

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT  
FIRST SESSION**

**Thursday, 18 August 2005  
(extract from Book 2)**

**Internet: [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard)**

**By authority of the Victorian Government Printer**



## **The Governor**

JOHN LANDY, AC, MBE

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

Lady SOUTHEY, AM

## **The ministry**

Premier and Minister for Multicultural Affairs .....	The Hon. S. P. Bracks, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Environment, Minister for Water and Minister for Victorian Communities .....	The Hon. J. W. Thwaites, MP
Minister for Finance, Minister for Major Projects and Minister for WorkCover and the TAC .....	The Hon. J. Lenders, MLC
Minister for Education Services and Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs .....	The Hon. J. M. Allan, MP
Minister for Transport .....	The Hon. P. Batchelor, MP
Minister for Local Government and Minister for Housing .....	The Hon. C. C. Broad, MLC
Treasurer, Minister for Innovation and Minister for State and Regional Development .....	The Hon. J. M. Brumby, MP
Minister for Agriculture .....	The Hon. R. G. Cameron, MP
Minister for the Arts and Minister for Women's Affairs .....	The Hon. M. E. Delahunty, MP
Minister for Community Services and Minister for Children .....	The Hon. S. M. Garbutt, MP
Minister for Manufacturing and Export, Minister for Financial Services and Minister for Small Business .....	The Hon. A. Haermeyer, MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrections .....	The Hon. T. J. Holding, MP
Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Planning .....	The Hon. R. J. Hulls, MP
Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs .....	The Hon. Gavin Jennings, MLC
Minister for Education and Training .....	The Hon. L. J. Kosky, MP
Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Commonwealth Games .....	The Hon. J. M. Madden, MLC
Minister for Gaming, Minister for Racing, Minister for Tourism and Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs .....	The Hon. J. Pandazopoulos, MP
Minister for Health .....	The Hon. B. J. Pike, MP
Minister for Energy Industries and Resources .....	The Hon. T. C. Theophanous, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Information and Communication Technology .....	The Hon. M. R. Thomson, MLC
Cabinet Secretary .....	Mr R. W. Wynne, MP

## Legislative Council committees

**Privileges Committee** — The Honourables W. R. Baxter, Andrew Brideson, Helen Buckingham and Bill Forwood, Mr Gavin Jennings, Ms Mikakos, the Honourable R. G. Mitchell and Mr Viney.

**Standing Orders Committee** — The President, the Honourables B. W. Bishop, Philip Davis and Bill Forwood, Mr Lenders, Ms Romanes and Mr Viney.

## Joint committees

**Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourable S. M. Nguyen and Mr Scheffer.  
(*Assembly*): Mr Cooper, Ms Marshall, Mr Maxfield, Dr Sykes and Mr Wells.

**Economic Development Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourables B. N. Atkinson and R. H. Bowden, and Mr Pullen. (*Assembly*): Mr Delahunty, Mr Jenkins, Ms Morand and Mr Robinson.

**Education and Training Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourables H. E. Buckingham and P. R. Hall.  
(*Assembly*): Ms Eckstein, Mr Herbert, Mr Kotsiras, Ms Munt and Mr Perton.

**Environment and Natural Resources Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourables Andrea Coote, D. K. Drum, J. G. Hilton and W. A. Lovell. (*Assembly*): Ms Duncan, Ms Lindell and Mr Seitz.

**Family and Community Development Committee** — (*Council*): The Hon. D. McL. Davis and Mr Smith.  
(*Assembly*): Ms McTaggart, Ms Neville, Mrs Powell, Mrs Shardey and Mr Wilson.

**House Committee** — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), the Honourables B. N. Atkinson and Andrew Brideson, Ms Hadden and the Honourables J. M. McQuilten and S. M. Nguyen. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr Cooper, Mr Leighton, Mr Lockwood, Mr Maughan, Mr Savage and Mr Smith.

**Law Reform Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourables Richard Dalla-Riva, Ms Hadden and the Honourables Geoff Hilton and David Koch. (*Assembly*): Ms Beard, Ms Beattie, Mr Hudson, Mr Lupton and Mr Maughan.

**Library Committee** — (*Council*): The President, Ms Argondizzo and the Honourables Richard Dalla-Riva, Kaye Darveniza and C. A. Strong. (*Assembly*): The Speaker, Mr Carli, Mrs Powell, Mr Seitz and Mr Thompson.

**Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee** — (*Council*): Ms Argondizzo and Mr Somyurek. (*Assembly*): Mr Baillieu, Ms Buchanan, Mr Dixon, Mr Nardella and Mr Smith.

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourables W. R. Baxter, Bill Forwood and G. K. Rich-Phillips, Ms Romanes and Mr Somyurek. (*Assembly*): Ms Campbell, Mr Clark, Ms Green and Mr Merlino.

**Road Safety Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourables B. W. Bishop, J. H. Eren and E. G. Stoney.  
(*Assembly*): Mr Harkness, Mr Langdon, Mr Mulder and Mr Trezise.

**Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee** — (*Council*): The Honourables J. M. McQuilten and R. G. Mitchell. (*Assembly*): Mr Crutchfield, Mr Hardman, Mr Ingram, Dr Napthine and Mr Walsh.

**Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee** — (*Council*): Ms Argondizzo and the Honourable Andrew Brideson.  
(*Assembly*): Ms D'Ambrosio, Mr Jasper, Mr Leighton, Mr Lockwood, Mr McIntosh, Mr Perera and Mr Thompson.

## Heads of parliamentary departments

*Assembly* — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

*Council* — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr W. R. Tunnecliffe

*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Dr S. O'Kane

**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
**FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

**President:** The Hon. M. M. GOULD

**Deputy President and Chair of Committees:** Ms GLENYYS ROMANES

**Temporary Chairs of Committees:** The Honourables B. W. Bishop, R. H. Bowden, Andrew Brideson, H. E. Buckingham,  
Ms D. G. Hadden, the Honourable J. G. Hilton, Mr R. F. Smith and the Honourable C. A. Strong

**Leader of the Government:**  
Mr JOHN LENDERS

**Deputy Leader of the Government:**  
Mr GAVIN JENNINGS

**Leader of the Opposition:**  
The Hon. PHILIP DAVIS

**Deputy Leader of the Opposition:**  
The Hon. ANDREA COOTE

**Leader of The Nationals:**  
The Hon. P. R. HALL

**Deputy Leader of The Nationals:**  
The Hon. D. K. DRUM

<b>Member</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>Party</b>
Argondizzo, Ms Lidia	Templestowe	ALP	Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	Melbourne	ALP
Atkinson, Hon. Bruce Norman	Koonung	LP	Koch, Hon. David	Western	LP
Baxter, Hon. William Robert	North Eastern	Nats	Leanders, Mr John	Waverley	ALP
Bishop, Hon. Barry Wilfred	North Western	Nats	Lovell, Hon. Wendy Ann	North Eastern	LP
Bowden, Hon. Ronald Henry	South Eastern	LP	McQuilten, Hon. John Martin	Ballarat	ALP
Brideson, Hon. Andrew Ronald	Waverley	LP	Madden, Hon. Justin Mark	Doutta Galla	ALP
Broad, Ms Candy Celeste	Melbourne North	ALP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Jika Jika	ALP
Buckingham, Hon. Helen Elizabeth	Koonung	ALP	Mitchell, Hon. Robert George	Central Highlands	ALP
Carbines, Ms Elaine Cafferty	Geelong	ALP	Nguyen, Hon. Sang Minh	Melbourne West	ALP
Coote, Hon. Andrea	Monash	LP	Olexander, Hon. Andrew Phillip	Silvan	LP
Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard	East Yarra	LP	Pullen, Mr Noel Francis	Higinbotham	ALP
Darveniza, Hon. Kaye	Melbourne West	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth	Eumemmerring	LP
Davis, Hon. David McLean	East Yarra	LP	Romanes, Ms Glenyys Dorothy	Melbourne	ALP
Davis, Hon. Philip Rivers	Gippsland	LP	Scheffer, Mr Johan Emiel	Monash	ALP
Drum, Hon. Damian Kevin	North Western	Nats	Smith, Mr Robert Frederick	Chelsea	ALP
Eren, Hon. John Hamdi	Geelong	ALP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	Eumemmerring	ALP
Forwood, Hon. Bill	Templestowe	LP	Stoney, Hon. Eadley Graeme	Central Highlands	LP
Gould, Hon. Monica Mary	Doutta Galla	ALP	Strong, Hon. Christopher Arthur	Higinbotham	LP
Hadden, Ms Dianne Gladys	Ballarat	Ind	Theophanous, Hon. Theo Charles	Jika Jika	ALP
Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Gippsland	Nats	Thomson, Hon. Marsha Rose	Melbourne North	ALP
Hilton, Hon. John Geoffrey	Western Port	ALP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Chelsea	ALP
Hirsh, Hon. Carolyn Dorothy	Silvan	Ind	Vogels, Hon. John Adrian	Western	LP



# CONTENTS

## THURSDAY, 18 AUGUST 2005

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
Adjournment.....	357
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
Ministers: performance.....	357
Members: eye testing .....	357, 358
Planning: Mitcham development.....	358
Balliang: tree planting .....	358
Western Port Highway: upgrade.....	359
Telstra: sale.....	359
Employment: rate.....	359
Hospitals: infection control .....	360
Fair Dinkum Food campaign .....	360
Melbourne Cricket Ground: redevelopment .....	360
Government: performance.....	361
Victory in the Pacific Day: 60th anniversary.....	361
Arthur Lelean .....	361
SUSPENSION OF MEMBERS .....	358
STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS	
Inspector of municipal administration:	
Glen Eira City Council.....	361
Family and Community Development	
Committee: development of body image	
among young people.....	362, 366
Inspector of municipal administration:	
Glen Eira City Council.....	363
Human Services: report 2003–04.....	364, 369
Innovation, Industry and Regional	
Development: report 2003–04.....	365
Auditor-General: managing intellectual	
property in government agencies .....	367
Economic Development Committee: economic	
contribution of Victoria’s culturally diverse	
population .....	368
Victorian Child Death Review Committee:	
report 2005.....	369
MELBOURNE COLLEGE OF DIVINITY	
(AMENDMENT) BILL	
Second reading.....	370
RACING AND GAMING ACTS (POLICE POWERS)	
BILL	
Second reading.....	372
VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL	
Second reading.....	373, 399
Committee.....	404
Adoption of report.....	408
Remaining stages .....	408
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
Gas: regional supply.....	391
Housing: government initiatives.....	392
Planning: ministerial role.....	392
Energy Safe Victoria: launch.....	393
Hazardous waste: Nowingi.....	394
Sport and recreation: government initiatives.....	395
VicRoads: surplus land.....	396
Aboriginals: government initiatives.....	396
Hepburn: inquiry.....	397
VicUrban: projects .....	397
Supplementary questions	
Gas: regional supply.....	392
Planning: ministerial role.....	393
Hazardous waste: Nowingi.....	395
VicRoads: surplus land.....	396
Hepburn: inquiry .....	397
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE	
Answers .....	398
VAGRANCY (REPEAL) AND SUMMARY OFFENCES	
(AMENDMENT) BILL	
Introduction and first reading .....	408
FISHERIES (ABALONE) BILL	
Introduction and first reading .....	408
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (FURTHER	
AMENDMENT) BILL	
Introduction and first reading .....	408
WORKING WITH CHILDREN BILL	
Second reading .....	408
ADJOURNMENT	
Whistleblowers: legislation review.....	411
Planning: rail trails .....	411
National parks: funding.....	412
Western Port Highway: upgrade.....	412
Hospitals: infection control.....	412
Member for Derrimut: conduct.....	413
VicRoads: surplus land.....	414
Bushfires: Wilsons Promontory.....	414
Responses.....	414
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE	
TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2005	
2102. Transport: Office of the Spencer Street	
Station Authority — advertising.....	417
2311. Commonwealth Games: Melbourne	
2006 Commonwealth Games Pty	
Ltd.....	417
2312. Multicultural affairs: VITS Language	
Link — advertising .....	418
2325. Major projects: Docklands	
Authority — media research and	
public opinion polling .....	418
2331. Energy industries: Office of Gas	
Safety — media research and public	
opinion polling .....	419
2333. Transport: Spencer Street Station	
Authority — media research and	
public opinion polling .....	420
2555. Major projects: Docklands	
Authority — capital works funding.....	421

# CONTENTS

2766.	<i>Sport and recreation: Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust — capital works funding</i> .....	422
2772.	<i>Sport and recreation: State Sports Centre Trust — capital works funding</i> .....	422
2775.	<i>Commonwealth Games: Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd — capital works funding</i> .....	423
3067.	<i>Attorney-General: Municipal Electoral Tribunal — office accommodation</i> .....	423
3324.	<i>State and regional development: ministerial staff — mobile telephone services</i> .....	423
4102.	<i>Transport: Urban and Regional Land Corporation — interstate and overseas travel</i> .....	424
4364.	<i>Energy industries: Haystack Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	424
4370.	<i>Finance: Haystack Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	424
4392.	<i>Gaming: Haystack Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	425
4405.	<i>Energy industries: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	425
4435.	<i>Racing: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	425
4453.	<i>State and regional development: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	426
4467.	<i>Innovation: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	426
4473.	<i>Gaming: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	427
4636.	<i>State and regional development: Innovation, Industry and Regional Development — overseas trips</i> .....	427
4646.	<i>Health: Human Services — stress-related leave</i> .....	427
4923.	<i>Housing: Windsor estate — redevelopment</i> .....	428
4928.	<i>Housing: neighbourhood renewal project — Doveton and Eumemmerring</i> .....	429
4942.	<i>Aged care: residential care — facilities</i> .....	430
4980.	<i>Education and training: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority — communications staff</i> .....	441
4988.	<i>Education and training: Office of Strategy and Review — communications staff</i> .....	441
5070.	<i>Consumer affairs: Motor Car Traders Guarantee Fund Claims Committee — communications staff</i> .....	441
5224.	<i>Treasurer: Victorian Managed Insurance Authority — communication staff</i> .....	442

## WEDNESDAY, 17 AUGUST 2005

2121.	<i>Small business: Office of the Small Business Commissioner — advertising</i> .....	443
2195.	<i>Agriculture: Victorian Meat Authority — advertising</i> .....	443
2295.	<i>Treasurer: Victorian Funds Management Corporation — advertising</i> .....	444
2308.	<i>Sport and recreation: State Sports Centre Trust — advertising</i> .....	445
2330.	<i>Transport: Melbourne Port Corporation — media research and public opinion polling</i> .....	445
2332.	<i>Energy industries: Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector — media research and public opinion polling</i> .....	446
2338.	<i>Transport: VicTrack — media research and public opinion polling</i> .....	447
2355.	<i>Tourism: Australian Grand Prix Corporation — media research and public opinion polling</i> .....	448
2543.	<i>Commonwealth Games: Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd — media research and public opinion polling</i> .....	448
3068.	<i>Attorney-General: Office of the Victorian Privacy Commissioner — office accommodation</i> .....	449
3703.	<i>Major projects: Innovation Building — opening</i> .....	449
4075.	<i>Resources: minister's office — alcohol purchases</i> .....	449
4093.	<i>Major projects: Docklands Authority — interstate and overseas travel</i> .....	449
4126.	<i>Police and emergency services: Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner — interstate and overseas travel</i> .....	450
4131.	<i>Police and emergency services: Victorian Community Council Against Violence — interstate and overseas travel</i> .....	450
4336.	<i>WorkCover: Victorian WorkCover Authority — entertainment expenses</i> .....	450
4406.	<i>Agriculture: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	451
4424.	<i>Resources: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	452
4638.	<i>Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — overseas trips</i> .....	452
4722.	<i>Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — advertising and credit card expenditure</i> .....	453
4826.	<i>State and regional development: Albury-Wodonga (Victoria)</i>	



# CONTENTS

	<i>Corporation — advertising and credit card expenditure</i> .....	453		<i>Racing: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	466
4921.	<i>Housing: Shepparton estate — redevelopment</i> .....	453	4433.	<i>Gaming: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	467
4927.	<i>Housing: neighbourhood renewal project — Norlane and Corio</i> .....	454	4434.	<i>Planning: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	467
4940.	<i>Environment: hazardous waste — Nowingi</i> .....	455	4454.	<i>Treasurer: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	468
4950.	<i>Education and training: Education and Training — communications staff</i> .....	456	4459.	<i>Environment: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	468
4985.	<i>Education and training: Adult Multicultural Education Service — communications staff</i> .....	456	4475.	<i>Racing: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	468
4990.	<i>Education and training: Office of Resources and Management and Strategy — communications staff</i> .....	457	4617.	<i>State and regional development: Innovation, Industry and Regional Development — alcohol purchases</i> .....	469
5215.	<i>Treasurer: Essential Services Commission — communication staff</i> .....	457	4641.	<i>Agriculture: Primary Industries — overseas trips</i> .....	469
5241.	<i>Multicultural affairs: Victorian Multicultural Commission — communications staff</i> .....	457	4880.	<i>Innovation: Innovation, Industry and Regional Development — staff</i> .....	470
5256.	<i>Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — communications staff</i> .....	458	4918.	<i>Housing: Bendigo estate — redevelopment</i> .....	470

## THURSDAY, 18 AUGUST 2005

	<i>Employment and youth affairs: Office for Youth — advertising and credit card expenditure</i> .....	459		<i>Education and training: Office of Learning and Teaching — communications staff</i> .....	472
2098.	<i>Transport: Marine Safety Victoria — advertising</i> .....	459	4989.	<i>Education and training: Office of School Education — communications staff</i> .....	473
2103.	<i>Transport: Urban and Regional Land Corporation — advertising</i> .....	460	5071.	<i>Consumer affairs: Patriotic Funds Council — communications staff</i> .....	473
2123.	<i>Tourism: Emerald Tourist Railway Board — advertising</i> .....	460	5216.	<i>Treasurer: Government Superannuation Office — communications staff</i> .....	473
2293.	<i>Treasurer: Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria — advertising</i> .....	461	5249.	<i>Education and training: Education and Training — communications staff</i> .....	474
2326.	<i>Major projects: VicUrban — media research and public opinion polling</i> .....	462	5255.	<i>Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — communications staff</i> .....	474
2334.	<i>Transport: Urban and Regional Land Corporation — media research and public opinion polling</i> .....	462			
2654.	<i>Agriculture: Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board — capital works funding</i> .....	463			
3065.	<i>Attorney-General: Legal Practice Board — office accommodation</i> .....	463			
3066.	<i>Attorney-General: Legal Profession Tribunal — office accommodation</i> .....	464			
4283.	<i>Transport: Hastings Port (Holding) Corporation — entertainment expenses</i> .....	464			
4349.	<i>Commonwealth Games: Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd — entertainment expenses</i> .....	465			
4374.	<i>WorkCover: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments</i> .....	465			



**Thursday, 18 August 2005**

**The PRESIDENT (Hon. M. M. Gould) took the chair at 9.33 a.m. and read the prayer.**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****Adjournment**

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, 6 September 2005.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MEMBERS STATEMENTS****Ministers: performance**

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I have been concerned for some time about the standards in this Parliament, and those standards go to the heart of the transparency of this government. This Parliament is being treated with contempt. Let me cite two examples. The first was yesterday when the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place was asked when he first knew about the police files issue and refused to answer.

He then went out and told the journalist the particular date that he did know, and then explained his situation. I put it to the house that if a question as specific as that has been asked in Parliament there at least should be an answer rather than prevarication and going outside to answer the question.

I put to the house that exactly the same issue occurred in relation to the Minister for Sport and Recreation's performance in this chamber yesterday. He was asked a specific question which he refused — —

**Mr Lenders** — On a point of order, President, I am loath to raise points of order during a 90-second statement because the general rule is that a member has great latitude. Mr Forwood has now reflected on two ministers. I seek your guidance in that if a member is going to reflect on other members of this place there are procedures that involve a substantive motion rather than a 90-second statement. President, I urge you to draw the member's attention to the practices of this place.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Minister!  
Mr Forwood!

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — On the point of order — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I am speaking; Mr Forwood should sit down. In his 90-second statement Mr Forwood was making statements about the standards of the house. I remind honourable members that when the President is on her feet they should sit down.

With respect to the point of order raised by the Leader of the Government, I remind members that when they are making a statement they may raise a concern but not make an allegation. In respect of the matter Mr Forwood raised, I suggest he be cognisant of that ruling. With respect to the point of order made by the Leader of the Government, Mr Forwood and other members in this chamber are well aware that making allegations against members and ministers can only be done by substantive motion. I accept the point of order in part, and I draw Mr Forwood's attention to my previous rulings and ask him to be cognisant of those when making his remaining remarks.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — I note the sensitivity with which the government approaches issues of probity. There is no doubt that this government promised to be open, honest, transparent and accountable. I invite honourable members to look at the behaviour of the government and honourable members opposite. I invite them to read the *Hansard* in the other place and in this place. I invite them to read what is in the media and to form their own judgment about the contempt with which the government treats, not the opposition or the people of Victoria so much, but the institution of Parliament. It is an absolute outrage that some people in here have no understanding of propriety, no understanding — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

**Members: eye testing**

**Ms ROMANES** (Melbourne) — Yesterday nearly 70 members of Parliament took advantage of the opportunity to have an eye test and to learn more about eye disease and vision problems from Professor Hugh Taylor and his team — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Mr Forwood and the Minister for Sport and Recreation will desist from interjecting. If they want to have a conversation they should leave the chamber. If they do not cease interjecting, I will remove both of them. Ms Romanes, to continue.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Members statements interrupted.**

**SUSPENSION OF MEMBERS**

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I have just warned Mr Forwood and the Minister for Sport and Recreation about interjecting. Pursuant to sessional order 31 they will remove themselves from the chamber for 30 minutes.

**Hon. J. M. Madden and Hon. Bill Forwood withdrew from chamber.**

**Members statements resumed.**

**Ms ROMANES** (Melbourne) — Many members came along to talk about eye disease and vision problems with Professor Hugh Taylor and his team from the Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA), at Parliament's neighbouring institution in East Melbourne, the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. All parties were well represented, and I thank the Honourable Bill Forwood and the Honourable Peter Hall for their support in encouraging their parliamentary colleagues to participate.

The eye testing was set up along the same lines as CERA's field exercises in different community locations where they screen not only the eye health of individuals but also test whether various eye health promotion messages are getting through to the general public. The CERA team left members of Parliament with some clear and important messages: not to take our eyesight for granted as it underpins our general health and quality of life; three-quarters of vision problems are preventable or treatable; and economic analysis shows that investment in targeted prevention will result in future financial savings. It is a timely reminder for all members in this Parliament of the critical importance of the good sense of supporting an increase in the level of investment in prevention — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

**Planning: Mitcham development**

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON** (Koonung) — I wish to draw the attention of the house to the decision of the Supreme Court to reject the appeal by the City of Whitehorse against the towers development — a 15-storey apartment block in Mitcham. I take up the words of George Droutsas. I am sure government members will be familiar with him as he is likely to be

trotted out as a Labor candidate very shortly; he certainly has a habit of meddling in council elections on behalf of the Labor Party. I agree with him on this point where he said that Mitcham is not Manhattan.

The fact is these towers have absolutely no place in Mitcham. It is a totally inappropriate development which has been brought to the people of Mitcham in my electorate by the Melbourne 2030 policies of this government. Whilst the member for Mitcham in the other place, Tony Robinson, expresses empathy with the people and suggests that it is a dreadful development, I note that he and his colleagues, including the Honourable Helen Buckingham in this place, have done nothing to try and change the Melbourne 2030 plan which is the fundamental government plan for these sorts of developments. We have other developments in Nunawading, with the Blackburn Lake area looking at a five-storey development as well. Again, local members of the other persuasion are showing interest and concern about the project but are doing nothing to change the policies that have delivered that project — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

**Balliang: tree planting**

**Ms CARBINES** (Geelong) — Last Saturday I joined hundreds of local people on a farm at Balliang in an attempt to break the world record of planting more than 4100 trees in an hour. The Balliang site is one of 12 across Victoria which has been selected for tree planting as part of the Commonwealth Games environment program. All our volunteers worked extremely hard over the course of the *Guinness Book of Records* designated hour and I was pleased to join up with the chief executive officer of the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority, Don Forsyth. Amazingly, Don and I managed to plant over 250 native trees in an hour. At the end of the hour we were informed that we had smashed the world record and had planted an incredible 13 125 trees as a group

**Mr Smith** — How many?

**Ms CARBINES** — The addition of over 13 000 trees at Balliang will be a tremendous addition to the vegetation corridor between the You Yangs and the Brisbane Ranges. I would like to thank the Geelong Landcare Network, in particular the chairman, James Petit, for its excellent organisation of the planting; Julian Menegazzo, for his generosity in making his farm available; and the wonderful volunteers who inspired everyone with their hard work in planting over

13 000 trees in the effort to break the world record in 1 hour.

### **Western Port Highway: upgrade**

**Hon. R. H. BOWDEN** (South Eastern) — I want to talk this morning about the Western Port Highway. I was very pleased to receive a letter recently from the management of VicRoads saying that they are going to review the capacity and efficiency plans for the Western Port Highway between Dandenong and Hastings. I was very pleased to receive that letter indicating that the review is under way by VicRoads. I would like to think that it might be, in a small way, a response to some of the representations I have made. I am concerned that the efficiency of the Western Port Highway be maintained, because it is a vital artery that we will require as a state when the port of Hastings is developed in the future.

I would like to remind VicRoads that there are such things as overpasses, and instead of having major roads come to sets of traffic lights, it should use overpasses. I would be happy to provide it with photographs of overpasses in case it has forgotten what they look like — and we need one at Thompsons Road urgently. The duplication of the Western Port Highway is absolutely necessary south of the Cranbourne-Frankston Road because of the traffic. I would encourage VicRoads to be open-minded and progressive in its planning and consider overpasses, which it seems to have forgotten about. The City of Casey deserves condemnation for its pollution and its constant plans to add inefficiencies to that road. I am very critical of the City of Casey, and want the lights out at Morton Bay Drive.

### **Telstra: sale**

**Hon. J. H. EREN** (Geelong) — John Howard is the most ideologically driven Prime Minister this country has ever known. His entire prime ministership has been based on trying to impose outdated draconian policies on our country, and we will all suffer the consequences. We only have to look at his industrial relations agenda since he was elected in 1996 to see that it has all been about union bashing and dragging the worker back to the 18th century. The policies have nothing to do with creating better workplaces; it is all about trying to be the most conservative Prime Minister this country has ever had. The laws that he is looking to introduce would make former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher squirm.

That is why it is not surprising that he wants to sell Telstra. The sale of Telstra will have a severe impact on

country people. There is no policy basis for selling Telstra other than the idea that public ownership is wrong.

It is not wrong, and to see that we only have to look at the way banks have deserted the bush and regional areas in the past decade. Why would a fully privatised Telstra be any different? It is time The Nationals stood up to John Howard and said, 'No more!'. The Nationals should stick up for the bush instead of pretending to negotiate on the sale of Telstra. It is shameful the way they are selling out for 30 pieces of silver, because once Telstra is sold, it is gone forever. Telstra makes extraordinary profits, which in turn benefit all Australians through infrastructure research and renewal.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

### **Employment: rate**

**Hon. ANDREW BRIDESON** (Waverley) — The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) labour force figures show that the Bracks government has been lagging behind other states in reducing unemployment. The figures show that the unemployment rates in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland are all below 5 per cent, whereas the unemployment rate in Victoria has risen to 5.5 per cent.

In the past month the unemployment rate in New South Wales dropped by 0.3 per cent, from 5.1 per cent to 4.8 per cent. In South Australia the unemployment rate dropped by 0.4 per cent, from 5 per cent to 4.6 per cent. Over in Western Australia the unemployment rate dropped by 0.1 per cent, from 5 per cent to 4.9 per cent, and Queensland also has a 4.9 per cent unemployment rate. In Victoria the unemployment rate increased by 0.3 per cent — from 5.2 per cent to 5.5 per cent. Victoria has the second-highest unemployment rate in Australia, with Tasmania being the highest on 5.8 per cent.

The ABS labour force statistics also show that under the Bracks government Victoria's unemployment rate has been above the national rate for 15 of the past 16 months and consecutively since June last year. The Bracks government must take positive action to maintain jobs in Victoria and address this unemployment trend.

### **Telstra: sale**

**Hon. S. M. NGUYEN** (Melbourne West) — Senator Barnaby Joyce blew into Canberra claiming he would not support the sale of the remainder of Telstra

unless the bush got a better deal. He claimed the concept of abolishing compulsory union fees at universities was not in the best interests of the students, especially the ones from the bush. He came to Canberra 'talking the talk', but from yesterday's newspapers he is not 'walking the walk' but 'hobbling the walk'. He has fallen for the short-term gain. The \$3 billion sounds good, but what happens when the money runs out?

I will tell you what will happen — nothing. Who will spend money in the bush? The answer is not Telstra. The \$3 billion may upgrade telecommunications now, but who will upgrade future technology and maintain it and ensure the bush has updated telecommunications in the future? Not Telstra. Telstra will have its shareholders to answer to, not The Nationals or the Liberal Party. This is a sell-out of the bush by their own representatives. Barnaby blew into Canberra like a gale-force wind and will leave Canberra like a soft breeze. As for his concern for students, he needs to stand by his statements that he is against abolishing compulsory student union fees, and not look for the soft middle ground as he is reported as saying in the *Age* newspaper yesterday.

### Hospitals: infection control

**Hon. D. McL. DAVIS** (East Yarra) — My contribution today relates to infections in hospitals. It is very clear that this government's record is very bad in relation to infections in hospitals. Referring to his government's policy in 1999, Mr Bracks said he would improve hospital cleanliness and infection control by redirecting \$9 million a year from the hospital network bureaucracy. The truth, of course, is that there are now 1700 more health bureaucrats and there is huge spending in that area that could more successfully be employed to prevent infections in many of our public hospitals. Labor said that it would redirect this money. It said that a Labor government would abolish the health network bureaucracy and put it where it is needed most — with patients.

There have been constant reports of filthy hospitals, dirty wards and even cockroaches. I can tell you that the infections in our hospitals are very serious and the news yesterday that 123 people have either died or had serious issues with infections chills most Victorians. Victorians should feel comfortable and safe in going to a public hospital. They should be able to go into a public hospital without fear of contracting an infection. It is simply the case that the Minister for Health in the other place, Bronwyn Pike, and this government have not done as much as they should have done. Standards are low, and they need to take —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

### Fair Dinkum Food campaign

**Hon. B. W. BISHOP** (North Western) — I rise today to congratulate the organisers of the Fair Dinkum Food campaign which had its beginnings at a potato protest meeting in Tasmania. The issue is about big supermarkets such as Woolworths and Coles — and I might add other companies as well — which choose not to buy Australian products in favour of cheaper imported products. The campaign is a real push for those big buyers to stock Australian-grown produce, whether it be fresh, frozen or prepackaged, and not bring in cheaper imported products using their own brand. Our supermarkets and other big buyers need to take a longer term view of the market to support our producers because if they do not they might find one day that they are all gone and they are then stuck with the volatility of both price and quality of overseas production. We need sensible and practical labelling laws so our consumers can make informed choices when they walk the aisles of our supermarkets.

The campaign, led by a convoy of Tasmanian farmers on tractors, received tremendous support as it left Tasmania, arrived in Melbourne and wound its way through central Victoria, calling in at Swan Hill and Mildura, two areas that produce a huge amount of our fresh food products and, of course, many products for processing. Again, I congratulate all those involved in the Fair Dinkum Food campaign, which successfully hammered home the message in Canberra last Thursday to the wider community that we want our supermarkets to buy Australian produce over imports.

### Melbourne Cricket Ground: redevelopment

**Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS** (Eumemmerring) — I rise today to condemn the government for its sneaky and deceptive tactics in trying to conceal from Victorians the true cost of the Commonwealth Games. The latest demonstration of the contempt that the government displays for the Parliament and the people of Victoria occurred in question time yesterday. The Minister for Commonwealth Games was asked a question by Mr Atkinson about whether the government would honour its commitment, its contract, to the Melbourne Cricket Club to pay any costs in excess of \$450 million for the redevelopment, and what the revised budget for the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) development was. These were two simple questions. In response the minister mocked Mr Drum. He talked about hospitality at the MCG, about a

favourite bowler getting a wicket at the MCG and about a footballer kicking a goal at the MCG.

What the minister did not talk about was the budget for the Melbourne Cricket Ground redevelopment or the cost to the government under its contractual obligations with the Melbourne Cricket Club. Before the President said she did not like the minister and suspended him from the chamber, he interjected during Mr Forwood's speech, saying that Mr Forwood simply did not like the answer. The minister needs to realise that his response to that question and his responses to other questions in this house do not meet the test of accountability which should be met by a minister of the Crown.

This government does not understand the meaning of the words 'open and accountable', and it stands condemned for the contempt it displays towards the people of Victoria when it comes to accountability.

### **Government: performance**

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** (East Yarra) — I wish to put on record my concern for this government and the way it continues to treat the people of Victoria with its continual use of spin lines and doctoring of words, making it an organisation that is really nothing about substance but about spin. Government members continually use spin lines whether it is in this chamber or whether it is out in the broader community. The government has no substance. We have just heard this morning about issues relating to the unemployment rate. We are hearing about its failure to progress major projects that are being developed in this state. The government fails to respond to questions about accountability, and budget accountability.

The government has a history in this chamber and in this state of driving down the economy of Victoria. Every time the Labor Party gets its greedy fingers into the Victorian taxpayers purse it continually drives it down. The government is now spending over \$30 billion of Victorian taxpayers money — and what is the end result? There is a continual failure in the hospital system, in major projects and in managing the budget. But what we do have is a success in spin. The government uses spin in here, out there and — I have said it before — is a government renowned only for spin and — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

### **Victory in the Pacific Day: 60th anniversary**

**Ms HADDEN** (Ballarat) — Last Sunday I had the great pleasure of attending a commemoration and

wreath-laying service at the Ballarat cenotaph for the 60th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day. This was a very special occasion for surviving veterans, their families and members of the civilian community who experienced World War II. The march past for World War II veterans was very moving and those attending were able to show our deep appreciation for the service and sacrifice of those men and women.

Almost 9000 Ballarat men and women enlisted in World War II and around 200 proud veterans marched from the Ballarat Returned and Services League club to the Sturt Street cenotaph to the sound of the Ballarat city municipal band. A Royal Australian Air Force museum aeroplane flew overhead to mark the 60th anniversary of VP day. This special commemorative service was attended by Ballarat, Sebastopol, Buninyong, Creswick and Ballan RSL sub-branch members. Uniting Church minister Reverend Bryan Nicholls gave the prayer service, and Dr Anne Beggs Sunter gave an address on Ballarat's history during the war years.

### **Arthur Lelean**

One Ballarat digger, Arthur Lelean, proudly clutched the baton from his army band, the 1st Armoured Division Australian Imperial Force band, which was used during the Japanese army surrender on the island of Morotai in 1945. After he had marched back from the cenotaph, having laid a wreath, Mr Lelean held that baton high in the air to proudly show the assembled crowd. He then collapsed whilst the last post was played, was attended by paramedics, and later taken by ambulance to hospital, where he sadly passed away that evening. Vale Arthur Lelean. You have served your country and community proudly and well. My sincere sympathy goes to Arthur's wife, Marjorie, and their family.

## **STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS**

### **Inspector of municipal administration: Glen Eira City Council**

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** (Western) — I would like to comment on the *Report of Investigation into Glen Eira City Council*. I would like to read the introduction which says:

On 28 September 2004, the Glen Eira City Council requested the Minister for Local Government, the Honourable Candy Broad ... to appoint an inspector of municipal administration to investigate and report on matters arising out of an audit of councillors' expenses by its internal auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers ... in particular breaches by

councillors of the policy relating to the use of council supplied telephones.

The inspector investigated, and in general councillor expenses looked at were:

The review period of 30 months includes all expenses relating to all 12 councillors who held office during that time:

six for 30 months;

three for 19 months ...

three for 11 months ...

The average annual expenditure incurred directly by councillors during this period was: councillor allowances — \$183 000, approximately; telephone expenses — \$17 500; meetings, conferences and associated costs — \$13 000; and other expenses — \$1366. That is a total of \$216 668 for the annual expenses of councillors. The report states:

A comparison of these figures with other similar metropolitan municipalities shows that civic expenses costs incurred by the Glen Eira City Council were not excessive. This being so, the inspectors confined their attention to a review of councillor telephone costs.

This whole report is based on councillors' telephone expenses. That was the finding at the end of the day. Basically the councillors did not work together properly. They fought — probably just like we do in here — and all those sorts of things, but at the end of the day it came down to councillors using their mobile telephones for personal rather than council functions.

Finally the inspector came up with two actions for consideration by the minister. He said in his report that effective responsible government could be restored to the City of Glen Eira through one of two alternatives:

The first is for the Minister for Local Government to set performance objectives designed to restore good government by —

correcting the council's unproductive and divisive behavioural practices and working relationships;

focusing its attention on addressing the major issues ...

That is a reference to the major issues in Glen Eira. The third point is:

monitoring the results achieved through an inspector of municipal administration appointed for the purpose.

The other alternative was that the minister suspend the council and appoint an administrator. The minister has taken up the second option.

I find this amazing coming from a Labor government. Two years ago I heard members opposite debating

loudly and clearly that they were going to enshrine local government into the constitution so that a minister of the Crown could no longer go around sacking councils. The minister roundly condemned the Kennett government for sacking Nillumbik and Darebin councils — the Labor Party said the Kennett government stepped in because they were Labor councils — but the Labor Party has sacked two councils since in it came to government, Melbourne City Council and Glen Eira City Council.

The stupidity of the bill that has been introduced in the other place is very simple to see. Before the bill will have gone through both houses and been proclaimed the councillors will be in caretaker mode. The Glen Eira council goes to elections at the end of November, and there is a two-month caretaker period during which it cannot make decisions anyway, so the councillors will be just sitting there doing nothing. By the time the legislation goes through the lower and upper houses the council will already be suspended, so I cannot understand why the minister, especially a Labor minister who stands up here criticising the Kennett government for sacking councils, has gone down exactly the same track and sacked Glen Eira council. At the end of the day the worst crime this council has committed is spending \$17 000 on mobile phone calls in three years. Of course it should not have done that, but I find the Labor Party's hypocrisy amazing when it comes to local government in that it says one thing in here and does something else outside this place.

### **Family and Community Development Committee: development of body image among young people**

**Hon. J. G. HILTON** (Western Port) — I am very pleased to make a brief contribution on the body image report, which was recently presented to the house. Several members have elected to speak on this report, which in some way reflects the importance with which we all view the report's findings.

First of all I commend the members of the committee, under the chairmanship of my friend the Mr Smith, who I believe has handed down a first-class document that details an issue of serious importance in our society. The recommendations of the report have been canvassed by other speakers, and my comments today will be restricted to the influence of the media and the power of marketing in our society.

When they are promoting their products obviously advertisers try to make the image as attractive as possible. The most egregious examples of this in recent times have been the smoking campaigns with the



Marlboro Man and the idea that smoking was in some way cool. Many people took up smoking as a habit because they wanted to have the image of being cool. We now have a rather more pervasive image because when I see products being advertised they are advertised by attractive, slim young women and attractive young men who appeal to people's idea of an ideal image or physique. The implication is that if you are not slim and good looking, you are somehow missing out. This obviously affects how young people see themselves. I am sure all young people, and maybe even older people, would like to have an ideal image. If this is taken too far, girls can develop anorexia and, if they are able to get hold of them, young men can use steroids to build up their muscles.

The report addresses this issue. It refers to the National Body Image and Eating Disorders Awareness Week postcard campaign, which revealed the concerns young people have with the type of body images presented in the media. It states:

Characteristic of the comments were:

I think that the magazines with skinny blondes are just a put-down to those who feel less attractive;

We need less sticks (people) on TV or in the limelight; and

I would like to see more overweight girls in magazines because all the girls that model in them are pretty and skinny and I think that it's pretty hurtful to an overweight girl looking and seeing all these pretty girls.

The report commented on the short-term effect on women's body image of viewing slim model-type images and said the findings are mixed. I must admit that I was rather surprised by that because I would have imagined intuitively that continual bombardment with slim model-type images would create a belief that that is the ideal, and that if you cannot meet that ideal, there is something wrong. The report goes on:

However, an analysis of a large number of studies found that body image was significantly more negative after viewing thin media images than after those which involved a different kind of image. This effect was stronger in studies of women under 19 years old.

I believe the advertising industry has to accept responsibility for the health issues which are caused by people who are desperately trying to achieve what is portrayed to them as the ideal. The advertising industry should be made aware that it needs to be responsible in these issues. I would prefer that to be done by agreement but if it cannot, I believe the issue is so serious that consideration needs to be given to some regulation that ideal body images are not to be used to promote products and that a size 10 figure — or maybe

these days a size 8 figure — or bulging biceps are not essential to be a contributing and well-regarded member of our society.

### **Inspector of municipal administration: Glen Eira City Council**

**Hon. ANDREA COOTE** (Monash) — I would like to make a comment on the report of the investigation into the Glen Eira City Council conducted by the inspector of municipal administration, Merv Whelan, dated July 2005. At the outset I would like to quote the Municipal Association of Victoria's reaction to this report. It stated:

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has expressed total dismay at the state government's decision to sack Glen Eira City Council.

MAV president, Cr Geoff Lake, said today's announcement is an affront to all local government, and flies in the face of basic democratic principles.

...

'The government lays claim to restoring democracy in local government but repeatedly fails to live up to the mantle it has built for itself.

'This is not a solution to Glen Eira City Council's problems — it is the dismantling of democratic government and the imposition of central control by the state government.

It is certainly damning. The Victorian Local Governance Association also made a comment:

After having fully read the report of investigation, the VLGA executive is dismayed that the investigator's report, recommendations and the minister's action to dismiss Glen Eira council failed to provide the council and the community with anything more than a circuit breaker. The Glen Eira community may in November re-elect the same councillors who were just suspended.

As my colleague the Honourable John Vogels outlined, this is ridiculous. If you look at the timetable for the suspension, you find that by the time the bill is debated in the other house in September it will not come here to the upper house until the middle of September. By the time it is implemented, there will only be a two week time frame in which this bill will be relevant. This bill will be a complete waste of time.

What happened with the Surf Coast Shire Council must be reflected upon. That shire, I remind members, is a Labor council. It wasted \$12 million of taxpayers funds. It got a rap across the knuckles; it did not get dismissed — it was just told to lift its game. But Glen Eira, which is a Liberal council, has been suspended over some phone calls. I admit those phone calls are unacceptable, but that behaviour goes nowhere as far as

the despicable behaviour of the Surf Coast Shire Council, which was only given a warning.

I have worked very closely with this city and its councillors. I put on the record my huge respect for Margaret Esakoff, Alan Grossbard, Jamie Hyams, Dorothy Marwick, Rachelle Sapir, Veronika Martens, Bob Bury, Peter Goudge and Noel Erlich. They represent their community, and I work with them on a close basis. We go to citizenship ceremonies and many functions and activities. They represent their community to the best of their ability. They are dedicated and hard working. They went into local government because they wanted to make a difference and a mark for their community. They represent issues that are relevant to their community. To my way of thinking they have done a very good job. They are professional and diligent. They work with sincerity and an enormous amount of integrity.

I would like to put on the record how much I have enjoyed working with this council and with each and every councillor on an individual basis. I would also like to speak about the chief executive officer, Andrew Newton, and his second in command, Paul Burke. Both of them have given me an enormous amount of assistance and provided very worthwhile professionalism at all times. They have assisted me in carrying out my job on a professional basis. They have always been courteous and given me the information and detail I have needed.

The minister now has to make certain that she proves this is not a political witch-hunt. She has to look at other councils such as Darebin, Hume, Brimbank and Moonee Valley to make quite certain that they are reaching the standard she has now set. Let us make certain this is not a political witch-hunt and the vilifying of a Liberal council. Let us see where the minister's politics actually lie. Let us see transparency and what she has to say about these other councils, all of which are in disarray.

### **Human Services: report 2003–04**

**Ms ROMANES** (Melbourne) — I rise to make a statement on the Department of Human Services Report 2003–04. I note it has been listed on the notice paper today by the Honourable David Davis. I think all members who are here know the approach Mr Davis will take to the report. It will be to home in on health and use it as an opportunity to do his usual job of spreading misinformation and talking down the enormous achievements of the Bracks Labor government in the health portfolio.

If members take the time to look at the Department of Human Services Report for 2003–04, they will see it captures the enormous complexity and immensity of the task facing the Department of Human Services across the portfolios of health, housing, community services and aged care.

It is a department that spent \$9 billion in 2003–04, which is 40 per cent of the operating expenses of government, so it represents a huge amount of human activity and service provision in our community. It addresses areas of great need and complexity in all portfolios, including mental health in the health portfolio, housing people with multiple and complex needs in the housing portfolio, and ageing in place, near friends and family, in the aged care portfolio.

As a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee one gets an overview of the activity of government across the many portfolios and the nine department. At the time the PAEC members were speaking with the Minister for Community Services in the other place I was struck by the almost insurmountable task of the minister and her staff in the Department of Human Services. They are the ones dealing often with some of the most intractable problems facing individuals, families and communities in Victoria. They are charged with doing that sensitively and in a way that empowers those who are sometimes the victims or who are involved in crises and other problems, and they do it in a way which works towards more viable solutions to these problems. They cover areas such as disability services, juvenile justice, child protection and families in crisis, to name just a few. It is not just dollars that are needed in this area because dollars will not fix many of these problems. They are real challenges in terms of providing appropriate services and solutions in areas of complex need.

The department's annual report provides an excellent summary of its approach to providing these services and outlines very clearly the objectives and key results achieved over this period and the challenges and future directions. The list of key results is an impressive one. I will just pick up a few in the community services area. There was additional government funding of \$77.9 million in the 2003–04 budget to provide 920 flexible support packages through the Support and Choice initiative and 420 respite episodes for families of people with a disability. The companion card for people with a disability was launched, and more than 6000 cards were issued. More than 400 venues formally recognise the companion card.

New services were established for young people leaving care. An advocate for children in care was appointed in March 2004, and the Aboriginal children specialist advice and support services were established in six regions. These are only a tiny fraction of the many important results that have been achieved in the Department of Human Services. The report sets out the challenges ahead and the future directions, and outlines a strategic approach across the department and how it will respond. It is a huge task, and we wish it well working on behalf of the people of Victoria.

### **Innovation, Industry and Regional Development: report 2003–04**

**Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS** (Eumemmerring) — I wish to make a statement on the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development annual report 2003–04. The department is the government's lead agency for the provision of investment and business support services across government. It is a department of roughly 700 staff with a budget in the order of a little over \$300 million, of which around \$200 million is distributed through grants programs. One of the key roles of the department is the promotion and facilitation of investment to Victoria, both interstate and more particularly international investment.

To that end in the course of 2003–04 the Minister for State and Regional Development established Invest Victoria headed up by Ben Foskett, who is charged with overseeing the whole-of-government investment attraction efforts. I note that over the life of this government with respect to manufacturing investment our record has not been great. When this government came to power in 1999 Victoria used to attract \$1 in \$3 of Australia's total investment in the manufacturing sector. It now only attracts \$1 in \$4. It has gone from a 33 per cent share in the total investment pie in manufacturing in Australia to around 25 per cent over the last six years.

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS** — Mr Smith says we are well ahead of the rest of the country. I do not now how he can say we are well ahead of the rest of the country when Victoria's share of the country's total has fallen from a third to a quarter. We used to get \$1 in \$3 and we now get \$1 in \$4 that comes into the country, so I am not sure how Mr Smith says that we are doing better than the rest of Australia.

Invest Victoria has as part of its responsibilities the operation of Victorian government business offices which are the international offices established around

the world for the purposes of investment attraction. This government has been all over the place with its policy on Victorian government business offices (VGBOs) throughout the world. One of its first decisions on coming to government was to close the VGBO in Seoul. Three years after that decision was taken the government announced a North Asian strategy. It said that it would focus on North Asia, despite having closed the office in Seoul three years earlier.

**Hon. D. McL. Davis** — They are backtracking.

**Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS** — They are not quite backtracking, Mr Davis, because the government is setting up another office instead in Shanghai. This follows a decision by government to establish an office in Nanjing in 2003–04, which is only around 300 kilometres from Shanghai. The Shanghai announcement was curious because it came at the same time as a visit by the Premier to Shanghai. The Premier seems to like to make announcements such as opening offices and so forth when he travels. On his trip to Shanghai he announced the opening of an office in Shanghai. We have two offices in China 300 kilometres apart with the rest of China not having representation by the Victorian government.

The Premier announced in October last year that the Shanghai office would be open by the end of 2004, but, of course, the government was unable to meet the Premier's target and the office did not open by the end of 2004 as the Premier promised. It was not until well into the first half of this year that the office was opened. Unfortunately, as of August we are still waiting for the appointment of an executive director to that office. Almost 12 months after the Premier made the promise we have the office but we do not have someone to run it.

Like most of the announcements the Premier makes on these offices, and investment policy generally, it is policy on the run. It was a decision made when the Premier needed a press release on a trip to Shanghai and as a consequence almost 12 months later it still has not been fully implemented. It is about time the government sorted out what its true international investment policy is and had a coherent strategy for where it will set up offices and for what reason it is setting them up and articulated that to the business community.

**Family and Community Development  
Committee: development of body image among  
young people**

**Hon. KAYE DARVENIZA** (Melbourne West) — I am delighted to speak on the inquiry into issues relating to the development of body image among young people and the associated effects on their health and wellbeing. This excellent report was tabled recently by the chair of the Family and Community Development Committee. This is an excellent report, and it is well worth every member of this chamber and the wider community taking the time to read the findings of this report and familiarising themselves with its recommendations.

As we know, eating disorders are an increasing problem in our community. When my generation thinks of eating disorders we think automatically of disorders such as bulimia and anorexia affecting teenagers and teenage girls in particular. Although we know that is certainly not the full extent of eating disorders, we also know that those two disorders are increasingly affecting a wider range of young people, including those as young as 9 and 10. We know they are not disorders that affect only females but that they are increasingly affecting younger boys and adolescent men. We know that eating disorders are not just about the pressure on young people to be thin, as is illustrated by what they see in the media and films, and from observing celebrities such as movie stars, pop stars and so on. Those examples say to them that the only way you can be famous, be attractive and be part of whatever action is happening is to be thin — and the thinner you are the happier your life will be.

The committee took evidence. It looked at the effects the media and other forms of communications have and at that bad message we send to younger people. It is not just about the pressure to be thin, but we know that increasingly we are becoming much heavier. I do not mean just here in the Parliament, but that Australians generally are putting on more weight and becoming heavier. We know from the research that is also true of our children. We have more children who are overweight and obese and more adolescents who are overweight and obese than in the past. The committee looked at those issues and at the pressure on young men to take steroids and other substances to enhance their bodies.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the committee, particularly the chair, Mr Bob Smith, and the deputy chair, Jeanette Powell from the other place. The other members are the Honourable David Davis; and from the other place, the member for Evelyn, Heather Mc Taggart; the member for Bellarine, Lisa Neville; the

member for Caulfield, Helen Shardey; and the member for Narre Warren South, Dale Wilson. This is an excellent report. I urge all members to take the time to familiarise themselves with it and to recommend it to community groups.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

**Family and Community Development  
Committee: development of body image among  
young people**

**Hon. D. McL. DAVIS** (East Yarra) — My contribution today relates to the Department of Human Services annual report for 2003–04. I want to talk about the acute health output group and, in particular, about hospital infections. Prior to doing that, I will make some comments about the Family and Community Development Committee's report. I thank the Honourable Kaye Darveniza for her comments. It is an excellent report that deals with a significant issue around body image among our young people, both boys and girls, and reviews much of the literature. One the key points in the recommendations and conclusions contained in the report is that the community has very poor information on this topic. It is not well understood, and despite some research from overseas and a modest amount of research in Victoria, it is the fact that the community and the medical profession do not well understand these conditions.

As Ms Darveniza has said, on one end of the spectrum body image issues are around obesity, which is better understood now, including the need for greater exercise and resilience work in schools and so on. I will say more about that in a moment. There is a great lack of research on anorexia nervosa and bulimia. One of the key recommendations of the committee is that a research centre of excellence be established and be based in Victoria. That centre would have a lead agency in Victoria, with support from the Victorian government in the first instance. I urge the federal government and other governments around Australia to support this initiative. Even some philanthropic groups may see their way clear to support this initiative. In my view a coordinated effort by the centre of excellence to increase research into this area and to turn that research into practical measures that will combat eating disorders would place us in a much stronger position.

There is an opportunity in Australia, particular in Victoria, to strengthen our place in the world research community on these issues, which are increasingly prevalent. As Ms Darveniza said, the committee made recommendations calling for research into those issues

affecting both boys and girls be dealt with by the centre for excellence. There is also a need to focus more strongly at a state government level on the known and effective techniques developed by the Centre for Adolescent Health at the Royal Children's Hospital. Its research on capacity building and resilience for younger people is remarkable research, and in many ways it is the most solid response at a community level that we can take. I urge the state government, which will have the support of the opposition in doing that work, to step forward and support a wider implementation of those resilience steps within schools and communities. The building of the robustness and resilience of young people within a school community will mean they are able to deal with many developmental issues, such as bullying and other issues that come from media image, by having optimism and a capacity to respond when knocks and issues emerge. That is what the Centre for Adolescent Health research, particularly its gatehouse program, shows strongly.

While I intended to talk at some length about the Department of Human Services annual report, I have done that in the sense that the Department of Human Services will be the principal funder of these steps. The opposition is supportive of the steps recommended by the committee and looks forward — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

### **Auditor-General: managing intellectual property in government agencies**

**Mr SCHEFFER** (Monash) — I rise to make a contribution on the Auditor-General's report on managing intellectual property in government agencies. The Auditor-General has prepared an important and informative report on his investigation of the issues involved in the way government departments manage intellectual property. Intellectual property refers to the legal rights which result from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary and artistic fields. The report says that intellectual property differs from tangible assets in that intellectual property assets are divisible through shared ownership, licensing and royalty arrangements. It tends to be cumulative in nature, with a single innovation being built on and contributed to by different people. The reports says that computer software is a good example where development is continuous across successive layers of employees and researchers. This makes it difficult to establish single ownership. Some intellectual property assets do not diminish over time because they do not wear out; others lose their value almost immediately as they are superseded.

The report usefully shows the different types of intellectual property: trademarks, copyright, patents, confidential information, designs such as plant breeders' rights that apply to registered plant varieties and circuit layout rights that apply to designs for integrated circuit and computer chips. Importantly, the report points out that it is the government's role to achieve public good from the innovations under way in the community. A part of this public good relates to the use and dissemination of knowledge, ideas and information systems that are at the heart of democratic systems of governance.

The report points out that intellectual property is a resource that can be used, managed and commercialised to provide economic, social and environmental benefits for the government, the community and business. Interestingly, the report provides a list of risks to the public sector if intellectual property is not well managed. These include a weakening of the integrity of government information which can lead to the public being misinformed. The failure to keep sensitive information secret can mean that it can fall into the wrong hands and be used inappropriately. If government does not ensure that the research is properly managed it will not be able to ensure that other researchers can access the research or that it can be used to get an economic return for the community. Where intellectual property held by a government agency is poorly documented and inconsistently administered, it may end up having no clear title and this can mean that any future development of the innovation is difficult. The report lists more examples, but these are probably enough to give an idea of the risks faced by the public sector if intellectual property is in inappropriately managed.

The report recommends that the government nominate an agency to take responsibility for the development of a whole-of-government policy on intellectual property. It also finds that the management of intellectual property should be integrated into the routine of project management practice and recommends that steps be taken to ensure that public servants know more about the administrative methods that will better protect intellectual property against inappropriate use. This is a very interesting report on an important subject that deserves wide readership and serious consideration. I congratulate the Auditor-General's office on its production and I commend it to the house.

### **Auditor-General: managing intellectual property in government agencies**

**Mr SOMYUREK** (Eumemmerring) — I, too, rise to speak on the Auditor-General's report on managing

intellectual property in government agencies. Like Mr Scheffer, I also thank the Auditor-General for preparing this report. It is a very important report and covers an area which probably does not receive attention. It is seen to be esoteric, although I have to say that it is an area that is becoming increasingly important. You only need to have a look at international relations and the notion of intellectual property (IP) rights always comes to the surface — for example, there are big intellectual property rights' issues with China and the USA, which are one of the sticking points in the Sino-American relationship at this stage. In fact Australia's recent free trade agreement with the United States had a big component of intellectual property rights. For Western countries in general there are huge property rights' issues. In the Third World the practices and laws are not developed to the extent they should be. I think you will find that the concept of intellectual property is non-existent in some of these countries, and that is why we have pirated goods.

The Auditor-General reports specifically on the managing of intellectual property in government agencies in Victoria and considers whether selected government agencies effectively manage their IP assets. It refers to both intangible assets and intellectual property. It states that these rights are very important in today's economy. It also states that government agencies deal with many different kinds of IP — for example, scientific research, information technology solutions, information databases such as global information systems and social research.

On page 16 of the report is a pictorial demonstration of the various types of intellectual property. At the top of the page there is a photo of the report issued by the Victorian Auditor-General that displays a 'copyright' example saying that it applies to original works of art, literature, music, films, broadcasts and computers. Next to that is a picture of a patent illustrating 'plant breeder's rights' with a photo of a strawberry variety registered by Primary Industry Research Victoria on behalf of the state government. There is something that might interest all of us here: another form of intellectual property headed 'confidential information'. Under this heading is a picture of the 2005–06 budget papers. It says, 'The Victorian budget is confidential until launched by the Treasurer'. I think Mr Broadbent should have read this. We then have 'registered designs' and 'circuit layout rights'. It is a very clear understanding of intellectual property and a clear pictorial guide to intellectual property rights.

The report also states that there is no whole-of-government policy framework to manage intellectual property rights and that:

The guidelines in existence relate to copyright only; however, several agencies currently use the guidelines on copyright to support their approaches to managing other, non-copyright IP.

There is currently little proactive — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

### **Economic Development Committee: economic contribution of Victoria's culturally diverse population**

**Hon. R. H. BOWDEN** (South Eastern) — I would like to make some helpful and constructive comments in appreciation of the Economic Development Committee's report *Economic Contribution of Victoria's Culturally Diverse Population*. We are very fortunate to have in Victoria an outstanding example of harmony and good relations with the citizens of this state who come from a wide range of culturally diverse backgrounds. There is no question that over a long period the individual and community contributions to our successful Victorian community have benefited by the arrival in this state of a large number of people who have origins away from the normal population pattern we had prior to, say, 1950.

After the Second World War, under commonwealth and state programs, Victoria was fortunate to receive a significant number of arrivals of people from countries in Europe and, more latterly, from Asia. It is fair to say that we have been most fortunate to derive the benefits on many levels from the arrival of these people from those different cultural backgrounds. We are enriched as a society and as a community by the successful integration of those persons from non-English backgrounds, which we typically had in the past.

One of the most satisfying things, which is commented on around the world, is the high quality and variety of our food, restaurant and hospitality industries. We are often complimented on the ability of tourists who visit Australia to have an enjoyable and pleasurable visit to this great state of Victoria. I suggest to honourable members that the large and successful tourism icon that we have in Phillip Island hosts on a daily basis large numbers of overseas visitors who travel here.

What is satisfying about this report is that it reinforces a feeling we have and have had for a long time — that the success of the Victorian community is in no small measure attributed to the contribution made to the professions, to industry and to our society at large by our diverse population. The report emphasises and clearly states the value and appreciation of the

community for that contribution by persons from a wide variety of origins. That is very helpful.

I suggest to honourable members that Victoria is a positive example for other states, in some cases, and certainly other countries, in demonstrating its success from a large percentage of its population successfully operating as a respected community. The important pillar of that success is the fact that we are an acknowledged and mature democracy. Underpinning that democracy we have laws that protect and encourage the contributions that have been, and will continue to be, successfully made to Victoria by people from different cultural backgrounds. I would like to go into more detail but there is not time. I believe the report is an excellent contribution, and I am pleased to support it.

### **Human Services: report 2003–04**

**Hon. C. D. HIRSH** (Silvan) — I want to speak today about aspects of the Department of Human Services annual report for 2003–04. I particularly want to talk about the two major hospitals in the electorate of Silvan, both of which are in the eastern metropolitan region of human services.

Maroondah Hospital started 25 years ago. I give credit to former minister Kay Setches, who was very involved in ensuring that Maroondah Hospital got off the ground and became a major asset in the eastern region. Maroondah provides a 24-hour emergency department and psychiatric emergency and care unit, and a whole range of great services. It recently received \$12.5 million from the state government for the development of a new ward and new emergency department, which were absolutely crucial to the operation of the hospital.

As of July this year the new multideck car park was almost complete at Maroondah. That is an essential facility, which is expected to open at the beginning of September 2005. It will make a great difference to the convenience of the patients, visitors, staff and of course the residents in the immediate area. Things have been difficult during the building of this car park, but it will make a massive difference.

There is another hospital I want to refer to. The annual report mentions the construction of a new emergency department at Angliss Hospital with a short-stay unit and a high-dependency unit. The Angliss Hospital, at the foot of the Dandenongs, is a community-based hospital that has looked after people in the outer east and the Dandenong Ranges for many years. It is a great

little hospital and has enormous volunteer and community involvement.

The new emergency department has 27 very well-equipped cubicles plus treatment areas, a short-stay unit with eight beds and an eight-bed critical care unit. The Angliss has a broad range of services, including a very good maternity service and a paediatric ward known as Wombat Hollow. I am concerned at the seeming certainty of Eastern Health that it will physically move the paediatric ward of Wombat Hollow into the maternity section. This worries me. Although assurances have been given about infection control, I am concerned about moving the paediatric ward. It seems to function very well as it is. It is up at the other end, away from maternity, and I believe it would be an inappropriate move to put it into the maternity section. Wombat Hollow should stay as it is. I do not think it is a good move, and I hope Eastern Health and the management of the hospital will reconsider this proposal.

I must allude to the excellent photograph at page 25 of the report. The photograph is of the Minister for Aged Care, Mr Jennings, engaging in a wonderful tug of war with a group of seniors. It is a very good photo, and Gavin fits in very well indeed. I had to mention that, because going through the report I found it a good photo. Coming back to the outer east, the Maroondah and Angliss hospitals are great hospitals that serve the community very well indeed.

### **Victorian Child Death Review Committee: report 2005**

**Ms HADDEN** (Ballarat) — I rise to make a statement on the 2005 annual report of the Victorian Child Death Review Committee on inquiries into child deaths and child protection. This is the 10th annual report of the committee, which reports on the deaths of children who are current or recent clients of the state's child protection service under the Department of Human Services. The committee provides an independent multidisciplinary external review of child death inquiries conducted by the Department of Human Services. It considers the deaths of all children in this state known to the child protection and family services branch. It is certainly well placed to identify emerging trends and patterns and to make very important recommendations as required in order to prevent the deaths of children in the custody of the department.

It is a very sad report. In fact it is a terrible indictment on our community that children die at all, especially children in the care of the state. We really need to address these issues very seriously. As I said, this is the

10th annual report, and this committee does an exemplary job in its findings. The report gives an overview of deaths of children known to the child protection branch in 2004. A total of 16 children known to child protection died in 2004, 5 for reasons unknown, 4 from acquired illness, 3 from accidents, 2 from sudden infant death syndrome, and 2 from drug and substance-related activities. The 16 children had little or no involvement with the department prior to their deaths, and 9 of those 16 deaths occurred in rural Victoria. In 2004 almost one-third of child deaths involved infants under six months of age, which is consistent with previous patterns in the age distribution of child deaths. There were no deaths of Aboriginal children known to the department in 2004. We have pretty high numbers of children dying in care. As I said, 9 of the 16 deaths last year were from rural Victoria, which is really quite alarming.

I acknowledge the new chair, Lisa Ward, and the current committee: Marg Stewart; Laurie Harkin; Dr John McNamara; Robyn Miller; Margaret Wagstaff; Paresa Spanos, a magistrate; Luisa Bazzani, barrister; Detective Inspector Rod Jouning; and Paul McDonald. I personally thank the retiring members of the committee, who have given many long years of service and commitment to this very important committee: Dr Judith Gibbs; Deputy Chief Magistrate Paul Grant; Francis Zemljac, lawyer; and Dr Sharon Goldfeld. I read their annual reports with great interest, although they are very sad. They certainly should be read and taken on board by all of us, especially by the department.

Another alarming aspect of the report is that for the period 1996–2004 in the adolescent age group of 13 to 18 years there were 43 deaths among young people. That represents 27 per cent of the total deaths known to the child protection branch in this period, and 16 of those deaths were of adolescents involved with drug and substance-related matters. It is quite alarming; it would appear that nothing is improving. We certainly need to get on top of this, and I urge the department and the minister to have a good look at this report.

Aboriginals were significantly overrepresented in the child protection population between 2000 and 2004. The committee made some very important recommendations for monitoring and reporting on deaths of Aboriginal children known to the department, for the collection of information regarding their Aboriginal status and for making sure that is acted on and looked at very thoroughly. Between 2000 and 2004 there were 97 deaths in total, 14 of which were Aboriginal children. Fortunately there were no Aboriginal child deaths in 2004.

The committee raised a number of issues which could be improved by the department, such as risk assessment and high-risk adolescents, case conferencing and case planning. In relation to case conferencing, the committee noted that many cases reviewed in the period by the committee would have benefited from the timely use of case conferences.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

## MELBOURNE COLLEGE OF DIVINITY (AMENDMENT) BILL

### *Second reading*

**Ordered that second-reading speech be incorporated on motion of Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources).**

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I move:

That the bill be now read a second time.

### **Incorporated speech as follows:**

This bill amends the enabling legislation for the Melbourne College of Divinity to make the legislative changes necessary for the college to comply with the new national governance protocols for higher education providers and to improve the college's operational efficiency.

The Melbourne College of Divinity Act 1910 contains provisions which reflect the individual history and character of this long-established institution. Apart from the mandatory governance amendments required for compliance with the protocols, changes are being made to simplify, modernise and generally improve the effectiveness of the college's operation.

Honourable members will be aware that recent changes to commonwealth funding arrangements for higher education institutions included a component of funding which is contingent on the adoption of a set of governance arrangements referred to as the 'national governance protocols'.

The Higher Education Acts (Amendment) Bill, which amends the enabling legislation for Victoria's public universities in order to implement these protocols, has previously been introduced into this Parliament.

In summary, the 11 national governance protocols applicable to the Melbourne College of Divinity (as a table B provider under the commonwealth's Higher Education Support Act) are as follows:

1. the higher education provider must have its objectives specified in the document that establishes the provider as a legal entity;



2. the governing body must adopt a statement of its primary responsibilities (including those which are listed);
3. the duties of the members of the governing body and sanctions for the breach of those duties must be specified in the document that establishes the provider;
4. each governing body must make available a program of induction and professional development for its members;
5. the size of the governing body must not exceed 22 members and must include members with certain expertise;
6. the higher education provider must adopt systematic procedures for the nomination of prospective non-elected members;
7. the higher education provider is to codify and publish its internal grievance procedures;
8. the annual report must be used for reporting on high level outcomes;
9. the annual report must include a report on risk management;
10. the governing body is required to oversee controlled entities; and
11. the higher education provider and its associated entities shall be audited by an external auditor.

Higher education providers other than universities are also eligible to receive the additional commonwealth funds provided they comply with the protocols. The Melbourne College of Divinity, operating under the Melbourne College of Divinity Act 1910, therefore requested that its act be amended to enable compliance.

As distinctive changes are required to enable the college to comply with the protocols and in order to accommodate its unique structure, amendments to the Melbourne College of Divinity Act 1910 are being introduced separately in this bill.

The Melbourne College of Divinity was constituted by the Melbourne College of Divinity Act 1910 and currently includes representatives of the churches of Christ and the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Uniting churches. The Salvation Army is also involved in its teaching program.

The college is affiliated with the University of Melbourne and is listed as a schedule 1 higher education institution by the commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.

Research has been part of the college's life since the beginning but the coming of commonwealth research training funds from 2001, and then participation in the PELS and now FEE-HELP schemes, brought the college into the wider tertiary education sector. Research funding has seen a steady growth in the number of students completing higher degrees by research — 8 doctorates and 16 research masters in three categories in 2004.

As a consequence, the college has become accountable to the commonwealth for the funds and loans provided, and as a higher education provider it must now accord with the national governance protocols.

Meeting these requirements has transformed the central administration and tightened quality assurance procedures across the college generally, with considerable restructuring as the college plans to the future. The opportunity to have its act thoroughly revised and so reshape the college is welcomed by the institution as it moves towards its centenary and a new phase in its history.

The college is a complex structure. Like a university, it has a central administration and academic boards responsible for the maintenance of educational standards across the institution. Its seven colleges, like the faculties of a university, engage in teaching and learning activities with students. Yet the college is unlike most universities in that these seven colleges are autonomous, employing teaching staff and providing teaching and library facilities but do not have the power to grant degrees.

The college thus functions as a network of diverse communities working cooperatively. This network embraces the Kew office; the teaching colleges which make up the registered teaching institutions; boards and committees which oversee academic programs; the graduates and fellows; and above all those who teach and learn — the faculty and students who constitute the college as a varied community of scholarship.

The amendments contained in the bill will enable the college to be defined as a much broader entity, with its affairs managed by a council which meets the requirements of the national governance protocols. The teaching of college programs has for the past three decades been largely carried out in teaching organisations with close links to the churches, but subject to quality controls and program details established by the college. Under the proposed new arrangement, the quality of programs will be the responsibility of the council rather than the college as a whole.

The council will consist of the dean of the college, the chairperson of the academic board and members appointed by the churches and the council. Some flexibility will be provided for the council to increase or decrease the number of members if the need arises. It seemed cumbersome to require parliamentary approval to add or subtract members and this bill will allow new members to join the college without further amendments to the act being required.

Consistent with the changes to the university legislation, at least two members must have financial expertise and at least one must have commercial expertise at a senior level. A majority of members must also be independent — that is, neither enrolled as a student nor employed by the council or a teaching institution recognised by the council.

In order to promote the introduction of new members to the council, a member's tenure is limited to 12 years, unless the permission of the council is given. Provisions will also be inserted to ensure the overlap of members' terms where possible.

The office of a council member will automatically become vacant if the member is or becomes disqualified from managing corporations under the Corporations Act or has

failed to attend three consecutive ordinary council meetings without the council's prior approval.

The council will have the power (by a two-thirds majority) to remove any council member for failing to comply with his or her duties. The bill outlines a process — in line with the principles of natural justice — that must be followed before such a removal can occur.

Provisions will be inserted regarding conflicts of interests and the responsibilities of council members which are consistent with the university acts.

The bill will enable the establishment of an academic board and will also allow the council to create and administer trust funds.

The vision and mission of the college is impressive. The following values, formally adopted by the college in 2004, express this vision. The college seeks to promote:

critical inquiry and open dialogue in the exploration of truth;

active engagement with local, national and global social contexts;

recognition and respect for the traditions of the member churches in an atmosphere of mutuality and ecumenical cooperation;

interdependence in the development of all learning activities;

honest professional relationships between students and staff;

freedom from all forms of discrimination;

a climate of respect and openness; and

enthusiasm, flexibility and innovation.

This bill has the full support of the Melbourne College of Divinity which has been consulted throughout all stages of the preparation of the bill. I thank the college for its input and on behalf of the Bracks government, I look forward to continuing to strengthen our important relationship with them.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of  
Hon. ANDREW BRIDESON (Waverley).**

**Debate adjourned until next day.**

## RACING AND GAMING ACTS (POLICE POWERS) BILL

*Second reading*

**Ordered that second-reading speech be incorporated for Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) on motion of Hon. T. C. Theophanous.**

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I move:

That the bill be now read a second time.

### **Incorporated speech as follows:**

The purposes of the bill are:

to amend the Racing Act 1958 to enable the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue exclusion orders with respect to licensed racecourses; and

to amend the Casino Control Act 1991 to expand the scope of exclusion orders issued by the Chief Commissioner of Police so that they apply to the casino complex.

During the 2004 Spring Racing Carnival, the government became aware of some anomalies in the power of the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue exclusion orders that help ensure the integrity of gaming in Victoria and reduce opportunities for certain criminal activities such as money laundering.

While the Casino Control Act 1991 currently enables the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue exclusion orders preventing a person from entering or remaining in the gaming area of a casino, the chief commissioner cannot also exclude persons from the remainder of the casino complex or from racecourses. This means that a person who has been the subject of a casino exclusion order can still attend race meetings and any parts of the casino that are outside the gaming area.

The government proposes to address these anomalies as part of its law and order policy.

Accordingly, the bill amends the Racing Act 1958 and the Casino Control Act 1991 to extend the current power of the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue exclusion orders. These amendments are particularly important as they will assist Victoria Police to implement its organised crime strategy and serve to protect the Victorian racing industry.

The Victorian racing industry is the envy of the racing world. Victorian racing is widely recognised as the national leader and the state is generally ranked in the top four racing industries worldwide.

This government recognises the importance of the racing industry in terms of the tourism that it generates and the broader economic and employment benefits derived by the state.

The racing industry also delivers to Victoria the biggest annual event in Australia, the Spring Racing Carnival comprising that much-loved premier tourism event on the Australian racing calendar — the Melbourne Cup carnival.

These events and the entire racing industry rely on the integrity of the Victorian racing industry, a reputation that we cannot afford to see undermined. That is why this bill seeks to protect and preserve our racing industry.

I will now consider the amendments the bill makes to the Racing Act 1958 and the Casino Control Act 1991 in turn.

The bill amends the Racing Act 1958 to provide the Chief Commissioner of Police with power to exclude persons from race meetings held at specified racecourses.

Currently, alleged crime figures, excluded from the casino by an order of the Chief Commissioner of Police, remain free to attend race meetings. This provides the opportunity for such persons to undermine the integrity of racing and engage in corrupt practices such as coercing individuals in the industry or potentially in money laundering.

The proposal to extend the power to issue exclusion orders to encompass race meetings protects against behaviours that may damage the integrity of the racing industry.

The bill makes provision for the issuing of exclusion orders for racecourses for the duration of race meetings. Racecourses can be used at other times for non-racing purposes and it is inappropriate and unnecessary for the exclusion order provisions to apply at such times.

Orders can be made for any of the racecourses specified in the bill and any that are prescribed by regulation.

Importantly, the Chief Commissioner of Police can only issue an exclusion order if he or she considers it necessary in the public interest.

The bill excludes persons who hold a bookmaking licence or an occupational racing licence under the Racing Act 1958 from the exclusion order provisions as they are already subject to licensing requirements, including disciplinary procedures, under the act and the relevant rules of racing.

Under the Casino Control Act 1991, the Chief Commissioner of Police may currently issue an exclusion order that prevents a person from entering or remaining in the gaming area of the casino. There is no power however to exclude persons from the remainder of the casino complex. The casino complex includes hotels, shops, restaurants, other entertainment facilities such as a cinema and car parking facilities. The casino complex will be defined by means of a map lodged in the central plan office of the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Copies of the plan are available from the Clerk of the Assembly.

Persons present in the broader casino complex may intend to enter the gaming area and there is a risk that an excluded person, present in the broader casino complex, might enter into the gaming area undetected.

Extending the power to issue exclusion orders to encompass the whole casino complex will assist Victoria Police in its efforts to combat organised crime.

The proposal also provides a more uniform approach with other jurisdictions, such as New South Wales, where the relevant provisions can apply, by the making of regulations, to the entire casino precinct, including restaurants and bars.

The bill amends the Casino Control Act 1991 to extend the power of the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue exclusion orders. It will enable the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue exclusion orders for the entire casino complex. As with the provisions for racecourses, the Chief Commissioner of Police can only issue an exclusion order when he or she considers it necessary in the public interest.

The measures contained in this bill are an important part of the government's law and order policy and its commitment to reducing the influence of organised crime in Victoria.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned for Hon. DAVID KOCH (Western) on motion of Hon. Andrea Coote.**

**Debate adjourned until next day.**

## VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 16 August; motion of Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources).**

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** (East Yarra) — I rise to speak as part of the opposition's contribution on the Victoria State Emergency Service Bill. The opposition wholeheartedly supports the State Emergency Service (SES) and also supports the establishment of Victoria State Emergency Service as a statutory authority. We see it as an important part of the process in terms of establishing a separate independent authority that will be run independently in its own right within its own piece of legislation. It is wholeheartedly endorsed by the opposition.

The opposition has some concerns about various amendments. The Honourable Bill Forwood will be raising those particular issues in more detail and I will in some way go through them. We have concerns about the issues relating to the calculation and reporting of the statutory contributions, being the fire services levy, by the insurance companies to the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board and the Country Fire Authority (CFA). We see there are some inequities in the way that the process is being undertaken. We also have some concerns in relation to the apparent disclosures that are required in respect of calculating and receiving premiums. For those reasons the opposition, whilst supporting the overall concept, will treat the bill as not opposed. We find that there are parts of the bill that we believe are suitable, relevant and part of the future of developing the Victoria State Emergency Service.

I put on record my experiences from many years gone by, working in the emergency services area in the Victoria Police, about how the volunteers of the SES have always been at the fore. They were always there, called out at the most unusual times to deal with some of the most horrendous car crashes and some of the

most interesting situations I have seen. The volunteers do it without complaint, with vigour and professionalism. Members should bear in mind that this is a significant and large voluntary organisation. I do not wish to go into too much detail in respect of the establishment of the SES. Members who require that detail should review the contribution of the member for Scoresby in the other place, Kim Wells. He gives a large dissertation in respect of the formation of the State Emergency Service in 1939 and goes into some detail. For the purposes of the house, the shadow minister in the other place has substantially covered the development of the State Emergency Service to the point where we are now. For those who wish to review some of the history of the development of the SES I would encourage members opposite and the people of Victoria to look at the formation and the history of the SES from 1939 and then when it was more recently re-established in 1975. There is a long history in relation to the SES volunteers in respect of the way they have made their commitment to assisting people in different levels of crisis.

To give some idea about the size of the organisation, there are 101 accredited road accident units. My understanding is that this is one of the largest accredited providers of road accident rescues in the world. From my experience, having visited and been to significant fatalities in road accidents, the professionalism of SES volunteers and the way they deal with emergencies in a very professional manner is to be commended. Unlike services such as police, ambulance, fire brigade and the like, these people are there on a voluntary basis. When you consider that they confront serious issues such as road accident victims, which can be quite horrendous to witness, I tip my hat to the fact that they do this on a voluntary basis and I think it needs to be recorded.

Some 350 000 hours of community service is contributed by SES volunteers, including their training and operations. I understand the SES volunteers have been involved in — I assume these figures are for the recent year — 300 searches, over 8000 operational call-outs, more than 5000 storm damage requests for help and over 200 operations in support of police and fire services. There is no doubt that every time Victoria or Melbourne confronts a storm of significant magnitude, most people who suffer some damage, call law enforcement, police or ambulance, more often than not find that they are in a limited position to deal with the problem and it is the SES which undertakes the enormous task on a voluntary basis to do those call-outs. It is important that we understand that.

I would also like to put on the record my acknowledgment of the families, partners, and support

people around the SES volunteers. They cannot do it on their own; they need support from their employers, and from fellow employees. Whilst I am sure we assume they are called out during odd hours, there are occasions when they are called out during normal working hours, and we need also to acknowledge the allowance and contribution provided by their employers and the support provided by their families.

The bill is quite substantial. It came out of a review undertaken by Brian Parry, the president of the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board. Apparently the review findings have not been released, with the government citing cabinet in confidence as the reason. It would have been good to understand why the board needed to be established.

The briefing we received on this issue was excellent. However, I walked out of the briefing feeling pleased with it but thinking that it meant the formation of yet another statutory authority. That thought led me to review the number of statutory authorities and boards that have been established by the government since it has been in power. It was a good report because we ended up getting media attention and finding substantial amounts of government money. It is a side issue, but it is important to acknowledge that a huge number of statutory authorities are being developed. We were up to 124 at my last count, but I might do an update and find out how many extra — —

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** — Did you do a count of the Kennett government?

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — Yes, and in fact there were less. I thank the minister for his interjection. I did the comparison and, unlike the government, I am a bit more thorough, but that is for another day.

As I said, the review from Brian Parry will not be released, as the government is citing it as a cabinet-in-confidence document. It is an interesting statement to use when you are forming a new act that establishes the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority. Why would you need to have this report hidden from public scrutiny? I am sure there is nothing sinister in it, but it seems strange when we consider this legislation. Were there other issues in the report that we are not aware of? Are we looking at establishing more bureaucracy within the organisation and less volunteers? I would not know. Some issues could be fleshed out in the committee stage. My understanding is that we are going into committee on the bill, and there could be some issues relating to that matter.

Parts of the act will be supported by the opposition. Part 2 establishes the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority, and we support that. Part 3 concerns the Victoria State Emergency Service and provides for the appointment of a director of operations. Part 4 deals with compensation. These provisions are a fair call in terms of ensuring compensation for injury during emergency service. There are obviously miscellaneous amendments in part 5, but it is parts 6 and 7 that have raised concern in the opposition. Rather than my pre-empting what the Honourable Bill Forwood will say, as he will speak to the issues relating to parts 6 and 7 — —

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** — So are you going to support the bill in the end?

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — I advise the minister that we are not opposing the bill, and thank him for bringing that up again. It is a non-controversial bill in respect of the establishment of the authority and a director of emergency services. It really puts in place a separate statutory authority as opposed to its existing status as a business unit of the Department of Justice. That will give it more teeth and more independence.

We note that the board will be made up of seven directors. We are advised that the minister is seeking an expert board with volunteers to be recognised and represented in their area of expertise. I hope one of the board members has the expertise of reading minutes or memos. That would be a good skills base for a board member to have. It might assist the minister responsible for this bill before the house! Given the latest fracas involving the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place, I suggest it would be good for him to have a director to advise him on how to read memos.

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** — That is a cheap shot!

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — It is not a cheap shot; it is a relevant shot at the minister, who has responsibility for this bill. The minister is failing in his responsibilities to deal with issues involving the police and corrections. The police minister is on the ropes; the Minister for Corrections is on the ropes; and he is also the minister for emergency services, which is what this bill is about!

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** interjected.

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has responsibility for the bill. The Minister for Energy Industries and Resources interjects and says he is doing a good job. He is not. We hope with the introduction of this bill that the

minister will do a good job in his role as the minister responsible for emergency services.

The seven directors, as outlined in the bill, are to advise the minister on setting up expert boards, with volunteers to be recognised. I just hope that when they write briefings to the minister, they keep it down to two paragraphs, because that appears to be the limit for this minister. They cannot go beyond that because he does not read beyond two paragraphs!

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** — That is two more than you can read!

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — I will take up the interjection: I have been dealing for close to two years with the person who is the subject of this particular matter being dealt with by the media, and if the minister had any understanding about the issues around the prison officer — the whistleblower — and all the other issues, he would have read more than two paragraphs. It seems astounding that in the context of what had occurred with this whistleblower and prison officer that he would read two paragraphs. It is absolutely amazing. It is not as though I have not raised this issue in the chamber before. I have raised it on the adjournment debate, in members statements, I even raised it in debate on a bill once before. Ms Mikakos objected to the issue I was trying to raise, in an attempt to protect the prison officer.

This is a bill about the minister's responsibility. It is important to put into context the interjections from the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources about the competency of the minister. In my contribution to the debate I am demonstrating that while we support the notion of the bill and the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority, we see some significant problems with the way the minister, and indeed the government, will be able to manage the particular — —

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** — You are demonstrating what an opportunist you are!

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — That is coming from the greatest opportunist in this chamber! If the minister makes an interjection, I am going to respond because I think it demonstrates the lack of capacity of this minister to understand the bill before the house.

We support the notion of the bill, but we do not support some parts of it, and, as I indicated, the Honourable Bill Forwood will discuss that in more detail. I think there are some issues we need to raise. However, I have grave concerns about the current minister and his capacity to manage the newly formed VICSES, as it

will be known, as a separate, independent authority. He is a minister responsible for three areas — police, corrections and emergency services. He cannot get it right for the police or the corrections but let us hope he gets one of the three right and gets a 33 per cent success rate with the bill before the house.

We see this as an important piece of legislation. As I said, we support the first parts of the bill. We do not have any problems with them. We look forward to the establishment — —

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** — Is that it? What about saying something about the bill?

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — I have gone through and mentioned the relevant parts, Minister. If you clear the wax out of your ears, you might hear.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT** — Order!  
Mr Dalla-Riva will speak through the Chair!

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — He needs to clear out his ear wax, Deputy President, because it is clearly blocking his thoughts.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT** — Order!

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — I think it is important to take up the constant interjections as we support the bill. We support the bill but we need to note for the record that the minister continues to interject because I am talking about the accountability of the minister who has responsibility for this bill.

We support the notion of VICSES. We support the notion that it is important for us to have a bill that reflects the volunteers. As I indicated, they are a great group of people who provide necessary support for Victoria. They provide necessary support to the police and other emergency services. I am very pleased that the bill is before the house. As I indicated, there are some concerns. I do not wish to labour the matter too much, but I hope the minister will display more competency in managing this bill than he has shown in managing his other portfolio responsibilities. We commend the bill to the house.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — Parts 1 to 6 of this bill establish a new independent statutory authority to manage the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES). The Nationals believe is a very fine proposal to establish this new authority. I think this concept would be supported wholeheartedly by all members of this chamber and, indeed, by all Victorians. However, it is despicable for the government to taint what should be unqualified support for the formation of this new

statutory authority with some amendments relating to the fire services levy. This is the Victoria State Emergency Service Bill and there is no reference whatsoever in the title to the extraneous matter of the fire services levy.

I do not think the fire services levy has anything at all to do with the State Emergency Service — at least that is what the government tells us. It says the fire services levy will not be used to fund the SES. The levy has nothing to do with the SES, yet this government has thrown in what we in The Nationals believe to be some pretty horrendous changes to the fire services levy in an attempt to disguise them on what should be a joyous occasion to celebrate the establishment of a new authority to manage the SES. The Nationals find it to be a despicable action on the part of the government to introduce these amendments relating to the fire services levy in the guise of establishing a new statutory authority.

When I was thinking about this I harked back to the government's often-repeated claim of being open, honest and transparent in the way it does things. Some better adjectives to describe the government's actions, of which this is only one example, would be underhanded, deceptive and misleading. That is exactly what the government is being in this bill — it is trying to avoid any debate on the fire services levy by throwing these changes in with the establishment of the new statutory authority relating to the State Emergency Service. It is despicable, and I will have more to say about it as I progress through my comments this morning.

I first want to talk about the State Emergency Service. I again express my unqualified support and that of my colleagues in The Nationals for that organisation. We have the greatest admiration for the many people who volunteer their time and their families' time to serve with the State Emergency Service. I note from the second-reading speech of this bill that the SES has something like 5500 volunteers, has 101 accredited road accident rescue units and attends something like 1200 road rescues every year. The SES is also involved in searches, repairing storm damage and requests for help. I understand that it attends more than 5000 of those events each year. Wherever there is a need, we find the SES is one of those organisations which is always available and always serving the needs of the community.

Much of Victoria experienced some pretty serious wind storms last weekend, and the SES was out there at all hours of the day helping people who were impacted upon by storm damage. Just last week we had some

unseasonal weather conditions in my own electorate of Gippsland which brought snow to a lot of parts of Gippsland. Again it was the SES which was out there assisting people, clearing roads, providing access and removing trees from houses as snow damage caused accidents and inconvenience to many people in my electorate. In the country towns we represent those country communities feel a greater sense of security knowing they have a volunteer SES unit available and ready to help out in times of need.

One of the things I have noted about the State Emergency Service is that over the years it has had to beg and scrape for money from governments. I do not think it has been well enough supported by governments currently or in the past. We frequently find that SES units are undertaking fundraising drives to secure the valuable equipment they need to carry out their functions. I recall that some years ago the jaws-of-life were quite a new piece of equipment that the SES required to assist in road accidents. I know that locally they had to carry out some fundraising events to purchase that sort of equipment. More recently, a Hazmat vehicle was secured by the Morwell SES unit, but once again it had to undertake some significant local fundraising to purchase that necessary piece of equipment. I think the government has a responsibility, now that we are establishing this new statutory authority to manage the State Emergency Service, to ensure that it is funded adequately and provided with the equipment that it needs.

All in all, I think the State Emergency Service is a wonderful organisation. It has my full admiration and that of my colleagues. We wish it well and encourage government to better support it. We have had a look at the proposed structure of this new statutory management authority. We believe that structure is appropriate. I will not go through all the individual components of the structure, but I think it is an appropriate structure to ensure that the new statutory authority is able to fulfil its purposes. We again thank the many volunteers who have been and continue to be involved in the SES for the countless hours they have put into serving their local communities. They deserve to be recognised and they are with this new statutory authority.

However, as I said, it is a damn shame that this government has tainted what should be a joyous celebration by throwing the fire services levy issues into this piece of legislation. In fact, I should be sitting down now. If this were truly a Victoria State Emergency Service Bill, I would be finished and sitting down now. But the most controversial parts of this legislation are the issues relating to the fire services

levy, and I now turn my comments to that particular aspect of the bill.

These issues are encompassed in parts 6 and 7 of this bill. They change the way the fire services levy in Victoria is structured. I note that on page 5 of the second-reading speech reference is made to the Department of Treasury and Finance's 2003 review of the Victorian fire services funding arrangements. I will come back to that because, on behalf of my colleagues in The Nationals, I made a submission to that review.

I also see repeatedly mentioned in the second-reading speech the issues relating to the changes to the fire services levy that are brought about to produce greater 'equity in the fire service funding system'. The Nationals believe the current system of the levy based on property insurance is far from equitable. I ask the house today, and challenge government members to respond, about those people in our community who do not insure and consequently do not contribute anything in the way of a fire services levy. What about those who own vacant property and yet if there is a fire there the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) are called in? Those people do not pay any form of fire services levy because they do not insure. What about those people in a community who underinsure either deliberately or unintentionally? They are not contributing to the full amount they should by way of a fire services levy.

What about those who insure via discretionary mutual trusts? They are exempt from any government taxes and the fire services levy. Where is the equity in that? What about those who take out insurance offshore? It is my understanding they avoid paying the fire services levy. What about those organisations that self-insure? I put governments in that basket, because to my knowledge the government does not take out any insurance on, for example, the schools across the state, hence there is no direct fire services levy paid for the most of the property that the government owns. Governments themselves do not pay the fire services levy. What about motorists who have had the benefit of a CFA or MFB unit attending an accident scene? Motorists in this state do not pay any fire services levy. In all these circumstances groups of people either avoid paying the fire services levy completely or in part. Does that make for an equitable system across the state? Certainly in the view of The Nationals it does not.

The Nationals made a submission to the 2003 inquiry by Department of Treasury and Finance into the structure of the fire services levy and how fire services should be funded. I want to quote from it — and it is on my personal web site if anyone wants to verify it. This

submission was made more than two years ago. In it I said:

We believe the cost of funding fire services must be shared equitably across the entire community.

This sentiment was expressed by the government but its actions do not match with the legislation we have before us.

We note that Queensland and South Australia abolished their property-insurance based funding schemes in 1984 and 1999 respectively and Western Australia will be changing its scheme from 1 July 2003.

That has already occurred and it has now successfully implemented a new scheme based on property ownership rather than property insurance.

With the ACT and the Northern Territory funding their fire services come from consolidated revenue, it is only Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania that still fund fire services on a property-based insurance scheme.

Under the heading 'The need for change' we said:

The fire services levy is not shared equitably across the community as only those people and organisations which choose to take responsibility for managing their own property risk by arranging insurance cover pay the fire services levy. Those who choose not to insure, to insure offshore or those who underinsure are not contributing fairly to the essential community service ...

We also said in our submission that the role of volunteers in the CFA should be recognised and some of them should be exempt from paying the levy in recognition of the contribution they make to their local CFA unit.

Moreover, we are of the strong belief that the state government should fully fund a 100 per cent concession to those property owners who are volunteer members of the Country Fire Authority and who have completed the minimum training requirements that allow them to be involved in active firefighting.

In this submission we advocated the need to restructure completely the way the fire services levy is structured in Victoria. We strongly believe that rather than being based on a property insurance structure it should be based on a property ownership structure. All property owners in Victoria pay rates. We believe it would be an equitable and efficient way of collecting a fire services levy by having it charged against property ownership rather than property insurance. Not everybody takes out property insurance, but all property owners have ownership and are required to pay some rate on that property. We advocate that very strongly.

The last thing I want to mention from the submission The Nationals made is that we stressed the need for the

government to undertake financial modelling of the various models that should have arisen from that review. We openly admitted in the submission that we did not have the resources in our party to undertake that financial modelling but we strongly recommended that the government do that, come back to the community and look at the impact of completely restructuring the fire services levy in a more equitable way. It is pretty disappointing that obviously the government has not done that financial modelling. No financial model evidence has been presented to the house here today or in the lead-up to this bill that suggests that what is about to occur, the changes proposed in this bill, are going to be more equitable in terms of spreading the load of the fire services levy across the entire community.

For those reasons that I have just outlined, I propose to move a reasoned amendment to the bill. Therefore, I move:

That all words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in their place 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the government has fully investigated the Western Australian property-based funding model for fire services, and those findings are subjected to public scrutiny'.

We do not believe the government has addressed the issue of equity within the fire services levy. What is being proposed in the bill will simply place a greater burden on some of the bigger commercial developments in the state and will have little impact, if any, on all other contributors to the fire services levy. We would argue strongly there is no equity in that at all.

Parts 7 and 8 of the bill change the way the fire services levy is collected. In essence it allows a maximum of \$10 000 in deductibles between the value of a commercial building and the value insured. The term 'deductibles' requires some explanation. In the simplest layman's language, deductibles are essentially an agreed position between an insurer and a property owner on the amount of insurance coverage taken out on a particular property. As I understand it, there are many, particularly those in the commercial sector, who strike an agreement with their insurer to vary the excess they will pay on any insurance claim to reduce the premium they have to pay — that is, they are prepared to take some responsibility for risk. It is a perfectly reasonable thing for any holder of property to take some responsibility for risk themselves. This is a legitimate, perfectly reasonable and financially sound thing for many businesses in our communities to do.

Our understanding is that under the proposed changes in the bill a development of \$100 million or so may well now be faced with an extra insurance premium of



\$2 million per year or thereabouts. We believe that will be enough to drive investors elsewhere. If you are copping a bill of an extra \$2 million per year, why would you stay in Victoria? We believe it will become a direct disincentive for businesses to do business in Victoria.

I was amazed at the gall of the Premier in saying last weekend and in the earlier part of this week, 'We as a nation, and we in Victoria, should be lowering business taxes and bringing about greater financial structural reform in this country as the next wave of reform'. Who is this man? Here he is making those claims one day and the very next thing he does is put changes through Parliament that will impose a greater impost on large-scale developments in Victoria. Those two sentiments simply cannot be reconciled. The Premier was being very hypocritical in his comments last weekend and earlier this week, because we see him now increasing a tax that is imposed on businesses in Victoria.

I turn to some of the comments made by both business and the insurance industry regarding this matter. I first turn to an article that appeared in the business section of the *Age* of 12 August headed 'Bracks under fire on levies'. It gave some background about the Victorian fire services levy, which is funded mainly by levies paid by insurance companies, which pass on more than \$200 million per year to their clients. We all see on our insurance bills a fire services levy component and other taxation components that I will mention in a moment. Those imposts are collected by the insurance companies and passed on to either the Country Fire Authority or the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board. The article states:

The legislation, which of the Victorian government argues will make the levy system more equitable, runs counter to a recommendation of the HIH royal commission that states abolish fire service levies.

I thought the HIH royal commission was generally supported by governments in all states and also at the federal level, yet here we have a serious recommendation from that royal commission being ignored by the Bracks government. The article goes on to mention some of Victoria's bigger groups, such as the Australian Industry Group. It also talks about organisations like Coles Myer, Paperlinx, Foster's Group and Orica, and insurance companies such as Aviva and Allianz, which completely oppose this and have expressed concern that it will drive business out of Victoria. I also note that the article contains a comment from The Nationals leader in another place, Peter Ryan, who described the levy as a dud. We certainly agree with that — we think it is a dud.

This change will not bring about equity in the distribution of responsibility for the fire services levy across this state, but it will place a greater burden on some of the bigger commercial developments. I had concern expressed to me by a company in my electorate, Patties Foods Pty Ltd in Bairnsdale, which I mentioned in another sense this week. Patties Foods, a large-scale employer employing over 300 people, is equally concerned that the change in the way the fire services levy is constructed will again impact on the viability of its business. It will cost that company many more thousands of dollars every year. As I said before, it is a further impost on businesses doing business in Victoria.

I have a letter from Peter Jamvold, the group manager, southern division, of the Insurance Council of Australia. He wrote to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place, Tim Holding, on 15 July — —

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — Pro tem!

**Hon. P. R. HALL** — 'Pro tem', says Mr Baxter. The letter says:

Our detailed assessment of the bill is attached. In summary, if implemented the bill would:

significantly increase costs for businesses and other organisations operating in Victoria that carry deductibles of \$10 000 or more in their insurance policies. The 'equity' of this outcome is not immediately apparent, given these organisations currently pay up to 86 per cent tax on risk premium;

distort important risk management processes;

complicate and distort the insurance process and introduce unwelcome costs for insurers and brokers in operating their property portfolios;

increase the incentive for tax avoidance.

That is an important point to finish on. I would have thought we would want to ensure that systems did not encourage tax avoidance, and that people could see sense in them and be willing to comply with them, but not so. It is the view of the Insurance Council of Australia that this will not occur in this instance. The letter also states:

The bill cannot redress fundamental problems of equity, inefficiency and lack of transparency because these are inherent in the FSL scheme. If implemented, the bill would raise questions about sustainability of funding for the fire services arising from the combined efforts of penal FSL rates and the increased incentive for tax avoidance.

...

Our strong recommendation is that the insurance provisions of the Victoria State Emergency Service Bill be withdrawn.

We agree with that, and we ask for that in the reasoned amendment we moved. The letter continues:

In their place we recommend the government reopens on the fire services funding review to undertake the modelling that was not done before and, generally, to consider replacement options that will support business investment in Victoria and not distort the insurance market.

The emergency services funding model we recommend is the Western Australian scheme introduced in 2003.

We support that sentiment wholeheartedly. We supported it early in 2003, when we made a submission to a review of the fire services levy, and we do so again today. The Western Australian scheme has been in place since 1 July 2003.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — Introduced by a Labor government.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** — As Mr Baxter reminds me, it was introduced by a Labor government in Western Australia. There has been a recent evaluation done for the Western Australian government of how that scheme is working. I will quote from the executive summary of the consultancy report undertaken by Sigma Plus Consulting and entitled *Emergency Services Levy Insurance Compliance Review — Final Report*. The executive summary states:

We are pleased to report that insurers have passed on the savings to consumers. The removal of FSL in Western Australia contributed to Western Australia having one of the most price competitive insurance markets in Australia in 2003. On average, buildings and contents insurers actually dropped their premium rates. Consumers have responded to cheaper insurance by increasing their insurance cover to more adequately protect themselves.

That is one paragraph from the executive summary of the report. The Western Australian model is appropriate, is working and is far more equitable in that it captures all property owners, not just those who are insured. We say that is a much better proposal than this half-baked idea put forward by the government in this bill.

I make one comment about a copy of correspondence I have received from Allianz Australia insurance which wrote to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place, the Honourable Tim Holding. They make this comment in an extensive letter that I will not quote other than this part. It states that the bill proposes to:

include a notional premium for deductibles of \$10 000 or more calculated in accordance with the prescribed formula.

The prescribed formula is not yet publicly available. We do not know how the government proposes to calculate the \$10 000 of deductibles and how it will structure the fire services levy in this regard.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — We are going into committee to ask them.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** — Good. I am pleased that Mr Forwood, with his knowledge in these areas, will take the matter to the committee stage, but I do not think the government knows. It certainly has not responded to Allianz insurance or anyone else about that matter. It is a half-botched effort to bring about some changes in the fire services levy that will be completely counterproductive.

The last thing I want to remind the house with respect to the fire services levy we pay in this state is the actual compounding taxation effects of the fire services scheme in Victoria. When you look at your insurance bill you may say that is a reasonable premium, but lo and behold the bottom line is at least 50 per cent greater in the insurance bills I receive because of the fire services levy and the various taxes imposed upon it. I give the house the example of the Country Fire Authority, and the rates for the metropolitan fire brigade are similar. If you take out domestic insurance of \$100 the amount you pay by way of the fire services levy is \$19, which is a total of \$119; but then you pay GST on top of that, which is another \$11.90, which is a total of \$130.90. Then you pay state government stamp duty — a tax on a tax — which really riles people in our community. The stamp duty is \$13.09, which brings the total bill to \$143.99. That is getting close to a 50 per cent premium being paid once you have the fire services levy with a tax on a tax. If you are in a higher risk category and in an industrial or special risk category your premium of \$100 attracts the fire services levy recovery of \$54. By the time you add GST of \$15.40 it totals \$169.40, and then you add the 10 per cent state government stamp duty of \$16.94 which brings the total bill to \$186.34.

The costs are similar within the metropolitan fire brigade district. Starting off with a premium coverage of \$100 you end up paying a tax of \$86.34 on the basic premium. We say that is unacceptable. We believe a more equitable system spread across a greater number of people will have the potential to bring those fire services levy contributions down. They have done that in Western Australia. They have reduced the tax paid on insurance coverage because they have introduced a property ownership-based scheme rather than a property insurance-based scheme. The strong advocacy of The Nationals is that we should be moving to a

property ownership scheme rather than what we believe is a very inequitable tax on insurance to cover the fire services levy.

In conclusion, it is an absolute tragedy that this morning we are not able to give unqualified support to the establishment of a new organisation to administer and represent the State Emergency Service in Victoria. We should have that opportunity and we should be singing the praises of those 5500 volunteers and all those others who support the State Emergency Service in Victoria. It is a fine organisation and one to which we give our unqualified and wholehearted support. It is despicable of this government to taint this celebration by throwing these inequitable changes to the fire services levy into this piece of legislation that the house has been asked to consider. The Nationals have moved a reasoned amendment asking the government to withdraw the bill and put in place a more efficient and equitable method of collecting the fire services levy. We will be strongly advocating that. Our depth of feeling is such with this levy and parts 7 and 8 of this legislation that if the government refuses to accept the reasoned amendment, we will have no other option but to oppose the bill.

**Ms MIKAKOS (Jika Jika)** — It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Victoria State Emergency Service Bill. At the outset I indicate how disappointed I was to hear the comments of the lead speaker for the opposition, the Honourable Richard Dalla-Riva, who during his 20-minute contribution might have touched on the bill for less than 1 minute. We know that Mr Dalla-Riva and the opposition have been highly distracted this week with internal party matters, their preselections and nominations. It has become more and more obvious as the week has progressed that they have been obsessed by their futures, perhaps with the exception of Mr Bowden and Mr Forwood who have sorted out their future careers. Mr Dalla-Riva, as the lead speaker, should have given more thought and consideration to what is an important piece of legislation. While I did not agree with some of the points raised by the Honourable Peter Hall in his contribution, at least he took the time to clearly articulate a point of view and to consider the merits of the bill.

I briefly summarise what the bill does. It has two purposes. The first is to re-enact the Victoria State Emergency Service Act 1987 to establish a statutory authority to manage the Victoria State Emergency Service. The other purpose is to improve the transparency and equity of the insurance-based funding system for the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board and the Country Fire Authority. The bill will implement recommendations of the Department of

Treasury and Finance's 2003 review of the Victorian fire services funding arrangements. I note The Nationals have moved a reasoned amendment. I indicate at the outset that the government will oppose the reasoned amendment and I will articulate the reasons for that shortly.

I begin my contribution by putting on the record the Bracks government's very strong commitment to the State Emergency Service and to providing better support for emergency services volunteers. Members might know that the history of the organisation goes back to 1958 when it was known as the Victoria Civil Defence Organisation. In 1975 it was renamed the State Emergency Service and it has grown into a complex organisation which plays a critical role in countering the effects of natural and man-made emergencies. Throughout Victoria there are 149 municipally based and supported SES units. Each unit is comprised entirely of volunteer members and is managed by a unit controller.

Units are spread across the state and have a close relationship with local municipalities within which they are located. With over 5600 volunteers backed by a team of paid emergency management professionals and supported by the latest equipment and technology, the State Emergency Service provides a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week rescue service to the Victorian community. Without these dedicated volunteers there would be no SES. More than 350 000 hours of community service, including training and operations, are contributed by SES volunteers. In any one year SES volunteers would undertake over 300 searches for missing people such as lost bushwalkers. There are 8000 operational call-outs, more than 5000 storm damage requests for help, over 200 operations in support of police and fire services and more than 1200 road accident rescues every year. I understand that the SES is one of the largest, single agency-accredited providers of road accident rescue services in the world.

Last week I had the pleasure of joining the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place to present the Northcote SES volunteers with their share of around \$1 million worth of special protective clothing and equipment. The Northcote SES covers Darebin and parts of Banyule and Yarra municipalities, and will now be better protected when responding to local emergencies. I note that more than 3000 pairs of overalls, 2900 sets of wet-weather gear and 1264 pairs of boots are being issued around Victoria. This high-quality personal protective clothing and equipment is an essential part of the SES's occupational health and safety program. Providing the Northcote SES volunteers with new overalls, boots and wet-weather

gear will make responding to emergency incidents a safer and more comfortable experience for the volunteers. I also note that in December 2003 and February of this year local volunteers performed a vital community service during the floods which impacted greatly on my local community.

To demonstrate the commitment of the Bracks government to ensuring that volunteers from across the state are appropriately equipped to carry out their vital work, we are also spending \$2.5 million over four years on new, personal protective clothing and equipment for the SES, and a further \$2 million has been allocated for the purchase of eight new general purpose trucks. The state government has also recently announced a further \$3 million Valuing Volunteer Emergency Services Workers program, an initiative that provides local emergency services groups with opportunities to enhance their volunteer networks. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the men and women of the SES who give so much of their time to help to keep our community safe. In particular I wish to thank those volunteers from the Northcote SES.

The bill has two purposes. The first is to establish a statutory authority to manage the SES and to improve the transparency and equity of insurance-based funding systems for the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFESB) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA). In late 2004 a strategic review of the SES was undertaken by Mr Brian Parry and the review concluded that the SES should be established as a statutory authority like the MFESB and the CFA. Members would be aware that at present the SES is merely a business unit of the Department of Justice. I note that the Parry report was not made public as it was a document prepared for cabinet and used for internal government deliberations only. Re-enacting the SES as a statutory authority will enable its long-term sustainability and identity as a separate emergency services organisation.

The bill seeks to establish the VICSES authority which will administer and direct the service in the performance of its functions; it will specify the authority's powers and functions including emergency response, assisting municipal councils with their obligations under the Emergency Management Act 1986 and assisting government and non-government agencies in relation to emergency management. The bill also provides that the authority be subject to the general direction and control of the minister. It provides for a board of authority of up to seven members and — whilst the bill does not stipulate that members should come from outside the metropolitan area — it provides

for an expert board with members to be appointed on the basis of their knowledge of commercial, operational and financial matters, and on an understanding of volunteer issues. It therefore does not preclude members from regional Victoria. As I said, this is an expert board rather than a representative board in line with current government policy for the sector.

The bill also provides for the appointment of a chief executive officer and a director of operations, and in the absence of being under the direction of Victoria Police during an emergency event it endows fully trained SES staff with traffic management powers. The bill also allows the SES to provide support outside Victoria in the instance of a cross-state boundary event or if interstate authorities request emergency assistance in another state. The bill provides immunity to volunteers when acting under the act. These changes were developed in consultation with the SES through a high-level VICSES reference group which was comprised of senior representatives of the SES and Department of Justice staff.

I wish to raise a point in relation to road accident rescue funding which is provided by the Transport Accident Commission. The bill maintains the current funding arrangements for the SES, including road accident rescue. Legislation requiring the TAC to contribute to the cost of road accident rescue services provided by the MFESB, the CFA and the SES was introduced in 1991. In 1998 the fees payable by the TAC were set at their existing level plus a consumer price index adjustment by the then Treasurer. This policy has remained in place since that time. TAC funds for road accident rescue services provided by the SES are paid into the consolidated fund and these arrangements will remain in place.

In relation to the fire services funding issue that was raised by the Honourable Peter Hall, I note that the bill requires insurance companies charging a fire services levy to report such collections to the MFESB and CFA. The bill gives both of those authorities the power to publish the fire services levy information in their annual reports. As an equity measure the bill requires high-level deductibles — that is, excesses — contained in the insurance policies of major corporates to be included in the calculation of insurance company contributions to fire service budgets.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — On a point of order, Acting President, I refer you to the second-reading speech, which says:

The bill will require high-level deductibles (ie excesses) contained in the insurance policies of major corporates to be included in the calculation of insurance company

contributions to fire service budgets (this is an equity measure).

I put it to you that the honourable member has just read that entire paragraph into *Hansard*, and that it is entirely inappropriate for a member to come into this place and to repeat verbatim the words that are contained in a second-reading speech. Honourable members know that people give their own speeches in here and do not read second-reading speeches.

**Ms MIKAKOS** — On the point of order, Acting President, it is absolutely incredible that the Honourable Bill Forwood should make point. I am actually speaking on the bill. I am explaining what the key provisions are, including this issue in relation to deductibles. I think this is just amazing, given that the lead speaker for the opposition spent 20 minutes on the bill. He had been given the courtesy of more time than I have and did not speak about the bill or this issue in any shape — —

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Smith)** — Order! I have heard Ms Mikakos's response. The fact is that the member is entitled to read from copious notes and develop her argument et cetera. She is not entitled to read slavishly from any such notes, and I would caution her against using direct quotes from previous speeches in other places, and in particular second-reading speeches and so on. I ask the member to pay due attention to my ruling.

**Ms MIKAKOS** — I know that this was a bit of a time-wasting device, given that I am actually addressing the bill, unlike Mr Dalla-Riva. In relation to the deductibles issue, it is appropriate that deductibles be factored into a notional premium through a formula prescribed by regulation. It is an equity measure aimed at distributing the funding burden appropriately between contributors.

In respect of the reasoned amendment, at the outset I indicated that the government will be opposing The Nationals' reasoned amendment. The amendment asks for an investigation of a property-based funding model for fire services. I refer The Nationals to the review by the Department of Treasury and Finance in 2003, which clearly examined various models including property-based funding models. In July 2003 the government decided to retain the present system rather than move to an alternative, such as a property-based system, which would not appropriately consider the principle of risk in the calculation of the fire services levy. The bill simply maintains the present system, with additional measures to increase the transparency and equity of the system of contribution of the fire services levy such as reporting requirements.

In conclusion, this is a very important bill. It indicates the Bracks government's strong support for the State Emergency Service (SES), and I ask all members to support it.

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON (Koonung)** —

Ms Mikakos usually makes a valuable contribution to debate in this house because she presents a cogent argument on matters that come before the house. Today, unfortunately, it was simply a public relations exercise where she re-read the second-reading speech and basically took every opportunity to simply run a government line without any consideration of the real issues associated with this debate. In fact, if her dismissiveness of some of the issues that have been raised in the course of this debate is an example of the government's attitude to this issue, then we are in a very serious position.

**Ms Mikakos** interjected.

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON** — There are two key issues that I would raise with Ms Mikakos. The first one is the funding of the State Emergency Service, which is inadequate, and there are issues there. It is interesting to note that there has been no additional budget provision for the re-establishment of the authority. So what is to happen with the funding of SES units if they are expected to draw from the same pool as is drawn from by the new bureaucracy? The other issue that is quite critical is that of the fire services levy. That has not been satisfactorily resolved and has certainly not been adequately addressed by the government with this legislation.

I am also concerned — and I know the SES units are concerned — about whether or not this is a bit of smoke and mirrors and is simply a first step towards some other agenda the government might have for the management of the SES in Victoria. The failure of the government to release the Parry report certainly raises questions as to exactly what was so crucial and of such great confidentiality that it required that the report be held by the government and not released as part of the debate on the future direction of the SES. I believe that report ought to have been made available as part of this debate to support the government's contention that the authority ought to be established.

The opposition does not oppose the establishment of the authority. In fact, as The Nationals have said — and I believe the government is also of this view — the work of the SES units around Victoria is one of the things we can be most proud of in this state. There are few people I admire more than those people who turn out for SES units. The work they do is remarkable. I

have seen them involved in trauma — from road accidents, home accidents, storm damage and so forth — where they have turned out in the early hours of the morning or at virtually any time of the day, despite the fact they also have homes to maintain, families, work commitments and so forth. They volunteer above and beyond that for the community. The work they do is remarkable, and the trauma they sometimes have to face in dealing these things challenges their sensibilities. I can imagine nothing worse than turning up at some of the road accidents these people turn out to.

As was referred to by the Honourable Peter Hall in his contribution to this debate, one thing that amazes me — and, frankly, concerns me — is the fact that these people who give so much and spend so much of their time in service to the community, and who very often dip into their pockets for their own training and skills development in order to provide that service, have to dip into their pockets again to raise funds for the equipment that they need to carry out their work. Not so long ago I was at the Knox SES, a unit which had spent a considerable amount of time and effort raising funds to buy a truck so that it could simply get out to these accidents and incidents at which it performs its invaluable service to the community. It is crazy that we expect these people to give, give and give again — until they bleed. The fact is that the SES ought to receive a better deal.

It was interesting to note the position put by Ms Mikakos and her dismissiveness about the funding available from the Transport Accident Commission for road accident rescue simply going into consolidated revenue. There was no preparedness to look at whether or not some of this funding might well be applied to upgrade the equipment — such as trucks and so forth — that is available to SES units to assist them in the work they do in the community. There was just, ‘No, we are not interested in that’. There was also a dismissiveness about the fire services levy. While the Honourable Bill Forwood will go into that in some detail, and I do not intend to dwell on it, it is interesting that it has been bundled in with this legislation for the establishment of the SES authority, and it just seems to me to be a bandaid treatment.

Again there is no real and genuine attempt to look at the fire services levy and at what ought to happen in funding fire services in an appropriate and comprehensive way. But perhaps there has been. Perhaps it has been included in the Parry report. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that the report has not been released publicly — that is, that sort of information might well be an embarrassment to the

government and might well not suit the direction it is taking with this fire services levy. If members of this house were to consult their local government authorities they would find those councils are not at all happy about the way the levy is collected.

I share Mr Hall’s concern about people who do not insure at all yet use our fire services. Of course we want to maintain a fire service for all, but in the funding of those services the issue of equity needs to be addressed in the best interests of the community and of maintaining an effective fire service. As I said previously, whilst this authority is to be established I know of no additional provision by the government beyond the \$28 million it has already made available to the State Emergency Service (SES) to cover the establishment of the new authority. Are we to expect that the costs of running the new authority will be deducted from that \$28 million, and will they be higher than the existing arrangements that are charged against the departmental infrastructure that is provided to the SES? The government needs to clarify that.

It is worthwhile for us as a community, and certainly the government on behalf of the community, considering whether the funding for SES units is adequate. We should consider whether our expectations of those who serve in SES units is beyond the pale and whether it is simply too great a task for people to try to live normal work and family lives and not only fulfil the community service obligations of the SES but also be involved in fundraising and so forth as well.

I am interested in whether the failure to put the Parry report out for public debate is a precursor to government intentions on the Country Fire Authority (CFA) as well — and whether there are further changes proposed there. There is obviously an ongoing debate about the roles and relationship of the CFA and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB). I wonder to what extent the Parry organisation might have drawn parallels between the SES and other organisations, including the CFA, and whether that is the reason the report has not been released. The government might have served the community better by releasing that report.

Notwithstanding what I have said in the course of this debate, I am encouraged by the establishment of the authority in the sense that I believe it will provide significant recognition of the men and women who are involved in SES units throughout the state. It will recognise the work they do. Hopefully it will also lead to a better understanding of that work at the local level, ensure further improvements in the SES and provide a service that is responsive to not only the needs of the

community but to the volunteers who staff the service. To that end I support the call by the member for South-West Coast in another place, Denis Napthine, who has argued that in appointing the board the government ought to appoint at least one member representing country SES units. It is imperative that the knowledge and experience of people involved in country units should be available to that board. Whilst I accept there is a need on all boards for a range of expertise — and we are increasingly moving away from representative boards — I support that as a general thrust. In this instance it will obviously be possible to obtain somebody who will bring both the expertise and skills in areas that might be sought by the board as well as the perspective of country SES units. I trust that the government will not ignore the needs of those units and will seek to appoint someone of that standing. I commend the SES authority as an initiative, and I look forward to the advancement of the SES in the years to come.

**Hon. B. W. BISHOP** (North Western) — I rise to make a few brief remarks on the Victoria State Emergency Service Bill. The bill is in two parts, one of which deals with the establishment of the Victoria State Emergency Services Authority. We in The Nationals support that strongly, and I will speak a little more about that. The other part of the bill that we have great interest in sets out proposed changes to the fire services levy, with which we have some difficulty.

I will start by talking about what I will call the SES — the State Emergency Service. Those of us in country Victoria really take our hats off to the SES. It operates right through our electorates. I noticed before I came in today that my wife and I have been invited to the north-west region awards presentation on 3 September at Swan Hill. We will have much delight in attending that.

It is a great showcase for the SES, and I think the SES is like a big family. The volunteers from different parts of the region get on very well together. They certainly provide a service in country Victoria that is absolutely essential to the community. SES has a big task and I suppose I have been fortunate enough, or perhaps I should say unfortunate enough, to see it at some of those tasks, whatever they might be. As my electorate runs along the river I have seen the SES involved in water rescues and also, unfortunately, in road accidents. I think the professionalism and training the volunteers go through and the equipment they gather together and look after so very well is a real credit to them. Our communities really respect and rely on them to a great extent. It is not easy work in the SES. It might involve fighting flood waters, and anyone who has done that

knows it is quite a difficult job. One of the areas that we see it operating in is when there are high winds and roofs become damaged or part of the roof blows off. You will see the SES up there putting the tarps on roofs — not an easy job.

**Hon. P. R. Hall** — As it did last weekend.

**Hon. B. W. BISHOP** — That is right, Mr Hall, that happened last weekend. The volunteers are up there on roofs protecting the valuables of people whose properties have been damaged. They do a great job.

SES also gets involved in searching for people who are lost. They do all that, willingly and very well, and, of course, as volunteers. What would we do in this state without our volunteers. There are thousands and thousands of people who put their shoulder to the wheel for community work. It is selfless work and they do not expect anything back except to do the job, and this we greatly appreciate. This first part of the bill which sets up the Victoria State Emergency Service is welcomed by The Nationals because it deserves security and support. It is important that that be documented in the legislation. I for one — and I know my colleagues feel the same — have often had some concern about the funding processes of the SES. It is important that those issues are looked at so that we can have some security and certainty about the SES operations into the future. Those operations have become an integral and valued part of our communities and the SES deserves some certainty and security in its funding into the future.

The two arms of the emergency services that communities most often deal with, apart from ambulances, are the SES and the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Quite often their responses are to what I call the short, sharp job. They might have to go out to a car accident and do their work there or they might have to tarp the roof of a house, as I said before; or with the CFA it might have to put out a house fire or crop fire. One night in Mildura I was walking along the street and came across a Volkswagen on fire. The fire brigade turned up in a very short time and quite professionally dealt with the fire. At its annual dinner later that year I applied for my turn-out documents which I thought I was entitled to because I was able to assist on that particular evening!

Most of those responses are short, sharp responses, but some of them are not. One sees the SES volunteers being called out to fight floods, and they are often there for a long time — hours and hours or perhaps even days or weeks. It is the same with the CFA. In the big fires in the parks a couple of years ago CFA volunteers were called out for an extended term. That is probably

unusual but in those circumstances they were called out for some time. If those volunteers are self-employed they need a good business to support this activity because they put in a lot of time, not only after hours but during working hours as well. If they do not have their own business they need to have a jolly good employer who understands the requirements of a volunteer and that they may be called out at any time. Obviously there is a great deal of understanding, both from other people running their own businesses and also from people who are employees, too. That is a great position for our communities to be in. As volunteers are sometimes called out for a long time I wonder whether the bill should include some support which these people no doubt richly deserve. I am sure they would resist that because they do the job for the love of it and for what they can put back into their community, but perhaps that is something that could be looked at.

I move to the fire services levy, I do not know where I saw it, but someone said it was a dog-of-a-levy and I suspect it is, too. The fire services levy is a vexed thing. It has been around for a fair while and there may have been a number of attempts to make it more equitable and fair, but at this point in time it is not equitable or fair. In a house fire, for example, if the house is not insured the fire unit turns up and does its job in putting out the fire as it would in any circumstance at all. If there is a crop, whatever it might be, that is not insured and it catches on fire, the fire brigade is called out and it will do its very best to put the crop fire out. Obviously those people do not pay the levy, are not supporting the brigades or anyone else in that particular area. The brigades can charge the property where the fire might be in those instances and I think they should if there is no insurance. The brigades are putting their time into the effort, the volunteers are at risk and whilst they are away from the station the rest of the community is at risk as well.

So they should charge. I have been advised that that charging process is sometimes quite difficult to achieve, as we would all imagine. It goes right through the whole mix of insurance. If, for example, people choose to underinsure, they therefore do not carry their part of the load in the process. I am told by the experts in the field that people can insure through a discretionary mutual trust, which reduces the fire levy legally. They are issues that should all be examined so that we have an even spread of load across that whole insurance sector and across the emergency services sector, particularly in the fire brigade area.

From my understanding of the legislation the government has gone only part of the way in fixing this

up. It focuses only on those who choose to share the risk by running a higher excess in their insurance programs. I would suggest to the house that the government has missed a great opportunity to have a decent look at the fire services levy and examine what applies in other states; where there are some good models.

I fully support the reasoned amendment moved by my leader, the Honourable Peter Hall, in his contribution earlier today. We should have a good look at what happens in other states, particularly in Western Australia, where that program seems to work well. I suspect it is much fairer than what we will end up with today.

This is a great chance for the government to grasp the opportunity and have a red hot go at this. The government should agree with the reasoned amendment. The research indicates that we could put more equity and commonsense into this system than we have at the moment with the fire levies. I therefore urge the house to support the reasoned amendment moved by The Nationals in this debate.

**Hon. J. H. EREN** (Geelong) — I support the Victoria State Emergency Service Bill. Being a member of the parliamentary Road Safety Committee, I have great sympathy and understanding for the work of the State Emergency Service (SES). The fact that it has 101 units accredited for road accident rescue makes it the largest provider of road accident rescue services in Australia, and one of the largest anywhere in the world, and I am quite proud of that fact.

We hear a lot from the opposition about how the SES is not adequately funded. That fact alone indicates that this state government has funded the SES adequately. The SES attends some 1200 road accidents every year. Like all members of the emergency services such as ambulance workers, firefighters and members of the Victorian police force, the SES deals with misfortune every day, and it does so with the utmost professionalism. These people are heroes, and they deserve our total support.

I will outline the purposes of the bill. The first purpose is to re-enact the Victoria State Emergency Service Act 1987 and establish a statutory authority to manage the Victoria State Emergency Service. The second purpose is to improve the transparency and equity of the insurance-based funding system for the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board and the Country Fire Authority.

The bill will implement recommendations of the Department of Treasury and Finance's 2003 review of



Victorian fire services funding arrangements. Each year we look to the SES to save Victorians. The SES is a key provider of emergency service assistance in Victoria. Our emergency service provider network in Victoria is widely recognised as highly effective in its delivery of services and planning for emergencies.

From my electorate's point of view in the Geelong-Otway region, we look to the SES each year, whether it is providing operational support for fire services during seasonal bushfire campaigns or search and rescue activities for police, and critically important support to local councils with their emergency prevention and management planning.

In the urban areas of Geelong the SES has been particularly helpful during some of the great downpours we have had in recent years and as recently as a few months ago, which saw Geelong flooded and homes being damaged. Gladly, I have never needed to call the SES, but it is reassuring to know that if anything like that does occur the SES would be there to assist. I know of people who have needed its assistance relating to problems such as having their roofs blown off in high winds, and they tell me that the SES has been very good at doing its job in assisting them. SES members are lifesavers, as I am sure everybody would agree, but I do not think they get the same recognition as their police and firefighter colleagues. They are equally brave men and women, and deserve to be seen as an important part of our emergency services.

In researching this topic I was surprised to see how big the SES is, considering it is mainly a volunteer-based organisation. As of 31 December 2003 there were 3250 active SES volunteers in Victoria, with 3806 on 31 December 2004. That is 556 extra active volunteers in one year, which is a significant increase. This does show that many Victorians are willing to help out their communities, putting their safety at risk at times, to ensure that the rest of the community is safe. The SES has been providing a valuable service to Victoria for many years, since the 1970s, but in recent years that organisation has been hampered by challenges such as a management structure that urgently needs reform to respond to increased demand, regulatory requirements, changed community expectations, and population growth in key urban corridors. The structure also needs a sustainable budget framework that assesses and enhances the performance of the organisation.

The Bracks Labor government is committed to resourcing the SES to address these issues through the bill. It is important that it become its own statutory body. Being a business unit of the Department of Justice belittles the importance of the organisation as a

vital link in the provision of emergency services in this state. If these brave men and women are willing to put their lives on the line helping ordinary Victorians in the worst of conditions, this government is willing to support them to the best of its ability. Therefore I am very happy to support the bill before the house today.

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** (Western) — I would also like to comment on the bill. As has been previously mentioned, the bill deals with mainly two issues. The first part establishes the Victoria State Emergency Service Authority, which everybody supports, and the second part amends provisions in the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958 and the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 relating to the calculation and reporting of statutory contributions by insurance companies to the metropolitan and country fire authorities. That second part is of some concern.

The bill recognises that the Victoria State Emergency Service is a key provider of emergency services assistance within the Victorian services management framework. It creates structural compatibility and provides a parity across all three emergency response services. The government states that creating an authority will assist in making existing and future challenges facing the SES more compatible with the other two emergency services or with the Country Fire Authority.

While I acknowledge that reporting and governance, planning and corporate efficiency will be improved, at the end of the day it boils down to dollars. For example, I know that the SES volunteers in Warrnambool, led by Gerry Billings, have been attempting for many years to build headquarters that are safe. They are presently accommodated in a home where the electrical wiring is so bad that whenever there is a storm they have to switch the power supply off. There are asbestos concerns, the roof leaks and so on. I am pleased to see that the Victorian SES will be recognised as a statutory body. However, unless funding follows, the challenges will remain.

Our SES volunteers, like those in the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and lifesaving clubs, get called out at all hours of the day and night and often risk their own lives. I think it would be nice if some insurance companies put some money into the SES. Some may do. Recently an experience was reported to my office. It was a very stormy night with a lot of wind around and some roof tiles and a lot of the capping blew off a house. It happened to be the long weekend in June — as usual, it happened on a Friday night before a long weekend. The people involved rang their insurance company to report that half the roof was missing and

asked what the company could do. The insurance company told them to ring the SES. I find that amazing. Their ads on television suggest they will always be out there with AAMI smiling away at you. You think they are going to be there instantly, but the roof blew off this house and the insurance company said it would not be there until Tuesday. It said, 'It is a long weekend. Ring your local SES — it is their job to put a tarp on the roof.'. In country Victoria especially, and I have no doubt a similar situation applies in the metropolitan area, the SES volunteers are all farmers or young people who have their own things to do. This person, as most people would do, got a few of his friends together and they put a tarp up on the roof themselves — they did not go to the SES because they did not think that was fair. That made me hope that the insurance companies make large donations to some of our volunteer organisations, like the SES, CFA and lifesavers, because no doubt they save the companies a lot of money.

The provisions in parts 6 and 7 of the bill relating to the fire services levy are of concern. It is claimed these provisions will improve transparency in the way insurers collect and report the fire services levy and provide greater equity in the basis on which it is levied. The amendments to the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958 and the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 will require insurance companies to report the total amounts they itemise on premiums as representing the fire services levy and include in the amount of gross premium income they report a notional amount of premium on account of deductibles of \$10 000 or more, calculated in accordance with a formula to be prescribed by regulation. The levy will then be payable by the insurer on the notional premium as well as the actual premium.

These changes are said to result from the Department of Treasury and Finance's 2003 review of Victorian fire services funding arrangements. This recommended that the current insurance-based fire services funding model should remain, as opposed to a property rates-based system, but with improvements to ensure a more equitable funding base. As Mr Hall mentioned earlier, the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority will not be treated as a contributor to the fire services levy with regard to government property. That worries me. We know that the state government owns billions of dollars worth of infrastructure across the state — schools, hospitals and all sorts of other buildings and infrastructure — but it does not contribute to the fire services levy at all.

Of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade's funding, 75 per cent comes from insurance levies, 12.5 per cent comes from

the state and the other 12.5 per cent comes from local government. I do not believe the state government actually contributes anything to the fire services levy because, as was pointed out before, by the time it collects stamp duty on insurance premiums it would be in front. I would say the government is putting nothing into the Metropolitan Fire Brigade levy at all. The same happens in country Victoria.

I would like to refer to an article from the *Weekly Times* of 28 April 2004. It states:

The police and emergency services minister André Haermeyer said that, since coming to office, the Bracks government had increased the CFA's budget by more than \$185 million.

That sounds fantastic until you read the fine print. The article states:

The CFA will have about 190 of its ageing tankers replaced at a cost of \$39 million.

The Victorian government announced the extra funding this week, saying the additional new trucks would join the CFA fleet over the next four years.

But a government spokesman admitted that the community would contribute 'the normal funding mix' to the cost of the new trucks.

This means country Victorians will pay 77.5 per cent of the \$39 million via fire service levies on their property insurance.

This equates to \$33 million — \$30 million in levies and a further \$3 million in stamp duty.

The government will contribute just under \$6 million.

The Victorian Farmers Federation's economic committee chairman, Geoff Crick, is quoted in this article as stating:

This decision further highlights the inequity of the fire services levy on country people who fund the CFA, voluntarily man the trucks, but have no say in the costs ...

What the minister failed to mention when he said the government had put \$185 million extra into the CFA budget is that probably \$150 million of that came straight from farmers, businesses and country householders. The government puts in about 20 per cent but takes all the credit when it is handing over another fire truck.

As I said at the outset, we support the SES being made a statutory body. It is a fantastic organisation. I just hope there is a funding trail to follow. Making something a statutory authority sounds great but unless there is funding with it, it is actually fairly meaningless.

However, I am very concerned about the fire services

levy. The insurance industry argues that imposing the fire services levy on a notional premium for deductibles over \$10 000 is unfair and close to unworkable. It argues there is no evidence that deductibles have been used to avoid the levy. Rather, they are a standard practice for effective risk sharing between insurers and clients. We do this all the time with our car insurance. There is often an excess of \$500 or \$1000 depending on how much you want to pay for your insurance. It is not a bad policy for both people to share the risk — the person who drives the car and the insurance company. We also know that younger people usually have higher excesses than older drivers like me — I am a safe driver — so that is all taken into account. People who want to insure their properties should be able to say they want to take some of the risk themselves and not be forced by the government to pay an extra levy on top of what they would normally pay simply because they are going to share part of the risk.

**Hon. W. R. BAXTER** (North Eastern) — I am pleased to contribute to the debate on this bill. However, I must say that it is really another Trojan Horse bill — the same as we saw last evening with the Environment and Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill where a whole range of issues that had nothing to do with each other were brought in and some were highly desirable and others less so, which made it very difficult for the Parliament to make a considered decision.

We have a similar circumstance here this morning with this bill entitled the Victoria State Emergency Service Bill. The average person in the community, an insurance company or whomever would be entitled at face value to believe that the State Emergency Service (SES) is all this bill deals with and not take it any further — a bit like the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place, Mr Holding, when he was reading his brief. He did not read through it but if he had, he would have found out a few things he should have known about. This bill is a bit the same. If you only take it at face value and are involved in the insurance industry, you will be caught out.

The Nationals, as Mr Hall has pointed out so well, fully support the State Emergency Service. Most of us have had occasion to work very closely indeed with those extraordinary volunteers who give up their time to attend all sorts of incidents — some minor and trivial which they should scarcely be called to, but others which are of great gravity, tragedy and trauma. I absolutely admire those people who are prepared to put their names on a list of volunteers and do endless training in readiness to be called out to go and extricate a dead body or a seriously injured person from a motor

vehicle against a big gum tree in the middle of the night when it is raining. I would not do it. They do and the whole community owes them a debt of gratitude.

Whenever I can I support the SES in its fundraising endeavours. I regularly attend the barbecues they have in my electorate at the various hotels which make the premises available in association with the TAB as a major fundraiser on Saturday mornings. They are not only fundraisers; they are actually good public relations and educative exercises. They point out to their local communities exactly what the SES does and at the same time perhaps encourage young people to consider they might join the list of volunteers. I am pleased to do that and I will continue to do so.

I also support whenever I can the driver reviver operations run by the SES at holiday periods, particularly on the Hume Freeway but on other major state highways as well. I often marvel that these people, who have everyday jobs in our towns and on our farms, are prepared to give up their holidays while other families are tripping off to the snow or elsewhere. They provide the incentive for people to stop and have a break. It is impossible to calculate how many lives that might have saved, but it is probably running into the hundreds if not thousands. There is plenty of scientific evidence to show that a break after a couple of hours driving works wonders in terms of arresting fatigue and refreshing people. I praise the SES for that work.

A bit of a detrimental development in our community, which perhaps applies more in the suburbs than it does in country Victoria, is what seems to be a growing expectation in the community that in any event, particularly a storm or flood, the SES volunteers are there are to do a clean-up, that it is somehow a right that householders can expect the SES to clear a tree that has blown over or do something like that. Frankly that is not what they are there for. In terms of the elderly and incapacitated, that may well be so, but the SES has to have the capacity to say no to financially well-off and fit and able households, or it should be on a fee-for-service basis. Otherwise some sort of expectation will develop in our community that these volunteers are there to do work that ought to be done either by the household themselves or by the householder engaging a commercial enterprise to execute that particular task.

The government is right in moving to establish a statutory authority of the State Emergency Service. Some see it as akin to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFESB). There will presumably be some sort of overhead paraphernalia that is going to

incur an additional cost, but bearing in mind the value the service provides to the community, no doubt that can be justified. I wish the new organisation well. I hope it is able to draw in all the members of the SES into a harmonious organisation. I am aware in my electorate there are a couple of groups that do extremely good work but are not formally members of the SES. I hope they feel they are able to join this new SES statutory authority, but if they are not for whatever reason, I do not want this new organisation to have some sort of compelling powers to force them to join. I certainly do not want the new organisation to use some sort of big stick simply because they are not part of that organisation. With the effluxion of time the two groups in my electorate whose members are not formal members of the SES will come in, but I do not want it to be as a matter of compulsion.

I want to speak about the objectionable parts of the bill and that is the changes to the fire services levy. It is extraordinary, although it is becoming typical of this government despite professing so often in this house and elsewhere that it is open, accountable and transparent, it has rolled this legislation into the Parliament and imposed an increase in the fire services levy without consulting the insurance industry. I was absolutely staggered when the Insurance Council of Australia told me it knew nothing about this until the legislation was introduced in the house. That is an absolute disgrace because it is through the fire services levy that ministers like Mr Haermeyer, the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services, as Mr Vogels has set out to the house, are able to claim the government is putting huge amounts of money into fire services. They are, but it is not their money. It is the policyholders' money coming via the premiums charged by insurance companies. It is quite outrageous that the government claims credit.

The government is attempting to charge the fire services levy (FSL) on the deductibles, the excess. This is charging a tax on something you do not get. You are not insuring for this amount, so in the event of an incident you pay anyway. It is akin to what we heard yesterday and the day before in Mr Hall's questions to the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources when he was educating the minister about line losses. You are paying for something you do not get. It is like some of my irrigators who in the last few years have had to pay for water they have not received.

It is typical of what this government does. It might have a counterproductive effect. It might lead to underinsuring. If people are now going to be charged the FSL on what they previously had as an excess upfront, they might now dispense with the excess but

they will have it at the other end. They will not insure to full value, so we will not be collecting the FSL on that end. We might end up with no net change in reality, but we will have encouraged people to underinsure. That is surely not what this government should be doing.

As much as I oppose this provision in the bill to exclude deductibles from the calculation of FSL, I am really opposed to the whole scheme. It has run its course. It has had its day. It is a dud, as Mr Hall described it, because it is inequitable. People who do not insure make no contribution at all. Is that fair? Definitely not. People who underinsure do not pay their full contribution, their share. Again, that is not fair. It does not impose any sort of incentive on the fire services to keep their costs down, because basically it is a cost-plus system, and cost-plus systems are notoriously inefficient because they add up what it cost to run the outfit last year, work out what they need and send a bill off to the insurance companies. There is no pressure at all to keep costs down — it just goes on.

There is a milking cow there, which is not fair. That is why it is so galling to all those prudent people who insure when they pick up their mail, open up the premium notice from the insurance company and note that the premium itself looks fair and reasonable, but then you have the add-ons starting with the fire services levy, which is significant depending on what your risk profile is; then you have the GST, which is acceptable; but then you have this very inequitable and obnoxious stamp duty on the total. You have a tax on a tax.

It is the government double dipping because the government gets the GST receipts courtesy of the federal Treasurer. It picks up the cheque out of the mailbox every month, and on top of that it charges stamp duty on the amount as well. That is extremely unjust and very unfair to people who prudently insure, and it is one of the reasons some people are dropping out, particularly those who are financially stressed. They are deciding they cannot afford insurance. That is a very unwise decision for them to make and they ought to be adjusting their expenditure priorities to ensure they can continue to insure the family home, but the reality is that in my electorate quite a few homes that have been destroyed by fire have not been insured on the basis that they could not afford it. One of the reasons they cannot afford it is because of these additional taxes that have been heaped upon it.

Yes, The Nationals promoted and supported a property-based scheme at the last election, and we made a submission to the Department of Treasury and Finance review on this issue. We believe that is the way to go and we will continue to promote that sort of a

scheme. I have had a look at the Department of Treasury and Finance review document and would have to say that the government — either unthinkingly or cleverly, I am not sure which — asking DTF to carry out this review was a bit like putting the fox in the henhouse, because Treasury does not like any scheme which might reduce its catch and its take.

I have the report with me. While I generally respect people in the department for their efficacy and their skills, this report is written on the basis that they did not want to change from the existing scheme. It is clear that the people who prepared this report did so, and maybe the terms of reference encouraged them to do so, from the point of view that they wanted the status quo to remain. They have not adequately examined the submissions made by many of the proponents of a property-based scheme, including The Nationals. They have not looked sufficiently well at the Western Australian scheme which, as Mr Hall pointed out, has been looked at by a consultant and appears to have delivered. They did not look well enough at the New South Wales and Queensland schemes. It beggars belief that of the four states that have a property-based scheme, Victoria can go on with the existing fire services levy and have done by its Department of Treasury and Finance a report which is so inadequate that it does not properly assess why the schemes in the other states are so successful and so widely accepted.

I support the reasoned amendment moved by Mr Hall. The house should not pass this legislation until a better examination has been made of an alternative means of funding our fire services.

**Sitting suspended 1.01 p.m. until 2:07 p.m.**

**Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Gas: regional supply

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** (Gippsland) — I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources. I refer to the *Energy for the Future — Labor's Plan for Energy and Minerals*, which was posted on the Labor web site on 22 November 2002. The policy states:

Specifically over the next four years, the Bracks government will:

Provide \$70 million over the next four years to expand the reticulation of natural gas to regional and rural Victoria.

Further, I refer to the ministers' joint press release of 5 August, which states:

This announcement takes to 34 the number of towns connected under the Bracks government's \$70 million natural gas extension program.

Is it not a fact that not one new town has yet been connected, despite claims to the contrary?

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I do not know how to answer this question, except to say, 'Come in, Spinner', because I love questions about our gas connection program. It is a fantastic program. I am always happy to be provided by the Leader of the Opposition with the opportunity to speak about the gas extension program. I note that the energy spokesperson did not ask the question, because he would not be so stupid as to ask a question which would give me the opportunity to explain to the house yet again how important this particular infrastructure program is in regional Victoria. The problem with the opposition's point of view is that it literally hates this program. We know why it hates it, because it knows regional Victoria loves it. The problem is that if regional Victoria loves it, the next step will be that regional Victoria will say, 'Who is delivering the program?'. The answer is the Bracks government. That is why the opposition hates it and keeps trying to find ways of denigrating the program.

Yesterday in the house I talked about Bairnsdale and gas extension programs in at least two towns where pressure testing occurred and where meters have been installed. The problem is that the opposition wants to denigrate a program even during the time when construction is taking place. These are major construction programs. To give an example, when we announced the South Gippsland project — gas going to five new towns in South Gippsland in a \$50 million infrastructure program — we were criticised for the time lines. However, getting gas down there is not just a matter of reticulating in those regions. You have to find a way to get additional gas into that region, which means putting BassGas on stream. There is a whole range of huge infrastructure projects which together mean five towns in that region will get gas within the time frame we have identified. You can come out and say, 'We do not like the fact that it will take so long', but in truth it is a fantastic program.

**Hon. Philip Davis** — You said 34 towns had been connected.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** — I know the member wants to put words into my mouth, but the fact is I did report to the house that in relation to two towns

progress had taken place and that meters had been installed at Patties Pies as part of developing the infrastructure program. Work is continuing, and the program will be delivered to regional Victoria.

*Supplementary question*

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** (Gippsland) — With 994 days having elapsed since the policy was published and with 466 days remaining to honour the promise, which of the 34 towns that have been recently promised gas connections will in fact be connected in the remaining 466 days?

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — The Leader of the Opposition — —

**Hon. Philip Davis** — Are you leading the way!

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** — You love leading with your chin. The answer to the member's question is that all 34 towns will be delivered to the people of Victoria.

**Housing: government initiatives**

**Mr SCHEFFER** (Monash) — My question is directed to the Minister for Housing. I refer the minister to the government's commitment to making Melbourne's suburbs a great place to live and raise a family. I ask the minister to inform the house how the Bracks government is improving the service being provided to people in housing need by boosting the quality and quantity of public housing stock in Melbourne's suburbs?

**Ms BROAD** (Minister for Housing) — I thank the member for his question and his support for the government's actions to make Melbourne's suburbs a great place to live and raise a family. The Bracks government believes that every Victorian deserves a decent place to live. That is why we have invested more than \$1 billion since coming to office to provide better housing services to those Victorians in housing need. These funds have been critical in turning around the maintenance black hole we inherited from the previous Liberal-National government when we came to government. These homes and this investment have also been critical in supporting homeless people to get their lives back on track and in putting a roof over the heads of families in need.

We know that there is more to do and that is why it is my pleasure to advise the house of further details of this year's housing budget. Today I announced a further \$213 million investment — money set aside in this

year's housing budget — which will deliver more homes on the ground and improvements to others. This investment includes \$148 million for capital upgrade projects to make tenants' homes safer and more comfortable because we think that is important, and \$64 million for acquisition of housing stock through new construction and purchase. These funds will deliver 300 homes in Melbourne suburbs for families and single Victorians. In addition a total of 1328 homes in Melbourne suburbs will be upgraded to make existing homes safer and more comfortable for families and single Victorians in public housing.

We know that low-income families are struggling to get a home of their own in the current housing market, especially where there has been strong housing price growth, so delivering more affordable rental housing is one way to tackle the difficult issue of housing affordability in Melbourne suburbs. These new homes are being delivered through a mix of new construction projects as well as targeted acquisition of existing properties. This means that not only are we expanding the supply of affordable housing, but we are also contributing jobs in the construction sector. The Bracks government is growing and improving public housing in Melbourne suburbs after years of neglect by the previous government and with only limited assistance, I am sorry to say, from the commonwealth government.

Importantly today's announcement is in addition to the other very substantial construction works which will occur this year as part of previously announced initiatives, including Building More Homes Together, the Melbourne 2030 Housing Boost and the Housing for Regional Victoria initiative, all of which are being funded by the Bracks government because of its commitment to improving housing affordability for Victorian families. We are acting to improve the services being provided to families in housing need because again we believe all Victorians deserve a decent place to live, and we want to make Melbourne suburbs a great place to live and raise a family.

**Planning: ministerial role**

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** (Western) — I direct my question without notice to Ms Broad, the Minister for Local Government. I refer to one of the most important issues that local government has to deal with — that is, planning — and I ask: does the minister support the fact that the Minister for Planning in the other place, Rob Hulls, is also the same minister who, as the state's Attorney-General, makes the planning laws, including the appointment of Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal judges who sit in judgment of his planning guidelines?

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I have a concern with the question asked by the honourable member of the Minister for Local Government. The member asked the minister to comment on another minister's portfolio and say whether certain action is appropriate for the Attorney-General and Minister for Planning. I will give the member the opportunity to rephrase the question. It has to be related to the minister's portfolio responsibility — the question Mr Vogels asked did not do that — otherwise I will have to rule it out of order.

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** — As one of the most important issues that local government carries out is planning, I ask the minister: does she support local government having planning authorities across Victoria?

**Ms BROAD** (Minister for Local Government) — The partnership between the Bracks government and local government across Victoria in terms of planning matters is one that we take very seriously and one that I know my colleague the Minister for Planning in the other place also takes very seriously. I have every confidence in the planning minister's approach to working in partnership with councils across Victoria on planning matters.

*Supplementary question*

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** (Western) — It is obvious that the minister and the Labor Party do not see a conflict in having the planning minister, who is also the Attorney-General, appointing the judges to make decisions on everything. It is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank!

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** — Since the Attorney-General was appointed Minister for Planning, how many planning permits have been called in that have not gone to local councils for endorsement?

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The supplementary question is about planning matters issues being called in by the Minister for Planning, not the Minister for Local Government. The question is not within the realm of the Minister for Local Government to answer. It is outside her portfolio. The honourable member needs to rephrase the question to make it relevant to the Minister for Local Government's responsibility. The Minister for Planning, as I understand it, has the authority to call in planning matters, not the Minister for Local Government. The supplementary question has to refer to the minister's answer.

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** — Does the minister's department keep statistics on how many planning permits are being called in by the Minister for Planning, who is also the Attorney-General?

**Ms BROAD** (Minister for Local Government) — On the substantive issue that the member has been trying to get around to in his various attempts at questions, I indicate that there are a number of ministers in the Bracks government who hold more than one portfolio, including myself, and we have no difficulty in ensuring that we meet our responsibilities appropriately in our separate portfolios, as I do in my roles as Minister for Housing and Minister for Local Government. This was not the case under the previous coalition government either. This is not something which should be taken seriously. In relation to the number of permits question that the member is seeking an answer to, I will take that matter on notice.

**Energy Safe Victoria: launch**

**Mr SOMYUREK** (Eumemmerring) — My question is directed to the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources, the Honourable Theo Theophanous. Can the minister advise the house on recent initiatives the Bracks government has undertaken to improve energy safety in Victorian homes and businesses.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I thank the member for his question; I know he has a significant interest in safety in homes and in the workplace. I am pleased to report to the house that last week I officially launched Victoria's new energy safety watchdog, Energy Safe Victoria. I was pleased to be able to launch it with the assistance of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade's premises and support. One of the things about energy safety in the home and the workplace is that a large number of cases — not all — have fires also associated with them, so it was appropriate to have the fire brigade involved in the launch.

The new entity will deal with issues as diverse as safety switches in the home and the integrity of gas pipelines. It means that Energy Safe Victoria will be even better placed to drive and promote energy safety in premises ranging from homes to the largest workplaces in Victoria. The establishment of Energy Safe Victoria is a further great example of this government's caring for a safe workplace and a safe place to live. The establishment of the body follows on from a review into the efficiency of Victoria's main energy safety regulators that the Victorian government announced in May 2004. I am very proud to have been able to bring

this initiative to fruition. It has been done through streamlining processes and cutting through red tape in order to bring even greater levels of safety than we have had in the past in these important areas.

It is easy to become complacent in relation to energy safety because it is a part of our everyday lives, but that is why it is so important to have a body such as Energy Safe Victoria. The new body has a number of roles. They include the safety of electricity and gas supplies, including generation, transmission and distribution; the education of the public through electricity and gas safety awareness programs; the safety of electrical and gas installations in industrial, commercial and domestic premises; the assessment, acceptance and compliance auditing of the safety cases of each gas company; the administration of gas safety standards; the safety of energy workers through registration and licensing; the safety of energy equipment and appliances by ensuring they meet the minimum required safety standards before sale; the administration of programs to ensure the energy efficiency of appliances; and the investigation and analysis of incidents and accidents to identify trends and develop preventive measures.

I think everyone would agree that with this significant list of roles and responsibilities this new body will make sure Victorians are kept safe. Protection for Victorians and making Victoria a better place to raise a family is part of what — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The minister's time has expired.

### **Hazardous waste: Nowingi**

**Hon. B. W. BISHOP** (North Western) — My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Major Projects, Mr Lenders. As part of the environment effects statement (EES) process of the Bracks government's proposal to place a toxic waste dump in the Mallee near Mildura the government hired a consultant to travel overseas to assess what effect such a dump would have on our clean, green market image. The consultant has been back for some months now, and, apart from a disturbing, aggressive article in the *Australian Financial Review*, in which he claimed that Australian agriculture's clean-and-green credentials were a myth created by government, there is no sign of the report. When will the report be available for public scrutiny?

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Major Projects) — I thank Mr Bishop for his question and for his ongoing interest. I am delighted on any occasion to talk about the long-term containment facility and this

government's response on how it makes difficult decisions like this, particularly ones that affect Victoria. The material point Mr Bishop raised was the McKinna report. He talked of the consultant being engaged and going overseas to find information about whether such a containment facility would affect the reputation of the Sunraysia district, whether that would affect products in foreign markets and a whole range of very pertinent questions that under any decent environment effects statement (EES) process you would expect to be addressed, answered and shared with the local community.

The McKinna report is, of course, but one of 19 reports that are before the technical reference committee, and very shortly — once the committee has completed its work — that report will be released for public comment in the Sunraysia district and in Victoria as a whole so that the Victorian community can share the full information that the government has when making decisions on an important matter like the long-term containment facility. I can assure Mr Bishop that within a matter of weeks that information will be publicly released in his community, as well as in the entire Victorian community.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — After you have sanitised it.

**Mr LENDERS** — I take up Mr Forwood's tawdry interjection about such a report having been sanitised. I remind Mr Forwood that this government takes these processes seriously. We go through the processes. As Mr Forwood would well know, the technical reference group has all the material in front of it, and that will be released publicly so that will all be very transparent and audit trailable.

This government does not make environmental decisions lightly and without getting information. In a sense, Mr Bishop's question implies this process has been slow. Yes, it has been slow, because we have actually been seeking information from the community. When the community has asked for more information, and if the request has been reasonable — the request for the McKinna report was — instead of rushing through, this government has actually gone forth and got the information and presented it. Within a few weeks this information will be available for public comment.

I know Mr Bishop has had a long interest in this and will undoubtedly go through all the technical reports very closely. I welcome him doing it; that is what we expect the community and its representatives to do. That report will be out there — that is what this process of an EES is all about — so that the Sunraysia community will without any doubt have knowledge of



the information the government is basing its decision on before it makes any planning decisions on whether the long-term containment facility will proceed.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — You don't even know how many trucks there are going to be.

**Mr LENDERS** — Again I take up Mr Forwood's interjection. If he had but bothered to read any of the information made publicly available, he would know that there is a figure out there of five trucks a day. I suggest he actually read the information before he opens his mouth in this place and embarrasses himself once again. In response to Mr Bishop's question, the information will be out in the next few weeks, and I welcome his supplementary question.

*Supplementary question*

**Hon. B. W. BISHOP** (North Western) — I thank the minister for the information he has given us that the report will be scrutinised by a group of experts prior to its public release. He would be aware, as I understand it, that the same process was promised to a local industry reference group. Will that still occur? If so, why has that group been gagged by having to sign an in-confidence document that will not allow it to comment on the report, which flies in the face of the minister's claims about an open, transparent and accountable government?

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Major Projects) — I know Mr Bishop is trying to make mileage and get some coverage in the *Sunraysia Daily* tomorrow, and he has probably faxed out his press release before he has even heard the answer.

For the edification of Mr Bishop and the house, an environment effects statement involves a number of steps. One of the steps is for the technical reference group to make sure when the draft material is in front of it that there are no unanswered questions or technical mistakes before it goes for public comment. Mr Bishop will be able to find out whether there is any difference between the draft report that goes before the technical reference group and the final report. There is nothing hidden about that; it will all be open and transparent. The report is about getting that information out to the public and getting some of the technical questions answered before they go out so they do not come out later.

The second and absolute thing is that this government, unlike the Kennett government, tries to bring in stakeholders earlier so they can make informed comments when the public documents are released. We are enhancing transparency. We are giving more

information than the Kennett government ever did, or the federal government ever does. This is a good process.

**Sport and recreation: government initiatives**

**Hon. H. E. BUCKINGHAM** (Koonung) — My question is directed to the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Honourable Justin Madden. I ask the minister to outline to the house how the Bracks government is strengthening the capacity of sporting clubs and associations to deliver at grassroots level and make Melbourne's suburbs a great place to live and raise a family.

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — I welcome the honourable member's question, and I particularly thank her for her interest in what we can achieve as a government in making Victoria a better place to live.

There are so many things happening in sport with the Commonwealth Games not far away. In fact the Commonwealth Games are only 209 days away and there is a lot of activity in sport. I know 209 days might seem like a lot, but it is not nearly as many as 308 days. Everyone in the chamber will ask: what has 308 days got to do with it? That is how long we have waited for the announcement by the Leader of the Opposition in the other place, Robert Doyle, on the Mitcham–Frankston freeway — and we are still waiting.

We are doing great things in relation to state sporting associations. We have recently announced \$2 million in funding to more than 70 state sporting associations to deliver programs that strengthen their ability to deliver sport at a grassroots and community level. As part of that I announced \$35 000 to the Royal Victorian Bowls Association for bowls projects to encourage more young people and school-age people to take up bowls.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Did you get them a bowling rink yet?

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** — I look forward to seeing the Honourable Bill Forwood taking up bowls in his retirement, because he will be looking for things to do. There will not be much opportunity for him to do much else, given the way his golf handicap is performing at the moment.

Our \$2 million of funding is a commitment to the state sporting association support grants program which has seen \$500 000 allocated to improve the capacity of state sporting associations in a number of areas, on top of the \$200 000 for employment of more grassroots

development officers, improving business aspects through the business improvement program. As well as that there is the Future Directions program.

Recently we have seen a great uptake of 40 sport development managers to strengthen sports capacity through the sports development manager scheme, which will capitalise on the benefits of the Commonwealth Games right across the community. As part of that I announced in Bendigo with my colleague the Minister for Agriculture in the other place, the Honourable Bob Cameron, funding for Table Tennis Victoria of \$20 000. We are seeing inspiration from the Commonwealth Games and investment from this government translating into greater outcomes for state sporting associations, so we can expect, right across the community, increased levels of performance and participation. What is important is that all this combined builds stronger communities, but most important of all it makes Victoria a better place to live and raise a family.

### **VicRoads: surplus land**

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON** (Koonung) — I direct my question to the Minister for Local Government, Ms Broad. Is the minister aware of an attempt by her colleague the Minister for Transport in another place to demand that councils buy land identified by VicRoads as not being required for the authority's core responsibilities in a bid to prop up the state's finances?

**Ms BROAD** (Minister for Local Government) — It has been a longstanding practice of this government and many previous governments that where land is transacted between levels of government, and indeed between government departments, it is done by Valuer-General's valuation as a way of ensuring that property is properly transacted between agencies and levels of government. In relation to the specific question of actions by the Minister for Transport, I will take that on notice and refer it to the transport minister.

### *Supplementary question*

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON** (Koonung) — I notice that VicRoads has a discussion paper out at the moment which suggests a wholesale transfer across local government areas of assets associated with recreational facilities. Those assets include shared paths, open space and linear paths. I ask: will the minister, based on her examination of this issue, which she has just promised, act to stop the cost shifting of community recreational facilities from VicRoads to local government?

**Ms BROAD** (Minister for Local Government) — What I indicated to the member earlier was that I would

take his question on notice and refer it to the Minister for Transport in the other place, which was not exactly what the member said in his supplementary question. I do not accept his interpretation of what I said previously and I reiterate that property is transacted between levels of government at Valuer-General's valuation, and that is the way it has been done for a very long time. It does not constitute cost shifting. It constitutes a proper and financially responsible approach by this government and government agencies to the management and transfer of property.

### **Aboriginals: government initiatives**

**Ms ARGONDIZZO** (Templestowe) — My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Can the minister advise the house how the recently announced indigenous community capacity building grants will contribute to the Bracks government's commitment to addressing disadvantage in indigenous communities as outlined in the *A Fairer Victoria* policy statement, making Melbourne's suburbs a great place to live and raise a family?

**Mr GAVIN JENNINGS** (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) — I thank Ms Argondizzo for her question and I thank Mr Forwood and other members of the opposition for their enthusiasm to hear about it. Yet again what the Bracks government is trying to do through the *A Fairer Victoria* policy and through other programs that are consistent with its objective to improve the lot of communities around Victoria includes addressing disadvantage that continues to exist within Aboriginal communities.

I am very pleased to talk to the house today about the most recent round of capacity building programs within indigenous communities throughout Victoria. During my tenure as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs we have invested \$1.4 million through this program and the most recent round of initiatives worth \$250 000 has been allocated to a number of projects designed to improve the business capacity and the skill level within a number of Aboriginal community organisations and, importantly, to appropriately develop training programs to assist in the ongoing capacity of individuals who work within Aboriginal community organisations. That is a very important element of this current round of outcomes.

A number of significant Aboriginal community organisations will be charged with the responsibility of taking those programs further. The Aborigines Advancement League in Thornbury will develop a new business management model that will apply to its extensive suite of community support services. It will

be developing a business management training regime and training its staff and its board to ensure the appropriate governance structures and management capacity of its important work which it embarked upon on behalf of Aboriginal people right throughout Victoria but primarily in metropolitan Melbourne.

I am very pleased to say that we have supported a new emerging organisation which has been established in Croydon to service the needs of Aboriginal people in the eastern suburbs and the interface suburbs of Melbourne where we have provided support for a volunteer coordinator. The Eastern Indigenous Gathering Place is an emerging organisation which is trying to tap into the capacity of its community and make connections with the broader service systems network. It is very important for us to try, at the very earliest stage, to get the maximum buy-in by members of the community into the service system networks. Hence a volunteer coordinator's position was seen to be a prime objective of this organisation.

I contrast this with an approach that has occurred within the Goolum Gollum cooperative in Horsham. This well-established organisation has a well-established connection within the Aboriginal community but also tries to permeate the broader mainstream services connection. We have provided a linkages package for Goolum Gollum to try to permeate the mainstream service delivery to get a more effective engagement between the Aboriginal community and mainstream agencies through Goolum Gollum. As members of the house will obviously notice, there is a variation in the approach we have adopted with a range of organisations to try to find a flexible and appropriate way to add to the business management, administration and skill development of those community organisations.

In Melbourne we have provided support to 3KND, the indigenous media outlet to develop, in conjunction with the technical and further education institute sector, training packages to enhance people's skills in radio production and in communication which is a very important project, and also through the Aboriginal community controlled health organisation a similar —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The minister's time has expired.

### Hepburn: inquiry

**Ms HADDEN** (Ballarat) — My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government, Ms Broad. I refer the minister to the Phillip Fox

probity investigation report into Hepburn Shire Council's handling of the lease assignment of the Hepburn spa bathhouse on the Hepburn Mineral Springs Reserve, which is on Crown Land. Will the minister now appoint an inspector of municipal administration under the Local Government Act to investigate the Hepburn Shire Council with the same vigour as the Glen Eira City Council investigation?

**Ms BROAD** (Minister for Local Government) — In response to the member I point out to her and to other members of the house that the Glen Eira investigation was at the request of the council after a very long period of difficulties at that council during the term not only of this government but also of the previous state government. It is an entirely different situation to the one being referred to by the member today. In relation to the investigations that have been referred to, those matters were thoroughly considered by both my department and the planning minister's department and there is no basis for a municipal inspector to be requested by me, and it certainly has not been requested by the council.

### *Supplementary question*

**Ms HADDEN** (Ballarat) — Given the reasons for the recent suspension of the Glen Eira City Council, such as confidentiality breaches, potential conflicts of interest, failure to provide good government, failure to hand over all relevant documents, misunderstanding of councillor roles and responsibilities, lack of an effective code of conduct and best practice audit committee guidelines, which are all similar to the probity reviewer's findings on Hepburn Shire Council, why has the minister not acted in the best interests of the local community to suspend Hepburn Shire Council like she suspended Glen Eira City Council, so that the community can have confidence in good government and accountability?

**Ms BROAD** (Minister for Local Government) — I believe I have already indicated to the member and to the house the difference between the circumstances faced in the Glen Eira situation as compared with Hepburn Shire Council. I reiterate that those reports which have been released, and which have been thoroughly examined, did not recommend the appointment of a municipal inspector, and those matters have been addressed by the council.

### VicUrban: projects

**Hon. KAYE DARVENIZA** (Melbourne West) — I raise a question for the Minister for Major Projects. Can the minister inform the house of how the Bracks

government is making Melbourne suburbs a great place to live and to raise a family through the innovations VicUrban is bringing to the urban communities it is developing?

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Major Projects) — I thank Ms Darveniza for her question and her interest in some of the urban infill projects in her electorate undertaken by VicUrban, particularly ones such as Werribee Field. She certainly has, whether at Point Cook or Werribee, shown a keen interest in those areas. It is important for the house and the Victorian community to see some of the work done by VicUrban to enhance the urban amenity — to do some infill in areas and be state-of-the-art in leading some of the new forms of environmental design and living that can be done in an innovative community like Victoria.

VicUrban is developing more than 20 urban communities. They range across the state from Tower Hill near Mr Bishop's home in Swan Hill, with 1200 houses coming into place, to some of the ones in Ms Darveniza and Mr Nguyen's electorate. In both cases, whether it be the boardwalk in Altona or Werribee Field, more than 5000 people are moving into areas being developed by VicUrban. This is one of the things the government is doing to improve the way people can live and, to take-up Ms Darveniza's point about making Victoria's outer suburbs better places to live and raise a family — —

**Hon. D. McL. Davis** interjected.

**Mr LENDERS** — Mr David Davis scoffs at this, but if a government cannot have as one of its driving objectives aspirations to make its community a better place to live and raise a family, then you have a pretty sad society. This government is driven by that aspiration at every single stage and in every single decision. We judge our actions against whether these actions make Victoria a better place to live and a better place to raise a family.

I will talk about one of these VicUrban estates, the boardwalk in Altona, which Ms Darveniza has been tenacious in drawing to my attention. In that example we are talking of 5000 people moving into an estate. There is urban renewal, and we are seeing great design, six-star housing ratings, a mixture of public and private sector and a blend of existing urban areas with new developments.

We are seeing the new style of living that makes Melbourne 2030 a vibrant city and allows us to put a city the size of Adelaide into Melbourne over the next 30 years. That is the task this government has undertaken in a sustainable way. VicUrban is doing its

bit. In a number of these housing projects we are going forward and leading the way as to what a better city can look like. In all of these areas, in partnership, we are rebuilding the state. Aurora is a community of 8000 houses at North Epping. It is larger than many towns we live in, certainly larger than the town I was born in, and all this urban infilling is coming into place.

Ms Darveniza asked the question, and I can answer her. I have certainly been to those estates in her electorate, and I invite all members to look at some of the innovative work VicUrban is doing. It is something we as Victorians can be particularly proud of. I notice Mr Forwood is wearing his Victoria badge today. Finally a member of the opposition is showing that they are proud about being Victorian. I also notice that Ms Darveniza is wearing her Long Tan Vietnam veterans badge today, which this side of the house was very pleased to acknowledge. We are making Victoria a better place to live and raise a family, and these VicUrban estates are a good example of the Bracks government in action.

**Hon. B. N. Atkinson** — On a point of order, President, I would like to seek clarification on what basis the minister just answered that question because he has not previously advised the house that he is responsible for VicUrban, and I want to establish whether he is responsible for VicUrban.

**Mr LENDERS** — On the point of order, President, I would be delighted if Mr Atkinson would actually read the administrative arrangements that were published in the *Government Gazette* in late January. Part of my ministerial responsibilities is responsibility for VicUrban — a great Victorian institution.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I thank the minister for that clarification.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### Answers

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Finance) — I am delighted to table answers to a further 31 questions on notice as follows: 1830, 2098, 2103, 2123, 2293, 2326, 2334, 2654, 3065, 3066, 4283, 4349, 4374, 4394, 4433, 4434, 4454, 4459, 4475, 4617, 4641, 4880, 4918, 4924, 4978, 4987, 4989, 5071, 5216, 5249, 5255.

**Hon. ANDREA COOTE** (Monash) — President, I ask you to ask the minister if he could please get some answers from the Minister for the Arts in another place. He is responsible for obtaining her answers for this chamber. I have 184 questions that have still not been

answered. However, I am not the only one who is victimised in this place. It has come to my attention that a senior government minister was sent an invitation by this minister, and the Minister for the Arts had forgotten that this portfolio had not been held by that minister for over three years. So it is not just me.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! With respect to the answering of questions on notice, certain procedures are to be followed in line with the rules of the house, and sessional orders allow for members to raise a failure to provide an explanation during general business. Under the rules all a member can do is ask for an explanation. Mrs Coote has done that, and that is as far as it can go, unless she wants to move a notice of motion and have it dealt with under sessional orders. Under the rules of the house with respect to questions on notice a member can ask for an explanation of a minister and the minister can respond, and that is it. That has been the case since questions on notice came into being many, many years ago.

Mrs Coote would appreciate that ministers in this house can only put a request to ministers in the other house. The rules in this house do not apply to ministers in the other house, so we have this ongoing dilemma. The opportunity is there under sessional orders to move a notice of motion and have it put on the notice paper, but that is limited to what is within the rules of the house. I call on the minister to respond.

**Hon. J. M. MADDEN** (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — I am desperately trying to get those answers for Mrs Coote. We are as tenacious as she is in this chamber in relation to those answers, and I will seek to get those at the earliest possible time.

**Hon. ANDREA COOTE** (Monash) — I appreciate that response from the minister.

## VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed.**

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** (Central Highlands) — I support the Victoria State Emergency Services Bill. It will re-enact the Victoria State Emergency Services Act of 1987, and establish a statutory authority to manage the Victoria State Emergency Service. The purpose of the bill is to establish the authority, and provide that the authority administers and directs the service in the performance of its functions. It provides that the authority is subject to the general direction and control

of the minister, and provides a board of authority of up to seven members comprising relevant people who will represent the Victorian SES in a most capable manner.

It allows VICSES to provide support outside Victoria in the instance of a cross-state boundary emergency event or if interstate authorities request emergency assistance in another state. This is particularly important when you get up along the Murray River where accidents, searches and the like are common and having the Victorian and New South Wales services working together could bring about a speedier and safer result. The bill also provides immunity to volunteer workers and service members when acting under the act.

This government has, is and will continue to be committed to a strong, dynamic and, more importantly, viable State Emergency Service. We have a long history of supporting and strengthening the State Emergency Service. We support it as a separate emergency service organisation. The SES is a key provider of volunteer emergency services and is a strong contributor to community safety and services across the state. Unlike those on the other side, I have spent many hours training and working with — —

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — How do you know it is ‘unlike those on the other side’?

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — I know because none of you have spoken about it. The term members opposite have used is ‘those people’ — ‘those people’ are not people you work with. None of them have done it. Opposition members have never spent any time doing this so they have no understanding.

I have worked with many wonderful volunteers in VICSES. Still today many of my friends and family volunteer in State Emergency Service units across the state, giving up their time and energy supporting community safety, working at community events and giving peace of mind to the people of Victoria. As I said, I have spent many hours working with the volunteers at such events as the torchlight parades. The Craigieburn festival is another event I have worked on for many years.

**Hon. T. C. Theophanous** — You have done a good job.

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — Thank you, Minister. I have been involved with the State Emergency Service at numerous road accidents in rain, hail, thick fog, hot weather, day and night, helping to save lives and continue life support for those who have been in the unenviable position of being involved in a road accident. The level of professionalism is second to

none. We all owe a great deal of thanks to each and every one of the volunteers out there.

I recall that under the previous government many of our SES units suffered from equipment shortages, shortages of uniforms and old and outdated equipment. Many times there would be a change of shift on an SES exercise and volunteers would have to come in and take off their overalls and boots so the next shift could put the soaking wet boots and overalls on because the former government did not care enough about these volunteers to supply them with overalls. That is something members opposite should have been embarrassed about then and should still be embarrassed about now. There was no clear future direction or leadership from the Liberal-National government.

Then along came Bracks. The Bracks Labor government came into office with a plan and a vision for respecting and assisting the many thousands of volunteers across the state who dedicate their lives and family time to protecting Victoria. I put on the record my thanks and respect to the former Minister for Police and Emergency Services whom I worked with closely in Craigieburn with the SES and community emergency response team.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — You respect him?

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — I respect him very much. If Mr Forwood had half Mr Haermeyer's work ethic, he would be a decent bloke. His passion and dedication for his portfolio were second to none. As we would expect, given the depths of talent in the Bracks government, the current Minister for Police and Emergency Services has continued in that vein. He has continued the work, commitment and dedication to that portfolio.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Are you worried about your preselection?

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — No, sir. Let us contrast that with the Liberals' champion — the would-be leader as they continue to run their little rudderless boat out to sea. While thanking both the current and former minister for this bill the member for Scoresby indicated to the other house that the new structure would provide an opportunity for Liberals to build up a relationship — —

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Who said that?

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — I believe it was Kim Wells, the member for Scoresby in the other place. It speaks volumes that opposition members now want to start to look at building up a relationship. One would

have thought that the lazy Liberals would have done this over many years, would have continued to support the SES. This shows their contempt for the SES, and that is why they oppose this bill.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — What?

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — You are opposing it.

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Are you saying we are opposing the bill?

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — Are you saying you are not?

**Hon. Bill Forwood** — Yes!

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** — I thought you were. I am pretty sure that is what members opposite were saying — we will see when the vote comes.

Another \$5.9 million will be delivered to the SES in this year's state budget as part of our commitment to continue to build the SES. Let us contrast that with the ignorance Mr Atkinson showed. He astounded me with his ignorance and the patronising speech he made earlier — no doubt Mr Forwood will continue in the same vein. When I think about the funding this government has provided to the SES over the years we have been in office and what we have delivered, I look at the 4x4 general rescue vehicle delivered to Seymour, the over-snow vehicles that were delivered to Falls Creek and Heathcote getting a lighting trailer and a general rescue vehicle. Kinglake also received a rescue vehicle and a 4x4 multipurpose rescue vehicle. Mansfield received the portable radios they so desperately desired and Marysville got some more snow chains. Alexandria received a rescue vehicle, Benalla received a rescue boat and a portable lighting tower. Bright received funding for their new building and a rapid response rescue vehicle. My friends in Craigieburn received a paging system and new rooftop safety kits while Euroa received hydraulic rescue kits. These are just some of the many hundreds of things we have delivered to the SES as further proof of our commitment to the State Emergency Service.

Under the current Minister for Police and Emergency Services we will continue to see the support the government has shown in the past for the State Emergency Service. As I said, many of my friends and family are involved in this and they will continue to do the good work they do for the community whether it be at rescues, functions or doing the work on the major highways where they have coffee and sandwiches to help tired drivers and prevent people from getting into strife on long weekends. Under our community safety

emergency support program the SES has received 174 grants valued at \$3.06 million in the period to 2004–05. That funding has delivered projects across the state.

We are very proud of what we do with the SES. It stands in stark contrast to those opposite. We know they are embarrassed by their poor credentials and the way they mistreated the SES during their time in office. I commend this bill to the house.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — At the outset let me say for the benefit of the house that the Liberal Party does not oppose the legislation before the house today. We will be voting with the government —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — You do not think I know, do you? You are such a goose.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J. G. Hilton)** — Order! Through the Chair, Mr Forwood!

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — I have no idea why I bother to engage with idiots and children. I want to make a couple of quick points.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — It is hard not to be patronising when I am dealing with you.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — Excuse me, I am being lectured from the door by the President.

Let me start by saying that the Liberal Party wholeheartedly supports the State Emergency Service (SES) and has for many years. We think it is a vital organisation in the state. We fully applaud the move to make it an independent statutory authority. It is for that reason and that reason alone that we will not be in a position to join The Nationals and support their reasoned amendment. As they know, and the house will know now, we have major problems with the insurance side of the bill.

I pick up the contribution of the Leader of The Nationals when he asked what the heck we are doing with the fire insurance levy issue in a bill entitled the Victorian State Emergency Services Bill. It does not belong there and we should have two pieces of legislation. Everyone in this house would then be able to fully support the SES parts of the legislation and we would be able to say, as we are going to say, that the

fire insurance levy part is a dog's breakfast. To use the words of the insurance council and others it will not work.

I note that not one of the government speakers, including Ms Mikakos, the lead speaker for the government, has made any effort to address the fundamental issues that have been raised in relation to the fire insurance levy. It is for that reason we will be taking this bill into committee and asking the minister at the table some quite specific questions about the issue of the fire insurance levy.

I am very disappointed also with Mr Mitchell's contribution and his distortion of the words of the shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place. I look forward to a retraction from Mr Mitchell once he reads the words the shadow minister said in *Hansard*. I will paraphrase. He said that there has been a long and strong relationship between the volunteers in the SES, and there has. That is the point he was wrong on. He went on to say that we welcome the new structure and it will be important —

**Hon. R. G. Mitchell** — Did he congratulate the ministers?

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — Of course he did. He said the relationship between us and the hierarchy has been difficult. There are all sorts of reasons for that and as Mr Mitchell well knows there is a difference between the volunteers and the paid employees and hierarchy. We will work hard to make that relationship work. Mr Mitchell's distortion is on the record for all to see. Not only was he wrong about our position on the bill, he was wrong on his representation of what the shadow minister in the other place said.

I turn now to the issue of the new minister. We heard the laudatory words from Mr Mitchell in relation to the last minister who everybody in Victoria knows was demoted because he was incompetent. He knows he was demoted; everybody knows he was demoted. Then what did we get? We got young wonder boy, Timmy Holding, the young new minister who is going to be the next Premier. But what do we discover? He lacks the capacity to read past two paragraphs in a memo. I say quite bluntly to this chamber that the new minister is not up to it. I am not sure that he is going to be the new minister for all that long —

**Mr Somyurek** — The documents were flawed.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — The documents were flawed. Let me take up the interjection from Mr Somyurek. It is always someone else's fault. It is

never their fault. The fact that 1000 files go missing and he was told about it on 20 July — it is not his fault that he knew about it and lied about it. No, the documents were flawed. I rest my case. We have had an incompetent minister removed and the next one is about to be removed too because his position is unsustainable.

**Hon. R. G. Mitchell** — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Forwood has been speaking for 6 minutes now and I think you should bring him back to the bill.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J. G. Hilton)** — Order! There is no point of order, but I remind the member he has 9 minutes left and I am sure he should devote some of that time to the substance of the bill.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — I appreciate your guidance, Acting President. I note that I will have opportunities in the committee stage to deal with the substantive issues in more detail if I run out of time in my contribution to the second-reading debate.

Let me turn to the issue of the insurance levy. I have a media release from the Insurance Council of Australia dated 17 August. I want to read this into *Hansard*:

New tax an extra burden for Victorian business

The Insurance Council of Australia has urged the state government to postpone debate on the introduction of what amounts to a new tax on medium and large businesses which will add to Victoria's reputation as a high taxing state.

This is the position that The Nationals is putting here today. We would support it except for the fact we regard the SES component of the bill as so important that it needs to go through.

ICA wants the government to consult with the business sector and insurance industry about the Victoria State Emergency Services Bill.

**Hon. P. R. Hall** interjected.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — You are joking.

ICA's group manager southern division, Peter Jamvold, said the lack of consultation was evident in the bill which showed a very poor understanding of insurance practice and introduced unworkable provisions.

Congratulations to the Bracks government! We have now got a bill before the house that does not understand insurance practice and brings in unworkable provisions.

The bill introduces a new tax on businesses operating in Victoria. It changes the tax base for the fire services levy scheme to include a non-insurance component levied on the notional premium for companies which have a deductible of \$10 000 or more in their property insurance policies.

A deductible (or excess) is the amount a company is prepared to contribute towards any losses before it makes a claim on its policy. It provides an incentive to adopt stringent risk management procedures.

We have heard, particularly from Mr Hall in his contribution to the debate earlier today, about the negative effect of this particular proposal. It is ridiculous.

Not only would this bill increase costs for businesses carrying deductibles of \$10 000 or more but it would undermine basic insurance processes. The government does not appear to understand that while deductibles are an essential insurance mechanism, they are not insurance per se because there is no transfer of risk.

Does the government understand that? It does not seem to me it does. We will be asking the minister about that when we get into committee as well.

It goes on to say:

... tax would be a major consideration in the establishment of deductibles provisions in commercial policies and in the development of risk management arrangements.

That is the current position of the Insurance Council of Australia. If you want more detail on it you need to turn to the letter that Mr Hall also referred to from insurers Allianz to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mr Holding, dated 5 August. Again one doubts he got to read it; we know he does not get past the first couple of paragraphs. If you look at attachment A, you will see it says:

Difficulties with the proposal for a notional premium for deductibles over \$10 000.

It goes into a number of them, and says:

No formula can equitably reflect the factors that have determined the deductible applicable policies of insurance against fire. There are many factors that determine the structure amount of a deductible, particularly in relation to commercial property insurance. Some of these factors originate with the insured, such as a decision to retain a greater share of the risk loss in return for a reduced premium. Other factors originate with the insurer, such as a decision not to insure risks involving high-frequency claims. The range of these factors is as broad as the range of risks for which insurers against fire is issued.

Do members of the government not understand that? Do they not understand the way the insurance system works?

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — No, they do not.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — I thank Mr Baxter, who said, 'No they do not'. We will be asking the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources some questions about this. In particular we will be asking



where the formula is. The Insurance Council of Australia wants to know where the formula is too. Allianz says at the third dot point in its letter:

The bill does not make clear what constitutes a 'deductible' for the purposes of the legislation. On the one hand, it may be relatively easy to identify deductibles in policies providing insurance for motor vehicles or for residential buildings. On the other hand, commercial insurances often involve a more complex interaction with a 'program' of insurance policies where there may be multiple layers of insurance. For example, a broker may arrange insurance for its client's \$50 million building that comprises three policies of insurance issued by three different insurers: the first providing cover for losses up to \$5 million, the second providing cover for losses between \$5 million and \$25 million and the third providing cover for losses between \$25 million and \$50 million.

I make the point that the minister's staff have had this letter since 5 August. I will be asking this question and looking for a factual answer, because the Allianz letter says:

If the deductible on the first policy ... is \$250 000, what is deductible on the second policy?

We will be asking that question, and we will be looking for a dollar answer, because the government has produced this legislation.

There is another issue I need to touch on that is raised by Allianz in this letter of 5 August. It goes to the issue of discretionary mutual funds. Allianz has raised an equity issue — that is, what it considers to be the inequity of the fire services levy not being paid by discretionary mutual funds (DMFs). It asks why the government is going to great lengths to impose the fire services levy on deductibles but has not responded to the question about the position of DMFs. We will also be asking what the government's position is on DMFs and why it did not include them. Allianz, which wrote a letter on 5 August — three weeks ago — and asked that specific question is entitled to at least receive an answer. We would like to know what the government's position is on DMFs. I look forward very much to getting to the bottom of some of these issues.

I am very sorry that because of the structure of the legislation we do not have the capacity to support the request of the Insurance Council of Australia that this bill be postponed and to support The Nationals in its reasoned amendment, which would have that effect. I would like to be able to do that. However, given the importance to us of the SES, we believe it is appropriate for us to support the legislation. We recognise that making VICSES a statutory authority is a logical step that provides it with organisational parity with the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan

Fire and Emergency Services Board. We certainly recognise that VICSES is a fully fledged professional emergency services organisation and that with a new structure it will be better able to respond to demands for services. On the one hand we wholeheartedly support the moves for the SES but on the other hand we are very surprised at the extraordinary position the government has taken in relation to the fire services levy. As I said, I look forward to canvassing these issues in committee.

#### **House divided on omission (members in favour vote no):**

*Ayes, 36*

Argondizzo, Ms	Lenders, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Lovell, Ms
Bowden, Mr	McQuilten, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Madden, Mr
Broad, Ms	Mikakos, Ms
Buckingham, Mrs	Mitchell, Mr
Carbines, Ms	Nguyen, Mr
Coote, Mrs	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Romanes, Ms
Darveniza, Ms ( <i>Teller</i> )	Scheffer, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Smith, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Somyurek, Mr
Eren, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Forwood, Mr	Strong, Mr
Hilton, Mr	Theophanous, Mr
Hirsh, Ms	Thomson, Ms
Jennings, Mr	Viney, Mr
Koch, Mr ( <i>Teller</i> )	Vogels, Mr

*Noes, 5*

Baxter, Mr ( <i>Teller</i> )	Hadden, Ms
Bishop, Mr	Hall, Mr ( <i>Teller</i> )
Drum, Mr	

#### **Amendment negatived.**

#### **House divided on motion:**

*Ayes, 36*

Argondizzo, Ms	Lenders, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Lovell, Ms ( <i>Teller</i> )
Bowden, Mr	McQuilten, Mr ( <i>Teller</i> )
Brideson, Mr	Madden, Mr
Broad, Ms	Mikakos, Ms
Buckingham, Mrs	Mitchell, Mr
Carbines, Ms	Nguyen, Mr
Coote, Mrs	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Romanes, Ms
Darveniza, Ms	Scheffer, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Smith, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Somyurek, Mr
Eren, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Forwood, Mr	Strong, Mr
Hilton, Mr	Theophanous, Mr
Hirsh, Ms	Thomson, Ms
Jennings, Mr	Viney, Mr
Koch, Mr	Vogels, Mr

*Noes, 5*

Baxter, Mr  
Bishop, Mr (*Teller*)  
Drum, Mr (*Teller*)

Hadden, Ms  
Hall, Mr

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time.**

**Committed.**

*Committee*

**Clause 1**

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — This bill is being dealt with in committee following a discussion with the opposition in which it indicated it would be happy for me to make a comment during the second-reading debate. However, in the interests of whether that particular comment would be satisfactory to the opposition, we have taken the bill into committee stage to allow me to make a comment on one of the major issues raised by the opposition, and also allow the opposition to ask further questions about that particular issue. Let me just try to see whether my first cut satisfies the opposition, and then we can move on with some additional questions that need to be answered.

My understanding is that the principal question revolves around discretionary mutual funds and is in part about Allianz Australia's letter of 5 August to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place, the Honourable Tim Holding, in which it raises the issue of what it considers to be the inequity of the fire services levy (FSL) being paid by discretionary mutual funds. The question that was put to me by the Honourable Bill Forwood was why the government is going to great lengths to impose FSL on deductibles but has not responded adequately to the question put by Allianz.

I am able to say that the discretionary mutual funds exist where companies agree to pool their risks directly between themselves rather than using insurance to cover risks, or at least some of the risks. They set up a mutual trust fund, contribute to it on an agreed basis and draw on the fund in the case of losses. This therefore is not, strictly speaking, insurance, and because it is not insurance it is not covered by the funding system. Actions proposed by this bill are not a comprehensive rewrite of the fire services funding. As the Department of Treasury and Finance review found, the system was the most appropriate system to use. The changes are simply improvements to the current system that will increase transparency and equity in the system,

and are not designed to make comprehensive changes to other extraneous factors such as that raised in the letter from Allianz.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I thank the minister for his answer and I understand the drift of where the government is going in saying that this is not insurance. In the example given by Allianz in the letter, it said:

Assume a DMF has 10 members who contribute \$100 000 annually to a pool to cover themselves against property-related loss.

That property-related loss could include, of course, fire.

The DMF will use its pool ... to pay for the 'working losses' of its members ... to ensure the pool's solvency in the event of large-scale losses ... the DMF will take out traditional insurance with a high deductible.

Such an insurance policy could have a deductible of, say, \$50 000 per event. Thus any claim by a member of less than \$50 000 will be paid from the pool and any losses in excess of \$50 000 will activate the insurance policy.

In fact, it would be bearing a measure of the risk to start with. It said:

Our advice is that the bill would apply FSL to the deductible under the insurance policy.

The policy taken out:

That is, FSL would be charged on the \$40 000 difference between the deductible and the bill's \$10 000 allowable deductible. However, the DMF's \$1 million pool, which represents the true magnitude of foregone premium, would continue to avoid FSL.

They have all contributed \$100 000, and instead of taking out insurance they are self-insuring, in essence, with a pool of \$1 million. Allianz is saying that the pool represents actual forgone insurance premium on which the fire services levy rightly should be paid, not some form of theoretical notional premium as is the case under the bill's deductible provision. Is the minister saying that despite the fact that this is a self-insurance arrangement, the government does not believe it is appropriate in an answer to Allianz's question to in fact put the FSL on that?

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — In response to Mr Forwood's question, first of all the example given by Allianz is a theoretical example. It does not relate to an actual case.

**Hon. W. R. Baxter** — What difference does that make?

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** — It makes a significant difference because if it emerges that all sorts of businesses in all sorts of situations seek to avoid their payments, whether it be in terms of stamp duty or fire service levies or anything else, usually what happens in government is that we would examine those attempts as they come to light.

In the event of a government, and in particular a Treasury, examination of these sorts of issues, I am sure that the Victorian Treasury would not be too thrilled about a scheme of this sort which not only avoided the fire services levy but also avoided the stamp duty. I am sure that the Treasurer would not be too keen for that to happen. Given that the Treasurer has decided on this occasion that, firstly, this is not the appropriate bill to deal with this very complicated matter, and secondly, that there is no real evidence other than the proposition from Allianz that this might be a structure that people might enter into, at this stage the government is not seeking in this bill to address what may or may not emerge as a problem.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — I want to take the opportunity to make a couple of comments because I think the minister's answer reinforces some of the views expressed by members of The Nationals in their contributions about some of our concerns and fears. The fact that discretionary mutual funds are not regarded by the government as insurance and therefore no fire services levy has been paid will simply prompt large businesses to restructure its operations and perhaps enter into discretionary mutual fund arrangements so as to avoid paying a fire services levy and corresponding stamp duty to the state government. As I said during my contribution, then there is an issue of encouraging tax avoidance, which in some respects is an appropriate term to use.

The other issue I want to address with respect to that is that if people are deliberately trying to avoid or reduce their fire services levy payments, that denies or goes against the intent of the government's claim that these changes will bring about a greater degree of equity across the whole community with respect to a fire services levy. If people taking out large insurances seek to restructure to avoid paying the fire services levy, that extra burden of funding fire services is spread across a smaller base and consequently will have an impact which is far from equitable because fewer people will be required to meet those funds.

Therefore we are disturbed. I raised the issue of discretionary mutual funds in my contribution, and the minister's explanation gives us no comfort whatsoever. I am also interested that the minister has said the

government is not prepared to address it in this bill. I wonder whether there is any intention in the future to bring further legislation back to the Parliament which looks into the fire services levy. Perhaps the minister could tell me whether it is an intention of the government to bring such a bill back, or whether the government is prepared to do what we in The Nationals believe should be done — that is, some economic modelling undertaken with other various models of fire insurance levies so that we can be better informed about whether or not we can get a more equitable fire services levy in this state.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — Let me try to answer some of the questions that I think are behind the honourable member's points. I will perhaps answer in this way. I do not think I am saying that the government is looking at other legislation. All I have said is that obviously this is always open to a government. This is an issue which is not yet a problem; it is a possibility. Whether or not it emerges as a problem will depend on a range of factors. It may never emerge as a problem because there are a whole range of other reasons why people might not go down the path which Allianz seems to be suggesting companies might move down. But obviously, as I said, it is always open to the Treasurer to look at these issues, and if something does become a problem it can be addressed in other legislation.

The other point I would make is that yes, we stand by what we have said, that this is more equitable. It is more equitable for a range of reasons, including other initiatives that remain in the legislation dealing with a greater degree of equity, such as the fact we are linking the premiums to risk in the way that the bill does. We believe that will create an equitable system for the fire services levy.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I would like to turn to a separate issue. Has the government yet commenced work on the prescribed formula that will be used for the calculation of the premium to be paid on deductibles?

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — As Mr Forwood is aware, the head of power is in relation to the deductibles and provides for a power of regulation. The development of the regulations is obviously something that would occur in the normal way that these things take place following the passage of the legislation. I would imagine that when the development of the regulations occur, they will be brought into play.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I thank the minister for his answer, but he did not answer the question that I asked. I again ask: has the government started to work on the development of the formula?

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I know that the member wants me to confirm whether or not this work has commenced. I am unable to confirm one way or another whether that has occurred. But it actually does not make much difference because nothing can actually occur until the bill is passed in terms of changing or having regulations. That work will commence and I am sure be finalised as soon as the bill is passed.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I thank the minister for his answer. The point I am trying to get to is that the work, to my understanding, has not been done on the formula, and there is considerable doubt about whether such a formula can ever be devised. We are bringing in a piece of legislation which depends on the formula, and yet the insurance industry itself is saying that the bill shows a very poor understanding of insurance practice and introduces unworkable provisions. I put it to the minister that the problem with the legislation is that it rests upon this notion of a formula for deductibles, which the experts in the field are saying cannot be done — for example, the attachment to the letter of 5 August asks at the third dot point what constitutes a deductible for the purposes of the legislation, and asks the specific question at the bottom, which I hope the minister will be able to answer:

For example, a broker may arrange insurance for its client's \$50 million building that comprises three policies of insurance issued by three different insurers: the first providing cover for losses up to \$5 million, the second providing cover for losses between \$5 million and \$25 million and the third providing cover for losses between \$25 million and \$50 million. If the deductible on the first policy (the first 'layer') is \$250 000, what is the deductible on the second policy?

I think that is the legitimate question that needs to be answered for people to have some understanding about how this will work.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — The most that I can say in relation to this is that the bill provides for a head of power for making regulations. It does not provide for the regulations themselves; they will be developed later, and it is not possible to answer the questions raised by the honourable member in terms of specific examples of the sort that are in the Allianz letter, which would be dealt with as a result of the development of the regulations themselves.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I thank the minister. I make the point to the committee that it is unfair that the minister is the person who is trying to answer these questions. He is doing a very good job, but he is not responsible for this piece of legislation, and he has been put in a position where he has been sent without enough information or backup to deal with what are complex issues.

**Hon. P. R. Hall** — Very complex.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** — Yes, they are complex, and I thank him for his honesty and his approach.

The commencement clauses say that the remaining provisions will come into operation on a day or days to be proclaimed and the default day is 1 July 2006. I am interested to know when the minister thinks this might actually start, because my view very strongly is that the government has a major problem in trying to develop the formula required under the head of power to make this work.

Again, in Allianz's letter the first dot point says that when you are trying to determine the structure and amount of a deductible:

Some... factors originate with the insured such as —

a personal decision to take some of the risk. The second part of a deductible relates to the insurance company saying, 'We will not insure that' or, 'We are going to insure this bit'. So that is an additional layer of complication.

I accept that the answer to this is going to be, 'We will see when we try to work it out', but I wonder whether the minister could firstly, indicate to the committee when the government hopes to have this legislation in place; and secondly, what role it will be playing with the Insurance Council of Australia whose view, as experts in this area, is that these provisions are unworkable.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — What I can say to the honourable member is that this is an equitable and fair piece of legislation which provides a head of power. This will be proclaimed in line with the provisions of the bill once it is passed by the house, and I would expect, or at least I am advised, that the regulations and process of producing the regulations will occur within a matter of about six months.

**Hon. W. R. BAXTER** (North Eastern) — I put on the record that it is a bit rich, frankly, that the committee is being asked to accept a piece of

legislation in the total absence of any sort of indication that the government knows how it is going to work and whether it is practical.

We have a letter from Allianz which asks pertinent questions. They are the experts. The Insurance Council of Australia was not consulted before the legislation came before the house, so we as members of Parliament are being asked to take this on trust. I acknowledge that the minister at the table, the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources, is not the minister with the primary carriage of the legislation but he has been inadequately briefed. That situation is of some concern to me, and I certainly want the insurance industry to understand that members of The Nationals and, I think, the opposition have the deepest reservations about the passage of legislation that we are left to take on trust when the government is not able to give us any indication at all that it knows how it is going to work.

**Hon. BILL FORWOOD** (Templestowe) — I fully endorse Mr Baxter's words: that is exactly our position as well. I do not want to delay the committee any further other than to request that the government sit down with the Insurance Council of Australia and in a practical way try to work out the answers to the issues raised. This is not playing politics or scaremongering; this is a practical issue. We now have a bill that provides a head of power, but the government has absolutely no idea how it is going to work and those in the advisers box are completely silent. It would be very good if the minister was able to indicate to the committee as we close the committee stages that at least the Insurance Council of Australia will have some hands-on input — if not final say, obviously — into the development of the formula which will be applied willy-nilly to the deductibles in the future.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — I have just one question on a further issue that concerns the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority. I ask the minister: is it a fact that clients of the VMIA are not required to pay a fire services levy; and if that is correct, why?

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I will attempt to deal with the issues raised. What I can say in relation to the consultation question raised by Mr Forwood is that, firstly, this reform was publicly canvassed as a possible option in the 2003 Department of Treasury and Finance review of fire service funding. There was at least a public canvassing of this. It is consistent with the government's decision after the review to pursue reforms to improve the transparency and equity of the system, so it is consistent with that decision. The

current bill, after all, only establishes a head of power which will allow regulations to be subsequently made to address the issue. I understand the concern the member has raised, and what I can say in relation to the consultations and concerns is that the government will consult further with the Insurance Council of Australia in the development of those regulations.

In relation to the question asked by Mr Hall, let me draw his attention to clause 69 of the bill, which requires the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority to lodge returns of gross premium from relevant bodies, and the purpose of this clause is to provide that to the extent that the VMIA provides insurance in the broader private insurance market it will lodge returns and contribute to the fire services like other insurers. When VMIA is insuring government bodies, however, it is not required to lodge returns, as government already contributes to the fire services levy.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — In terms of the whole transparency of the situation, here we are with government bodies that insure with VMIA and do not pay a fire services levy, whereas other organisations do. I acknowledge the fact that the minister says the government contributes to funding for fire services through consolidated revenue, and so it does. But again, if you wanted a more transparent system you would have the government paying a fire services levy and then if required making an additional top-up from consolidated revenue to ensure that fire services are fully funded. It is The Nationals' belief that there should be a transparent process where at least a notional amount from government departments is required to be listed as a fire services levy contribution.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I would be very surprised if this was not the policy framework of the previous government as well, but I take the point made by Mr Hall and would simply say that of course it is transparent in relation — —

**Hon. P. R. Hall** — It is transparent that nothing is paid.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** — No, it is also transparent in relation to the amount of government funding that goes towards the fire services levy, so you can actually see how much government funding goes towards fire services. If all that Mr Hall is concerned with is some kind of transparency or accounting issue, I would say there is transparency as is. If he is saying that there should be a kind of double payment by government to provide existing levels of funding and

then on top of that pay the fire services levy, then I think we would disagree with that.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — What I was saying and meaning was that I want to know whether the government contribution towards the funding for fire services is equivalent to government departments and agencies paying the fire services levy (FSL). That is what I was saying. I think it would be easier if a private school, for example, that insured its property knew there was some comparability to a government school, which may have insurance through VMIA, but if what the FSL would actually be was not explicitly stated. For the sake of consistency it would be preferable for all organisations to pay the FSL. We would then know how much the government contribution was and whether the government contribution was above or below what would normally be paid as an FSL. I am not asking for a comment or response from the minister, I am making a point. That is my view.

**Clause agreed to; clauses 2 to 75 agreed to.**

**Reported to house without amendment.**

*Adoption of report*

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources) — I move:

That the report be adopted.

In doing so I would like to thank members for their contributions during both the second-reading and the committee stages of the bill.

**Report adopted.**

*Remaining stages*

**Passed remaining stages.**

## VAGRANCY (REPEAL) AND SUMMARY OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Assembly.**

**Read first time for Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) on motion of Hon. T. C. Theophanous.**

## FISHERIES (ABALONE) BILL

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Assembly.**

**Read first time on motion of Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Minister for Energy Industries and Resources).**

## RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (FURTHER AMENDMENT) BILL

*Introduction and first reading*

**Received from Assembly.**

**Read first time for Ms BROAD (Minister for Housing) on motion of Hon. T. C. Theophanous.**

## WORKING WITH CHILDREN BILL

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 16 August; motion of Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation).**

**Hon. C. A. STRONG** (Higinbotham) — In rising to speak on the bill I would like to place on the record the opposition's position, and that is simply that we do not have any problems with what the bill is trying to achieve, but we think the manner in which the bill seeks to bring this about is fatally flawed and certainly puts the opposition in somewhat of a difficulty. Later in my presentation I will be moving a reasoned amendment to deal with what we see as some of the fundamental flaws in this bill. When examining the bill and what it seeks to achieve we need to remember that children are defined as anybody up to 18 years of age.

As they grow up children need to be exposed to life's experiences. They need to be involved in many ways so that they can understand what life is all about and grow up to be well-rounded and knowledgeable citizens. Many people are involved in that process of a child growing up, learning to live in the world, learning to understand what the world is all about and being involved in the activities that prepare them to be an adult in the community today. Involved in giving those life experiences to children are a host of individuals and organisations. Parents, friends and many other groups, both paid and unpaid, contribute to the development of our children. It is a very important contribution that makes for well-rounded individuals.

Clearly schools have a major impact, whether they be normal schools or specialist schools. Specialist courses are conducted by schools, like drug education, sex education and the like. Sporting activities are not only conducted through schools, but through clubs and many other areas. There is a wide range of clubs which can cover a huge range of activities, not just sport. There are computer clubs, sailing clubs, walking clubs, climbing clubs. A whole series of clubs deal with activities and with knowledge.

The church has played a very large part in children learning life experiences, not only in its religious education and teaching but through the activities it runs. There are excursions that take children to various places and show them parts of the world and give them experiences that they need to understand as they are growing up.

Then there is work experience. One of the most important experiences that young people can get to help them grow is experience in the work force — whether it be at a very young age as paperboys doing paper rounds, helping at a shop on the weekend, or any series of activities, such as working on farms. There are a whole lot of work-related activities that help our children grow. There are clubs and organisations that look at issues like reading and music. There is amateur theatre. There are computer groups. The list goes on and on.

All these people, organisations and groups play an integral and incredibly critical part in ensuring that our children, the children of our state, grow up to be well-rounded citizens who understand what life is all about. Many people who support these organisations and run these activities are paid, but a great many of them are volunteers and are to be encouraged, because they make a major contribution to our society by exposing our children to these life experiences.

While the majority of people who carry out these types of functions and supervise these activities for our children do it for altruistic reasons because they believe it is good for our children and good for society, there are unfortunately a small number of individuals who seek to abuse or take advantage of the good work that is done by many by masquerading, as it were, as people helping children but with a more sinister motive. This leads to what this bill is all about, which is the despicable area of child abuse. As legislators we are put in a somewhat difficult position because clearly on the one hand we have to encourage and give support to all these groups and organisations that seek to educate and involve our children in the world, but at the same time we need to protect them from those one or two people

who would seek to abuse the good work of many by preying on our children. As I said in my introduction, this bill seeks to do that.

In that objective the Liberal Party most strongly agrees, as I am sure does every normal person in Australia, and certainly every legislator. We want to make sure that our children are protected from those who would prey on them. However, unfortunately I must say that I believe this bill misses the target in so many ways. What it seeks to achieve could be done a lot better and a lot more simply.

I would like to quickly turn to the whole question of child abuse. I think we all know that the statistics in this area show that abuse more commonly comes from the close friends and family circle of a child. It is an unfortunate situation, but family and friends who gain the confidence of a family and a child in various ways are often responsible for child abuse. This bill does nothing to deal with that.

Another major area is those who are unknown or undiscovered abusers. We see these people every so often when in a blaze of publicity somebody who has been in an area of responsibility with children is suddenly, perhaps after many years, exposed as a child abuser. We have seen recently the exposure of various paedophile rings that have been in operation for a while. Child pornography networks are suddenly discovered and come to light. There is a whole host of people out there who are child abusers or potential child abusers whom we know nothing about, who are undiscovered, who have not yet come to the surface. When we look at the statistics, we see that that is potentially a very large number. Members only have to look at the recent publicity and statistics. Once again, this bill does nothing to deal with these people. The only way we can deal with them is to be ever vigilant about the type of people who are employed or involved in children's activities. There is no way that these undiscovered or unknown abusers can be targeted or known about because there is no record of what they are doing. As I said, often knowledge of them does not come to pass for many years.

The last category is those who have a record of child abuse, who have been caught and are known to the authorities. This bill seeks to deal with those people, the ones we know are child abusers or whom we know from their records are the sorts of people who should not be around our children.

I went through that fairly lengthy explanation to make the point that what this bill seeks to do is in no way a panacea for child abuse. By its very nature it will target

only a segment of the problem. It will target only that segment of the problem that is carried out by the people of whom we know. That does not mean by any means that we should not be doing it, because we need to be protecting our children. We must be protecting our children from those who are known to be a danger.

However, the point I make is that none of us should fool ourselves: when we put in place legislation or a system like this we have not beaten the problem, and we need to be ever vigilant. We need to be thinking about and working on means and measures to deal with those other two issues. I dealt with the first two issues which related to those people we do not know about who are potential abusers. We need to have mechanisms in place to make sure to the extent that it is humanly possible that the opportunities do not exist for them to do their terrible work.

In essence, this bill simply says that those who work with children who have some history of child abuse or criminal activity which makes them unsuitable to supervise children should not be allowed to supervise children. I do not think anybody could disagree with that principle. The bill defines people who work with children as those who have:

... regular direct contact with a child ... where that contact is not directly supervised by another person.

Work in this context includes paid work, like child minding, and voluntary work. I said in my initial comments that there are a whole series of areas where people volunteer to look after children. Work is both paid and voluntary. How will the system basically operate? If you want to work with children in either a paid or voluntary capacity you need to apply to the Department of Justice for an assessment notice. This assessment notice will basically state that you are or are not a fit person to work with children. The Secretary of the Department of Justice will be responsible for vetting all applicants for assessment notices, and the applicants will be everybody who works with children.

The Department of Justice will vet people's personal records and consider not only their criminal records but other activities they have been involved in in their profession. If they are a doctor, dentist, nurse or anybody else, the secretary will consider their general behaviour and make an assessment as to whether they are fit, proper and suitable to work with children. These assessment notices can be either positive or negative — in other words, if you apply for one of these assessment notices from the Department of Justice, you will get a notice that says you can or cannot work with children. If you get a notice that says you cannot work with children, it is an offence if you do so, and it is an

offence if somebody employs you to work with children. It is an offence to work with children if you do not have an assessment notice; and it is an offence to employ someone to work with children who does not have an assessment notice. This means that everybody who is going to work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity will have to undergo these checks by the Department of Justice and will have to be issued with one of these notices.

The bill makes provision for volunteer organisations where individuals provide their services gratis. The department will carry the cost of the assessment process in those cases. But if you seek paid employment with children, that cost will not be borne by the department but by the individual or employer. The individual involved may enter into arrangements to pay for the cost.

In this assessment process there are basically three broad categories of assessment — three broad criteria — which the bill sets out as to whether the Secretary of the Department of Justice will issue a positive or negative assessment. The first broad category deals with any person on the sex offenders register or a person who is subject to a serious sex offender monitoring order. Such people will automatically be given a negative notice and there will be no appeal against such a decision. Any person who is convicted or found guilty of an adult serious sex offence that was committed against a child or anyone involved in child pornography will automatically receive a negative notice without any discretion by the secretary.

There are another two categories where there are various degrees of discretion that can be exercised by the secretary of the department in deciding whether a positive or negative notice is issued. The second general category is those with a conviction or finding of guilt for a serious sexual offence against adults or children committed when the offender was a child. It also includes those with convictions for offences involving serious violence or drugs. There is a presumption that if they have such a conviction they will automatically get a negative assessment although it is up to the Secretary of the Department of Justice to make some assessment of those convictions as to whether a positive assessment is given — in other words, these people who have marginally less serious convictions — —

**Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.**



## ADJOURNMENT

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The question is:

That the house do now adjourn.

**Whistleblowers: legislation review**

**Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** (East Yarra) — I raise a query for the Attorney-General in the other place. It relates to the issue of whistleblowers and in particular the Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001. Members in this house and throughout the community would be aware that I have been coordinating and dealing for a number of years now with a whistleblower who was a prison officer. I raised this matter a while back in respect to the whistleblower who had raised concerns about some internal activities conducted at a prison. Subsequently the prison officer who raised those matters was hit over the head with a baton by a prison supervisor during a supposed training regime. That matter was subsequently investigated by the Ombudsman, who reported the prison supervisor should have been disciplined. In fact in early 2004 that prison supervisor was promoted within the prison system.

The prison officer who is the whistleblower and the subject of substantial media reporting this week has raised with me in many conversations his concerns about the capacity of the Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001 and its application in the real world. I have had contact with another prison officer who is also a whistleblower, and, as I recently reported, he is fearful after having allegedly been assaulted at a prison site by a fellow prison officer. This is a separate prison officer and separate whistleblower. The second whistleblower has escaped interstate to avoid further retribution.

This week we have heard about matters relating to the first whistleblower, not only in respect of the police files issue but also because, as members may recall, he received a letter stamped 'Whistleblower Protection Act — To be opened by addressee' at new premises, a secure place where he had moved his family to avoid being identified. It amazes me, and I am trying to be genuine.

We need to look at the application of the Whistleblower Protection Act. Given that it is a new piece of legislation, we need to give consideration to whether it has been effective. My query is to the Attorney-General. Will he take action to review the act, determine its effectiveness and perhaps report back to Parliament or indeed Victoria whether we need to improve it or amend it?

**Planning: rail trails**

**Hon. E. G. STONEY** (Central Highlands) — I wish to raise an issue with the Minister for Planning in the other place, Mr Hulls, who for some reason is responsible for rail trails. I have a letter from Garry Cecil, the chief executive officer of Mitchell shire, announcing that:

Urban Enterprise, a firm of urban planners, land economists and tourism planners, has been commissioned by Mitchell Shire Council (in cooperation with Murrindindi and Mansfield shire councils) to prepare a concept design and business plan for a proposed rail trail within the three shires.

This is a very exciting project, and one that I fully support. The letter goes on:

Rail trails have been highly successful in delivering significant economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits to regional Australia. The proposed ... rail trail is anticipated to provide a major tourism and recreational product, capable of generating new, innovative and complementary tourism investment along the length of the trail and contributing to the economic growth of the wider region.

The letter goes on:

The trail will also lead to the preservation of the natural environment.

Rail trails provide very important flora and fauna links throughout Victoria. The letter says the trail:

... has been able to progress into its next stage of development as a result of the three shires collaborating and lodging a collective application for federal government funding in 2004.

Some \$145 000 was successfully obtained:

... primarily under the Australian tourism development program and partly under —

regional partnerships. When the Bracks government took office its direct financial support for rail trails stopped, except for ministers opening those that were under construction and, of course, taking all the credit. Watching them change the history of rail trails was cringe material. There are still many opportunities to finish the rail trail program, which stopped dead in 1999.

My question is: will the minister create a designated budget and appoint a special officer to assist shires in finishing their current rail trails in the interests of both the local and wider Victorian communities?

### National parks: funding

**Hon. KAYE DARVENIZA** (Melbourne West) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Environment in the other place. The matter concerns our national parks in Victoria. I was delighted to have the opportunity to visit and tour the Alpine National Park just a couple of weeks ago. I am particularly interested in the actions planned regarding our national parks following the government's recent legislation which sees an end to alpine grazing in those parklands.

I want to acknowledge the excellent work being done by the minister and Parks Victoria in managing our 4 million hectares of parks and reserves across the state. This underscores the commitment of the minister and the Bracks government to protecting and conserving our natural environment. Our government recognises the vital contribution that parks make to the health of our regional economies and to the physical and mental health of all Victorians. I am not alone in acknowledging the excellent work done by Parks Victoria. It was recognised at the recent Victorian and national tourism awards for its bush recovery program and the contribution this program has made to the alpine region's tourist economy. Parks Victoria also received a major national environmental award this year — the Banksia award — for its marine national parks communication program. Under the leadership of Ms Kathryn Fagg, the board chair, a highly respected and credentialled business executive, and Mr Mark Stone, the chief executive officer, Parks Victoria is doing a marvellous job in managing Victoria's parks and reserves.

My specific query for the minister is: of the extra \$100 million allocated in the recent budget to Parks Victoria, how much funding will be allocated to ensure the restoration of our precious alpine bogs and the removal of the many environmentally damaging pest weeds, and will the minister implement programs that will assist in boosting regional economies by building on the many current attractions that we already have in our parks and reserves?

### Western Port Highway: upgrade

**Hon. R. H. BOWDEN** (South Eastern) — I seek the assistance of the Minister for Transport in the other place, and his reply in due course. I would appreciate his directing his efforts to dealing with certain aspects of the Western Port Highway, in particular the southern section where there are several issues which I believe are important in terms of efficiency and safety and are a cause for concern to many of my constituents. There is a substantial degree of upgrade required between

Frankston and Cranbourne on the Cranbourne-Frankston Road. To the south of that intersection heading towards Hastings the road is essentially one lane in each direction, so the Western Port Highway south of the Cranbourne-Frankston Road intersection is essentially one lane. The volume and mix of traffic is of great concern because there are steel trucks, large gas tankers, a lot of commercial vehicles, some farm vehicles and commuter traffic all using this road to a great extent. It is inevitable that in due course when the port of Hastings is developed in accordance with government plans there will essentially be an increased need to use this road. The time has come for VicRoads to look seriously at the duplication of the southern end of the Western Port Highway.

One of the interesting characteristics of the Western Port Highway, whether it be at the northern end in the Dandenong area through Lyndhurst or towards the southern section that I am discussing, is that there is an apparent lack of understanding of the need to seriously consider overpasses at major intersections. It is inevitable that the traffic volume at these cross intersections, whether it be Thompsons Road, Hall Road or Cranbourne-Frankston Road — —

**Mr Lenders** interjected.

**Hon. R. H. BOWDEN** — I know the road very well, Minister. I am suggesting that planning is very important because the volume in that area will be extremely high. I have not seen any great evidence as I drive around Melbourne of VicRoads being conscious of the need to plan overpasses instead of huge, complicated intersections, of which Springvale Road at Dandenong Road is one of the worst examples. Would the minister ask VicRoads to ensure that the efficiency, safety and capacity planning of the Western Port Highway is helpfully done and done — —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member's time has expired.

### Hospitals: infection control

**Hon. D. McL. DAVIS** (East Yarra) — My matter for the attention of the Minister for Finance concerns the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority's annual report for 2003–04 and in particular the issue of clinical risk management. The minister will be aware of the Auditor-General's recent report on risk management. He will be aware of the work his department is doing. It is that to which my adjournment matter is directed.

The VMIA's annual report, under clinical risk management, says at page 18:

Clinical risk management is of great importance to health care agencies. VMIA is a strong proponent of work in this area and its two clinicians assist the agencies with risk management education, and by providing feedback from investigation of adverse events that may assist in determining remedial action and reduce the possibility of recurrence. There is also a very complementary relationship between VMIA's clinicians and the claims management team that serves to establish a more in-depth understanding of the clinical issues associated with medical claims.

Obviously the annual report sets out a number of important areas where VMIA is working with hospitals and health bodies and also with the Department of Human Services. The minister will be aware that there has been an important story this week about hospital infections, in particular methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) infections. The story related to 1600 cases that had been referred to in government data and 123 cases involving either death or serious infection.

I want to establish what actions the minister is taking. I ask him if he would report to the house at some point on how many of these claims that are under management through the clinical risk management section of the VMIA involve infections of this nature. I ask him specifically to take up this issue, to ensure there is a focus on the issues surrounding MRSA infections in our hospitals and to inform the house how he would go about that and when he will do so.

### Member for Derrimut: conduct

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON** (Koonung) — My matter is for the Premier. Most members would obviously share concern about threats against MPs and attempts to discredit MPs. I have been provided with details of an attempt to discredit Telmo Languiller, the member for Derrimut in another place. I ask the Premier to investigate the circumstance referred to in a statutory declaration sworn by Gürkin Capar of Sunshine at Sunshine police station on 21 July 2005 and to establish what action the police propose to take on the allegations made in that statutory declaration.

For the benefit of the Minister for Finance, who is at the table, and the house I will read some parts of that declaration:

Over the course of this year in the first six months, I had been called to several meetings with Nelson Tornesi. Mostly we met at Nelson's rooming house in Riddley Street, Sunshine. On one occasion, Roberto Martinez was present at one of these meetings.

At the initial meetings with just Nelson and myself, Nelson was suggesting that I make statements that money transfers had gone into Telmo's account from various companies. Also, that in addition to this, Telmo's personal account was

receiving deposits from the SECC account, of which I was a co-signatory.

**Mr Lenders** — On a point of order, President, I have been listening very closely to Mr Atkinson's comments. After asking the Premier for action on threats to an MP, he is now proceeding to read into the record what are effectively substantive allegations against an MP, reflecting on an MP's character and about moneys being transferred into his personal accounts. I take exception to this as casting aspersions on an MP. The rules of this place are that a member is to do that by substantive motion.

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON** — On the point of order, President, in fact my intention is the exact opposite. The circumstances of this statutory declaration suggest that this is a fabrication, that Mr Languiller actually did not benefit in any way and that there is no substantive allegation against Mr Languiller. Frankly I would not have raised the allegation in this form had I not believed that to be the case. In fact what I am trying to do is to clear Mr Languiller's name.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The point of order has been clarified by the Honourable Bruce Atkinson, and I will allow him to continue with his adjournment matter.

**Hon. B. N. ATKINSON** — The statutory declaration continues:

... deposits from the SECC account, of which I was co-signatory. Essentially, Nelson was wanting me to say that Telmo was defrauding the SECC and accepting bribes from various companies. I refused to do this. Nelson Tornesi continued to make these requests over the course of several weeks and months. I constantly refused to cooperate in this defamatory action. At one point Nelson called me to come over again and said that he had 'something big' to tell me. When I arrived, Roberto Martinez was there as well. They again asked me to make these statements and that, because this would have to be done in English, I should contact a solicitor in Footscray employed by Robert Stary and Associates. 'This firm also represents Robert Mammarella', I was informed by Nelson and Roberto. Roberto Martinez told me that 'they have plenty of money'. 'If you want \$5000, it's there for you, or if you want \$10 000, it's there for you'. Martinez kept repeating throughout this conversation this \$10 000 figure in exchange for my cooperation.

Nelson was calling me on a daily to every second day basis after this meeting. He was wanting to know if I had spoken to the solicitor, and he was reiterating that the solicitor and Mammarella would pay for my statement.

The last that I heard, Nelson had arranged to speak with a journalist from the *Herald Sun* as someone wanted to interview him. He also told me that the journalist would also want to speak to me if I accepted the offer. Nelson asked me whether I thought that he would be able to get similar money from the *Herald Sun* for talking to them and tried to convince me that, if I cooperated, there could be more money for the two of us.

In all of these matters I refused to cooperate with these men. I have had no contact with these men for three months.

As I indicated, I believe the member is totally innocent. I believe there is an attempt to frame him, and I think it ought to be investigated by the Premier.

### **VicRoads: surplus land**

**Hon. J. A. VOGELS** (Western) — I raise an issue for the Minister for Transport in another place, the Honourable Peter Batchelor. It concerns VicRoads' plan to force municipalities to take on assets that VicRoads no longer wants to maintain. VicRoads has detailed plans in its land and facilities management discussion paper to off-load properties such as wetlands, freeway reservations, open space, retarding basins and footpaths. Ownership and maintenance of these assets would be transferred at market value to councils.

Councils across Victoria are extremely concerned about this proposal and see it as another shifting of costs onto local government. Any transfer of land should be on a cooperative basis, as there could be instances where councils are willing to take on the responsibility for certain land at a nominal price. The action I seek from the minister is that he ensure that this discussion paper does exactly what the acting chief executive officer of VicRoads, Gary Liddle, says it is for — that is, finetuning agreements only, not forcing councils to take on more responsibilities.

### **Bushfires: Wilsons Promontory**

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** (Gippsland) — I would like to raise a matter for the attention of the Attorney-General in the other place. It relates to coronial investigations. I note that the coroner has agreed to probe the Wilsons Promontory fire earlier this year which scorched 6000 hectares of the Prom. It is interesting to note the willingness of the coroner to do this, because he refused to undertake a similar investigation of the alpine fires in 2003. What is of significant concern to me is that I am assured by the Victorian Farmers Federation that, whilst it sought a coronial investigation, it desired to meet with the coroner and with the government to discuss the prospect of a coronial investigation. All requests for action and meetings were declined.

I would like the Attorney-General to advise me why it is that the Victorian government refused to work with the coroner to ensure that there was a proper investigation of the alpine fires in 2003, why there is the different treatment of the Wilsons Promontory fires earlier this year and what the justification is for the

contempt with which the requests on behalf of rural Victorians — particularly those in Gippsland and the north-east of Victoria — were dealt with because of the refusal of the government and the coroner to have a proper investigation of these matters when it was appropriate to do so.

### **Responses**

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Finance) — The Attorney-General received two requests, one from Mr Dalla-Riva regarding a whistleblower and one from the Leader of the Opposition regarding coronial investigations. I will pass them on to the Attorney-General for his attention. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will find that some of the Attorney-General's response will relate to the independence of the coroner in making some of his investigations and that they will deal with this in correspondence between each other. Some things are the actions of executive government and some are the actions of independent statutory authorities.

Mr Stoney raised an issue with the Minister for Planning in the other place regarding rail trails through a couple of municipalities in his electorate. I will pass that on to the minister.

Ms Darveniza raised a matter for the Minister for Environment in the other place regarding the Alpine National Park plan. I will pass that on to the minister for his attention.

The Minister for Transport in the other place received two adjournment matters — one from Mr Bowden regarding the Western Port Highway and one from Mr Vogels regarding a discussion paper on land and asset use. I will pass them on to the minister for his attention.

The Premier received for his attention a matter raised by Mr Atkinson, who sought an investigation regarding the circumstances referred to in a statutory declaration regarding a member of Parliament. I will pass that matter on to the Premier, as requested by Mr Atkinson.

Finally, Mr David Davis raised a matter with me as finance minister regarding the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority, and I will briefly respond to it. He asked what the role of VMIA would be in assisting with critical risk mitigation and best practice for dealing with infection. While I do not have the details on that particular matter in front of me, in general terms the role of VMIA is to provide advice to departments not just as an insurer but also, and far more importantly, on best practice in risk mitigation in a range of areas. I am confident VMIA will work closely with the Department

of Human Services and individual hospitals on this issue, and I will formally reply to the Honourable Mr David Davis with the details after consulting with my department.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The house stands adjourned.

**House adjourned 4.54 p.m. until Tuesday,  
6 September.**



**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, 16 August 2005**

**Transport: Office of the Spencer Street Station Authority — advertising**

**2102. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to the Office of the Spencer Street Station Authority's advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

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

The Spencer Street Station Authority undertook advertising on two occasions during the period 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003.

In relation to those two occasions I am advised that:

- a. The advertisements were approved on 1 August 2002 and 9 December 2002 at a cost of \$1,000 each. Both advertisements, which were for the now closed Tracks Café, appeared in a quarterly magazine.
- b. Each of the above advertisements were published in the Essendon Football Club magazine.
- c. The contracts for each of the above advertisements were arranged directly with Essendon Football Club.

**Commonwealth Games: Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd**

**2311. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Commonwealth Games: In relation to Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd's advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Corporation did not enter into any ongoing advertising contracts between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003. The following amounts were spent on advertising during that period.

Recruitment Advertising	\$166,940
Request for Tender Advertising	\$3,936

**Multicultural affairs: VITS Language Link — advertising**

**2312. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): In relation to VITS Language Link’s advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

- (a) (i) 1 August 2002.
- (ii) \$26,345.
- (iii) To promote contact details and services provided by VITS LanguageLink.
- (iv) One year.
- (b) In the Yellow Pages.
- (c) Sensis.

**Major projects: Docklands Authority — media research and public opinion polling**

**2325. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Major Projects): In relation to the Docklands Authority’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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



In relation to the Docklands Authority media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research?  
Docklands Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract?  
The contract was approved on 12 September 2002. The duration was for the survey period.
- (c) What is the cost?  
The cost of the survey was approximately \$22,000 [GST inclusive].
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project?  
The research was conducted by the successful tenderer.
- (e) Was it put to tender?  
Yes.
- (f) What recommendations were made?  
None.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister?  
No.

**Energy industries: Office of Gas Safety — media research and public opinion polling**

**2331. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries: In relation to the Office of Gas Safety's media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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

On advice from the Office of Gas Safety,

- a) The title is "Gas Safety Awareness Study"
- b) One Omnibus survey contract was entered into in December 2002 and repeated in December 2003
- c) Cost in 2002 was \$6,787.00 and in 2003, \$6,969.60
- d) Newspoll
- e) No
- f) To continue advertising subject to refinement.

- g) Results used by OGS as basis for assessing campaign and refining the next program.

**Transport: Spencer Street Station Authority — media research and public opinion polling**

**2333. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to the Spencer Street Station Authority’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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

The Spencer Street Station Authority (the Authority) has to date not conducted any formal media research. The Authority does, however, receive media monitoring transcripts and videos relating to the Spencer Street Station Redevelopment. Transcripts are ordered on an as-per-needs basis.

There have been two station patron surveys (which qualify as public opinion polls) conducted during 2004.

The details of these surveys are listed below:

1.
  - (a) Title: “*Spencer Street Station Authority Patron Survey January-February 2004*”
  - (b) Date of approval:
    - Approval to conduct surveys given in November 2003
 Duration of contract:
    - N/A (project coordinated by Authority staff. Survey staff hired on casual basis for 40 hours of surveying)
    - Surveys conducted 19-23 January, 2-6 February 2004
  - (c) Cost:
    - \$6206.20
  - (d) Personnel conducting the project:
    - Analyst, Spencer Street Station Authority, coordinated the project
    - Station Manager & Customer Service Manager, Spencer Street Station Authority were involved in project planning
    - Direct Image Promotion and Model Management provided four casual staff to conduct survey questioning
  - (e) Put to tender:
    - Various promotional agencies were contacted in order to determine most cost efficient source of survey staff

- (f) Recommendations made:
- The objective of this survey was to gather information on the demographics of station users; to gauge their attitudes towards station amenities during the redevelopment project; and to gain a better understanding of their holiday travel habits.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister?
- N/A
- 2.
- (a) Title: “*Spencer Street Station Authority Patron Survey II April 2004*”
- (b) Date of approval:
- Approval to conduct surveys given in February 2003
- Duration of contract:
- N/A (project coordinated by Authority staff. Survey staff hired on casual basis for 36 hours of surveying)
  - Surveys conducted 5-8 April, 19-23 April 2004
- (c) Cost:
- \$5108.00
- (d) Personnel conducting the project:
- Same as per 1(d)
- (e) Put to tender:
- Same as per 1(e)
- (f) Recommendations made:
- The objective of this survey was to gather further information on the demographics of station users; to gauge whether their attitudes towards station amenities had changed during the preceding two months of the redevelopment project; and to gain a better understanding of their holiday travel habits through additional and more detailed questioning.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister?
- N/A

**Major projects: Docklands Authority — capital works funding**

**2555. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Major Projects): In relation to the Docklands Authority’s allocation of funds to major capital works, including major maintenance, replacement, and upgrades, what were the priority major projects that were approved for the year 2002-03 and were each of those priority projects achieved.

**ANSWER:**

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

Priority major projects that were approved and undertaken by the Docklands Authority during the 2002-03 year were:

Collins Street Extension	Achieved
Docklands Park Base Works	Achieved
Batman’s Hill Internal Infrastructure	In Progress, in line with project plans
Tram Loop	Achieved
Harbour Esplanade Roadway and Extension	Achieved

**Sport and recreation: Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust — capital works funding**

**2766. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation: In relation to the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust’s allocation of funds to major capital works, including major maintenance, replacement, and upgrades, what were the priority major projects that were approved for the year 2002-03 and were each of those priority projects achieved.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

In relation to major capital works, the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust approved the following priority works in 2002-03:

- Melbourne Park catering outlets upgrade
- Roadworks to Western Entry to Northern car park (Stages 2 & 3)
- Upgrade to concourse paving tiles at Rod Laver Arena
- Roof static lines at Vodafone Arena
- Stage 1 upgrade to Rod Laver Arena
- New scoreboard at Olympic Park
- Upgrade Olympic Park secondary administration building
- Technology improvements
- Access action plan (Year 1)
- Automation of car parks
- Olympic Park on-grade car park
- Melbourne Sports & Entertainment Centre upgrade
- AFL training oval
- Olympic Park entry facilities
- Lighting upgrade to Margaret Court Arena, Show Court 2 & Show Court 3
- Landscape players retreat for Australian Open
- Refurbishment of old Melbourne Park function room

I am advised that all these priority works were achieved.

**Sport and recreation: State Sports Centre Trust — capital works funding**

**2772. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation: In relation to the State Sports Centre Trust’s allocation of funds to major capital works, including major maintenance, replacement, and upgrades, what were the priority major projects that were approved for the year 2002-03 and were each of those priority projects achieved.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

In relation to major capital works, the State Sport Centres Trust approved the following priority works for the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre in 2002-03:

- Installation of air filters in competition pool air returns
- New silk drop banners in gallery
- Re-landscaping to garden area in front of café with additional bicycle parking
- Additional retail outlets in gallery
- Mobile deck harness for Omega timing equipment

- IT peripherals improvement
- Pool cleaner
- Aquatic inflatable
- Upgrade main server to Dell 6040
- V bikes for introductory spinning classes
- Upgrade basketball scoreboards to LED systems
- Pilates equipment
- Revaluation of all assets

I am advised that all these priority works were achieved.

**Commonwealth Games: Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd — capital works funding**

**2775. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Commonwealth Games: In relation to the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd's allocation of funds to major capital works, including major maintenance, replacement, and upgrades, what were the priority major projects that were approved for the year 2002-03 and were each of those priority projects achieved.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The priority major project that was approved in the year 2002-03 was the first stage of the conversion of the former casino site at the World Trade Centre into an administration headquarters for Melbourne 2006. Completion of the first stage was achieved on time with relocation from the previous headquarters taking place in May 2002. This first stage comprised fit-out of the premises to hold up to 120 employees, together with associated facilities including front of house reception, meeting rooms and a presentation suite.

**Attorney-General: Municipal Electoral Tribunal — office accommodation**

**3067. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Attorney-General): In relation to the Municipal Electoral Tribunal's leases of office accommodation currently held, what is — (i) the location of each lease; (ii) the expiry date of the leases; (iii) the cost per metre of each lease; and (iv) the total cost of each lease over the term of the contract.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Municipal Electoral Tribunal occupies space leased by the Minister for Finance. You may wish to refer this question to the Minister for Finance.

**State and regional development: ministerial staff — mobile telephone services**

**3324. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Small Business (for Minister for State and Regional Development): What has been the cost of providing mobile telephone services to the Minister's staff since 1999-2000.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows

This is one of a number of questions seeking information in respect of mobile phone use by the staff of Government Ministers, going back to 1999.

The Government cannot justify the diversion of public time and resources required to gather this information and answer these questions.

**Transport: Urban and Regional Land Corporation — interstate and overseas travel**

**4102. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to interstate and overseas travel by the members and staff of the Urban and Regional Land Corporation in 2003-04:

- (1) How many trips were undertaken.
- (2) What costs were associated with the travel.

**ANSWER:**

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

Melbourne Docklands Authority was merged with the Urban and Regional Land Corporation in August 2003 to form VicUrban which operates under the provisions of the Victorian Urban Development Authority Act 2003.

During the relevant period, no travel occurred.

**Energy industries: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments**

**4364. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries:

- (1) What payments have been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

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

- (1) The Department of Infrastructure made 2 payments to this company, for \$8,062.50 each plus GST. Neither my office nor any of the Statutory Authorities made any payment to the Company.
- (2) 3 April 2004 and 12 May 2004
- (3) Payments were in relation to "Victoria Online", the Victorian Government internet access point for the public.

**Finance: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments**

**4370. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Finance:

- (1) What payments have been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There have been no payments in the time period specified.

**Gaming: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments**

**4392. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Minister for Gaming):

- (1) What payments have been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

**Energy industries: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments**

**4405. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries:

- (1) What payments have been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

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

- (1) One payment of \$13,300 plus GST was made by the Department of Infrastructure. There have been no payments made to the Company by the Minister's Office or by any Agency or Statutory Body under the Minister's administration.
- (2) 27 December 2003.
- (3) The payment related to the provision of strategic advice on the Multi Purpose Taxi Program.

**Racing: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments**

**4435. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Minister for Racing):

- (1) What payments have been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

**State and regional development: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments**

**4453. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Small Business (for the Minister for State and Regional Development):

- (1) What payments have been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

No payments were made to Social Shift Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

**Innovation: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments**

**4467. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Small Business (for the Minister for Innovation):

- (1) What payments have been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

No payments were made to Social Shift Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.



**Gaming: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments**

**4473. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Minister for Gaming):

- (1) What payments have been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

**State and regional development: Innovation, Industry and Regional Development — overseas trips**

**4636. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Small Business (for the Minister for State and Regional Development):

- (1) How many overseas trips were undertaken by executive level staff and base line staff of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development in 2003-04.
- (2) What were the destinations.
- (3) What was the purpose of visiting each destination.
- (4) What costs were associated with the travel.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

Information on overseas trips undertaken by staff is publicly available through the Department's 2003-04 Annual Report.

**Health: Human Services — stress-related leave**

**4646. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Health):

- (1) How many days have been taken as stress related leave by executive level staff and base line staff of the Department of Human Services in 2003-04.
- (2) What was the estimated cost.
- (3) What was the total number of staff involved.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

1. 22,700 days or part days were compensated for stress, anxiety or depression in the 2003/04 year irrespective of when the standard WorkCover claims were lodged.
2. \$2,402,617.81 was paid during the 2003/04 year irrespective of when the standard WorkCover claims were lodged.
3. 195 staff accounted for the values in 1 and 2 above.

Note that this data has been provided to the Department of Human Services by its WorkCover Claims Agents, QBE Mercantile Mutual.

**Housing: Windsor estate — redevelopment**

**4923. THE HON. WENDY LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Housing: In relation to the proposed redevelopment of the public housing estate at Raleigh St, Windsor:

- (1) What is the time line for the redevelopment.
- (2) Has a developer been selected for this project; if so, who.
- (3) Has the Government received a planning permit for the redevelopment; if so, when.
- (4) If a planning permit has not been received for the redevelopment, has an application been lodged with the relevant Council; if so, when.
- (5) What is the budget for the redevelopment over the life of the project.
- (6) How much has been budgeted for this development in 2003-04.
- (7) How much has been spent so far on this development.
- (8) What is the expected completion date of the project.
- (9) Broken down by the number of bedrooms, how many units will be available as a result of this redevelopment for —
  - (a) public housing; and
  - (b) private housing.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) A construction contract for the redevelopment was let in November 2004.
- (2) The contract was awarded to Hansen Yuncken Pty Ltd.
- (3) A planning permit for the redevelopment was issued in June 2003.
- (4) A planning permit has been received.
- (5) The budget for this project is estimated at \$31.2 million.
- (6) An amount of \$2.3 million was allocated for this project in the 2003–04 budget.
- (7) As at the end of April 2005, a total of \$5.2 million had been spent on this project.
- (8) The project is expected to be completed by February 2007.

- (9) (a) 96 units will be available for public housing comprising 40 two bedroom and 50 one bedroom units.  
 (b) There is no private housing associated with this project.

**Housing: neighbourhood renewal project — Doveton and Eumemmerring**

**4928. THE HON. WENDY LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Housing: In relation to the proposed neighbourhood renewal project at the public housing estate at Doveton and Eumemmerring:

- (1) What is the time line for the project.
- (2) Has a developer been selected for this project; if so, who.
- (3) Has the Government received a planning permit for the project; if so, when.
- (4) If a planning permit has not been received for the project, has an application been lodged with the relevant Council; if so, when.
- (5) What is the budget for the project over the life of the project.
- (6) How much has been budgeted for this project in 2003-04.
- (7) How much has been spent so far on this project.
- (8) What is the expected completion date of the project.
- (9) Broken down by the number of bedrooms, how many units will be available as a result of this redevelopment for —
  - (a) public housing; and
  - (b) private housing.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) There is no proposal for a new neighbourhood renewal project. There is an existing Neighbourhood Renewal project which commenced in August 2003. The housing and physical improvement works associated with the Neighbourhood Renewal program were anticipated to take approximately five years. A three year extension was announced as part of the social policy action plan *A Fairer Victoria*.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) The total budget for the original five year period is estimated at \$8.3 million. As the works and activities to be undertaken in the three year extension period are in planning, a budget for the total extended project has not yet been defined.
- (6) (a) \$810,000 was allocated for housing and improvement works for the 2003-04 financial year.  
 (b) \$350,000 was allocated for all other elements of the Neighbourhood Renewal project in Doveton and Eumemmerring for 2003-04 financial year.  
 (c) \$1.16 million was allocated in total for the Doveton and Eumemmerring Neighbourhood Renewal project for 2003-04.

- (7) As at the end of April 2005, a total of \$1.79 million had been spent on this Neighbourhood Renewal project.
- (8) Allowing for the three year extension, the Doveton and Eumemmerring Neighbourhood Renewal project is now scheduled for completion at the end of the 2010-11 financial year.
- (9) Not applicable.

**Aged care: residential care — facilities**

**4942. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care: In relation to State owned residential aged care facilities, both high care and low care (the following can be provided by way of a table):

- (1) How many facilities does the State of Victoria own.
- (2) What is the name of each facility.
- (3) Who is the provider of each facility.
- (4) Which Planning Region is each facility situated in.
- (5) What is the address of each facility.
- (6) How many beds does each facility have.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The State owns 196 residential aged care facilities details of which are attached.

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
1	Grace McKellar Centre	Barwon Health	Barwon South Western	45-95	Ballarat Road	NORTH GEELONG	VIC	3215	245
2	Hilary Blakiston House	Barwon Health	Barwon South Western	45-95	Ballarat Road	NORTH GEELONG	VIC	3215	30
3	John Robb House	Barwon Health	Barwon South Western	19-25	Colac Grove	BELMONT	VIC	3216	30
4	Percy Baxter Lodges	Barwon Health	Barwon South Western	45-95	Ballarat Road	NORTH GEELONG	VIC	3215	106
5	Casterton Nursing Home	Casterton Memorial Hospital	Barwon South Western	63	Russell Street	CASTERTON	VIC	3311	30
6	Polwarth House Nursing Home	Colac Area Health	Barwon South Western		Corangamite Street	COLAC	VIC	3250	78
7	Coleraine & District Nursing Home	Coleraine District Health Services	Barwon South Western		McKebery Street	COLERAINE	VIC	3315	12
8	Wannon Court Hostel	Coleraine District Health Services	Barwon South Western	67	McLeod Street	COLERAINE	VIC	3315	40

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Tuesday, 16 August 2005

COUNCIL

431

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
9	Hesse Rural Health Service Nursing Home	Hesse Rural Health Service	Barwon South Western	8	Gosney Street	WINCHELSEA	VIC	3241	24
10	Heywood Nursing Home	Heywood Rural Health	Barwon South Western	21	Barclay Street	HEYWOOD	VIC	3304	12
11	Sydney Lynne Quayle & Fitzroy Lodge Hostel	Heywood Rural Health	Barwon South Western	21	Barclay Street	HEYWOOD	VIC	3304	33
12	Koroit & District Memorial Services	Koroit & District Memorial Health Services Inc	Barwon South Western		Mill Street	KOROIT	VIC	3282	30
13	Lorne Nursing Home	Lorne Community Hospital	Barwon South Western	Lot 1	Albert Street	LORNE	VIC	3232	20
14	Lyndoch Hostel	Lyndoch Warrnambool Inc	Barwon South Western		Hopkins Road	WARRNAMBOOL	VIC	3280	113
15	Lyndoch Nursing Home	Lyndoch Warrnambool Inc	Barwon South Western		Hopkins Road	WARRNAMBOOL	VIC	3280	95
16	Moyne Health Services-Belfast House	Moyne Health Services	Barwon South Western	97	Regent Street	PORT FAIRY	VIC	3284	30
17	Moyne Health Services-Moyneyana House	Moyne Health Services	Barwon South Western		College Street	PORT FAIRY	VIC	3284	51
18	Otway Health Community Services	Otway Health and Community Services	Barwon South Western	39-43	McLachlan Street	APOLLO BAY	VIC	3233	30
19	Seymour Cundy Wing Nursing Home	Portland & District Hospital	Barwon South Western		Bentinck Street	PORTLAND	VIC	3305	30
20	Merindah Lodge Aged Care Facility	South West Health Care	Barwon South Western		York Street	CAMPERDOWN	VIC	3260	8
21	Merindah Lodge Nursing Home	South West Health Care	Barwon South Western		York Street	CAMPERDOWN	VIC	3260	28
22	Mount View Aged Care Facility	Terang and Mortlake Health Service	Barwon South Western	1	Austin Avenue	TERANG	VIC	3264	15
23	Timboon & District Healthcare Service	Timboon District & Health Service	Barwon South Western	21	Hospital Street	TIMBOON	VIC	3268	14
24	Grange Residential Care Services	Western District Health Service	Barwon South Western	100	Gray Street	HAMILTON	VIC	3300	45
25	Kolor Lodge Hostel	Western District Health Service	Barwon South Western	148	Watton Street	PENSHURST	VIC	3289	10
26	Penshurst Nursing Home	Western District Health Service	Barwon South Western		Watton Street	PENSHURST	VIC	3289	17

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
27	Specialist Extended Care Centre	Western District Health Service	Barwon South Western		Foster Street	HAMILTON	VIC	3300	45
28	Bill Crawford Lodge	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	1101	Dana Street	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	30
29	Eureka Village Hostel	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	14-60	Balmoral Drive	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	45
30	Geoffrey Cutter Centre	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians		Kenny Street	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	60
31	Hailey House Hostel	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	703	Norman Street	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	60
32	Jack Lonsdale Lodge	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	232	Spencer Street	SEBASTOPOL	VIC	3356	60
33	James Thomas Court	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	170	Morgan Street	SEBASTOPOL	VIC	3356	44
34	Jessie Gillett Court	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	170	Morgan Street	SEBASTOPOL	VIC	3356	42
35	Midlands Hostel	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	701	Norman Street	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	23
36	Pleasant Home Hostel	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	32	Pleasant Street	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	39
37	PS Hobson Nursing Home	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	311	Gillies Street	WENDOUREE	VIC	3355	60
38	Queen Elizabeth Centre	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	102	Ascot Street	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	45
39	Queen Elizabeth Hostel	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	311	Gillies Street	WENDOUREE	VIC	3355	73
40	Talbot Place Aged Care Facility	Ballarat Health Services	Grampians	1205	Dana Street	BALLARAT	VIC	3350	30
41	Beaufort Hostel	Beaufort & Skipton Health Service	Grampians		Burton Street	BEAUFORT	VIC	3373	12
42	Beaufort Nursing Home	Beaufort & Skipton Health Service	Grampians		Havelock Street	BEAUFORT	VIC	3373	15
43	Skipton Hostel	Beaufort & Skipton Health Service	Barwon South Western		Blake Street	SKIPTON	VIC	3361	9
44	Skipton Nursing Home	Beaufort & Skipton Health Service	Barwon South Western		Blake Street	SKIPTON	VIC	3361	4
45	Grant Lodge Aged Care Facility	Djerriwarrh Health Services	Grampians	123	Clarinda Street	BACCHUS MARSH	VIC	3340	30
46	Rupanyup District Nursing Home	Dunmunkle Health Services	Grampians	89	Cromie Street	RUPANYUP	VIC	3388	21
47	Garden View Court Hostel	East Grampians Health Service	Grampians		Lowe Street	ARARAT	VIC	3377	24

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Tuesday, 16 August 2005

COUNCIL

433

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
48	John Pickford House	East Grampians Health Service	Grampians		Girdlestone Street	ARARAT	VIC	3377	40
49	Parkland House Hostel	East Grampians Health Service	Grampians		Delacombe Way	WILLAURA	VIC	3379	10
50	Willaura Hospital Nursing Home	East Grampians Health Service	Grampians		Delacombe Way	WILLAURA	VIC	3379	2
51	Birchip Nursing Home	East Wimmera Health Service	Grampians		Taverner Street	BIRCHIP	VIC	3483	10
52	Charlton Hostel	East Wimmera Health Service	Loddon Mallee	4-8	Menzies Street	CHARLTON	VIC	3525	5
53	Donald & District Nursing Home	East Wimmera Health Service	Loddon Mallee		Aitken Avenue	DONALD	VIC	3480	12
54	Grandview Lodge	East Wimmera Health Service	Grampians		Grandview Street	WYCHEPROOF	VIC	3527	35
55	Kara Court Nursing Home	East Wimmera Health Service	Grampians		North Western Road	ST ARNAUD	VIC	3478	30
56	Kara-Linga Nursing Home	East Wimmera Health Service	Grampians	4-8	Menzies Street	CHARLTON	VIC	3525	10
57	Kowree Nursing Home Unit	Edenhope & District Memorial Hospital	Grampians	128-132	Elizabeth Street	EDENHOPE	VIC	3318	18
58	Lakes Hostel, The	Edenhope & District Memorial Hospital	Grampians		Lake Street	EDENHOPE	VIC	3318	22
59	Creswick Nursing Home	Hepburn Health Service	Grampians		Napier Street	CRESWICK	VIC	3363	30
60	Daylesford Nursing Home	Hepburn Health Service	Grampians	13	Hospital Street	DAYLESFORD	VIC	3460	18
61	Lumeah Lodge Hostel	Hepburn Health Service	Grampians		Hospital Street	DAYLESFORD	VIC	3460	12
62	Trentham Hostel	Hepburn Health Service	Grampians	22-24	Victoria Street	TRENTHAM	VIC	3458	20
63	Trentham Nursing Home	Hepburn Health Service	Grampians	22-24	Victoria Street	TRENTHAM	VIC	3458	15
64	Corrong Village Hostel	Rural Northwest Health	Grampians	100	Toole Street	HOPETOUN	VIC	3396	23
65	Hopetoun Nursing Home	Rural Northwest Health	Grampians	107	Lascelles Street	HOPETOUN	VIC	3396	10
66	JR & AE Landt Hostel	Rural Northwest Health	Grampians		Cox Street	WARRACKNABEAL	VIC	3393	30
67	Warracknabeal Hospital- JR & AE Landt Nursing Home	Rural Northwest Health	Grampians		Dimboola Road	WARRACKNABEAL	VIC	3393	36

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
68	Helen Schutt Nursing Home/MacPherson Smith	Stawell Regional Health	Grampians		Sloane Street	STAWELL	VIC	3380	35
69	Allan W Lockwood Special Care Hostel	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians		Schurmann Street	NATIMUK	VIC	3409	11
70	Archie Gray Nursing Home Unit	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians		Roache Street	KANIVA	VIC	3419	11
71	Iona Digby Harris Home	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians	49	Nelson Street	NHILL	VIC	3418	30
72	Jeparit & District Nursing Home	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians	2	Charles Street	JEPARIT	VIC	3423	15
73	Kaniva Hostel	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians	9	Farmers Street	KANIVA	VIC	3419	10
74	Natimuk BNH Nursing Home Annex	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians		Nelson Street	NHILL	VIC	3418	20
75	Rainbow Bush Nursing Home Annex	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians	2	Swinbourne Avenue	RAINBOW	VIC	3424	10
76	Rainbow Bush Nursing Hospital Hostel	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians	12	Sanders Street	RAINBOW	VIC	3424	10
77	Trescowthick House Hostel	West Wimmera Health Service	Grampians	6	Schurmann Street	NATIMUK	VIC	3409	10
78	Dimboola District Hospital Nursing Home Unit	Wimmera Health Care Group	Grampians	32-36	Anderson Street	DIMBOOLA	VIC	3414	26
79	Kurrajong Lodge	Wimmera Health Care Group	Grampians		Cnr Arnott & Robinson Streets	HORSHAM	VIC	3400	36
80	Wimmera Nursing Home	Wimmera Health Care Group	Grampians	100	Baillie Street	HORSHAM	VIC	3400	70
81	Carshalton House Hostel	Bendigo Health Care Group	Loddon Mallee		Stoneham Street	GOLDEN SQUARE	VIC	3555	45
82	Golden Oaks Nursing Home	Bendigo Health Care Group	Loddon Mallee	15-39	Hattam Street	GOLDEN SQUARE	VIC	3555	60
83	Joan Pinder Nursing Home	Bendigo Health Care Group	Loddon Mallee	26	Gibson Street	BENDIGO	VIC	3550	91
84	Simpkin House Nursing Home	Bendigo Health Care Group	Loddon Mallee		Cnr Gibson & Holdsworth Road	BENDIGO	VIC	3550	40
85	Stella Anderson Nursing Home	Bendigo Health Care Group	Loddon Mallee	100-104	Barnard Street	BENDIGO	VIC	3550	60
86	Boort District Hospital Hostel	Boort District Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Andrew Street	BOORT	VIC	3537	30
87	Boort District Hospital Nursing Home	Boort District Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Kiniry Street	BOORT	VIC	3537	10
88	Cohuna District Nursing Home	Cohuna District Hospital	Loddon Mallee	144-158	King George Street	COHUNA	VIC	3568	16



QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Tuesday, 16 August 2005

COUNCIL

435

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
89	Glanville Village	Echuca Regional Health	Loddon Mallee	9-27	Francis Street	ECHUCA	VIC	3564	103
90	Inglewood & District Hospital Nursing Home	Inglewood & District Health Service	Loddon Mallee	3	Hospital Street	INGLEWOOD	VIC	3517	15
91	Inglewood Hostel	Inglewood & District Health Service	Loddon Mallee	3	Hospital Street	INGLEWOOD	VIC	3517	20
92	Glenarm Nursing Home	Kerang & District Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Burgoyne Street	KERANG	VIC	3579	30
93	Kyabram Nursing Home	Kyabram & District Memorial Community Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Fenaughty Street	KYABRAM	VIC	3620	42
94	Thomas Hogan Wing Nursing Home	Kyneton District Health Service	Loddon Mallee		Caroline Chisholm Drive	KYNETON	VIC	3444	30
95	Jessie Bowe House	Maldon Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Chapel Street North	MALDON	VIC	3463	12
96	Maldon Hospital & Community Care Service	Maldon Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Chapel Street North	MALDON	VIC	3463	16
97	Cannon T D Martin Nursing Home	Mallee Track Health & Community Service	Loddon Mallee	28	Britt Street	OUYEN	VIC	3490	30
98	Dr R W Pattinson Hostel	Mallee Track Health & Community Service	Loddon Mallee	53	Hughes Street	OUYEN	VIC	3490	28
99	Manangatang & District Nursing Home	Manangatang & District Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Pioneer Street	MANANGATANG	VIC	3546	10
100	Avoca Hostel	Maryborough District Health Service	Grampians	13	Liebig Street	AVOCA	VIC	3467	10
101	Avoca Nursing Home	Maryborough District Health Service	Grampians	10	Templeton Street	AVOCA	VIC	3467	20
102	Dunolly Nursing Home	Maryborough District Health Service	Loddon Mallee	12	Havelock Street	DUNOLLY	VIC	3472	19
103	Maryborough Nursing Home	Maryborough District Health Service	Loddon Mallee	77-87	Clarendon Street	MARYBOROUGH	VIC	3465	45
104	Heathcote Aged Care Service	McIvor Health & Community Services	Loddon Mallee	39	Hospital Street	HEATHCOTE	VIC	3523	30

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
105	McIvor Health & Community Services Nursing Home	McIvor Health & Community Services	Loddon Mallee	39	Hospital Street	HEATHCOTE	VIC	3523	12
106	Mt Alexander Hostel	Mt Alexander Hospital	Loddon Mallee	20	Cornish Street	CASTLEMAINE	VIC	3450	118
107	Mt Alexander Nursing Home	Mt Alexander Hospital	Loddon Mallee	20	Cornish Street	CASTLEMAINE	VIC	3450	90
108	Red Cliffs Nursing Home	Red Cliffs & Community Aged Care Services Inc.	Loddon Mallee	39	Jamieson Avenue	RED CLIFFS	VIC	3496	30
109	Sunraysia Hostel for the Elderly	Red Cliffs & Community Aged Care Services Inc.	Loddon Mallee		Calotis Street	RED CLIFFS	VIC	3496	45
110	Riverside Hostel	Robinvale District Health Services	Loddon Mallee	39	Latje Road	ROBINVALE	VIC	3549	30
111	Robinvale Nursing Home	Robinvale District Health Services	Loddon Mallee	39	Latje Road	ROBINVALE	VIC	3549	19
112	Rochester & District Hostel	Rochester & Elmore District Health Service	Loddon Mallee		Village Drive	ROCHESTER	VIC	3561	30
113	Rochester Nursing Home Annexe	Rochester & Elmore District Health Service	Loddon Mallee		Village Drive	ROCHESTER	VIC	3561	30
114	Nyah District Aged Care Service (Jacaranda Lodge)	Swan Hill District Hospital	Loddon Mallee	1	Monash Avenue	NYAH WEST	VIC	3595	15
115	Swan Hill District (Nyah Campus)	Swan Hill District Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Monash Avenue	NYAH WEST	VIC	3595	12
116	Swan Hill District Nursing Home	Swan Hill District Hospital	Loddon Mallee		Splatt Street	SWAN HILL	VIC	3585	52
117	Barwidgee Lodge	Alpine Health	Hume	30	O'Donnell Avenue	MYRTLEFORD	VIC	3737	30
118	Hawthorn Village	Alpine Health	Hume		Hawthorn Lane	BRIGHT	VIC	3741	40
119	Kiewa Valley House	Alpine Health	Hume		Holland Street	MOUNT BEAUTY	VIC	3699	20
120	Beechworth Residential Aged Care Program, The	Beechworth Health Service	Hume	5	Warner Road	BEECHWORTH	VIC	3747	113
121	Morrie Evans Wing Nursing Home	Benalla & District Memorial Hospital	Hume		Coster Street	BENALLA	VIC	3672	30

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Tuesday, 16 August 2005

COUNCIL

437

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
122	Irvin House Nursing Home	Cobram District Hospital	Hume		Broadway Street	COBRAM	VIC	3644	30
123	Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home	Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home Inc	Hume	5	Eildon Road	EILDON	VIC	3713	50
124	Glenview Community Care Nursing Home	Glenview Community Care Inc	Hume	168	High Street	RUTHERGLEN	VIC	3685	40
125	Grutzner House	Goulburn Valley Health	Hume		Graham Street	SHEPPARTON	VIC	3630	30
126	Parkvilla Aged Care Facility	Goulburn Valley Health	Hume	64-68	Park Street	TATURA	VIC	3616	15
127	Waranga Nursing Home	Goulburn Valley Health	Loddon Mallee		Coyle Street	RUSHWORTH	VIC	3612	10
128	Bindaree Retirement Centre	Mansfield District Hospital	Hume		Cnr Highett Street & Lovick Avenue	MANSFIELD	VIC	3722	40
129	Buckland House Nursing Home	Mansfield District Hospital	Hume		Highett Street	MANSFIELD	VIC	3722	30
130	Nathalia District Hospital Nursing Home	Nathalia District Hospital	Hume		Elizabeth Street	NATHALIA	VIC	3638	16
131	Wangaratta & District Nursing Home	Northeast Health Wangaratta	Hume		Clark Street	WANGARATTA	VIC	3677	70
132	Baala House Nursing Home	Numurkah District Health Service	Hume		Katamatite-Nathalia Road	NUMURKAH	VIC	3636	30
133	Numurkah Pioneers Memorial Lodge	Numurkah District Health Service	Hume	11-17	Katamatite-Nathalia Road	NUMURKAH	VIC	3636	36
134	Seymour District Nursing Home	Seymour District Memorial Hospital	Hume		Brettoneaux Street	SEYMOUR	VIC	3661	30
135	Bolga Court Hostel	Tallangatta Health Service	Hume		Lakeside Drive	TALLANGATTA	VIC	3700	36
136	Lakeview Nursing Home	Tallangatta Health Service	Hume		Barree Street	TALLANGATTA	VIC	3700	10
137	Upper Murray Health & Community Services	Upper Murray Health & Community Services	Hume		Kiell Street	CORRYONG	VIC	3707	52
138	Allawah Special Care Hostel	Yarrawonga District Health Service	Hume		Piper Street	YARRAWONGA	VIC	3730	30

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
139	Yarrawonga Nursing Home	Yarrawonga District Health Service	Hume		Piper Street	YARRAWONGA	VIC	3730	30
140	Rosebank Hostel	Yea & District Memorial Hospital	Hume	20	Miller Street	YEA	VIC	3717	17
141	Rosebank Nursing Home	Yea & District Memorial Hospital	Hume	45	Station Street	YEA	VIC	3717	10
142	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service	Bairnsdale Regional Health	Gippsland		McKean Street	BAIRNSDALE	VIC	3875	17
143	Jacaranda House Hostel	Bairnsdale Regional Health	Gippsland		McKean Street	BAIRNSDALE	VIC	3875	41
144	Sutherland Lodge	Bairnsdale Regional Health	Gippsland		McKean Street	BAIRNSDALE	VIC	3875	32
145	Armitage House Nursing Home	Bass Coast Regional Health	Gippsland	225-233	Graham Street	WONTHAGGI	VIC	3995	30
146	Griffiths Point Lodge Hostel	Bass Coast Regional Health	Gippsland		Davis Point Road	SAN REMO	VIC	3925	29
147	Kirrak House Nursing Home	Bass Coast Regional Health	Gippsland	225-233	Graham Street	WONTHAGGI	VIC	3995	30
148	Evelyn Wilson Nursing Home	Central Gippsland Health Service	Gippsland	155	Cnr Foster and Palmerston Streets	SALE	VIC	3850	50
149	JHF Mc Donald Wing Nursing Home	Central Gippsland Health Service	Gippsland	48	Kent Street	MAFFRA	VIC	3860	30
150	Alchera House	Gippsland Southern Health Service	Gippsland		Bridge Road	KORUMBURRA	VIC	3950	22
151	Hillside Lodge Hostel	Gippsland Southern Health Service	Gippsland		Bridge Road	KORUMBURRA	VIC	3950	30
152	Koorooman House Nursing Home	Gippsland Southern Health Service	Gippsland		Koonwarra Road	LEONGATHA	VIC	3953	30
153	Killara Hostel	Kooweerup Regional Health Service	Southern Metropolitan		Rossiter Road	KOOWEERUP	VIC	3981	40
154	Westport Nursing Home	Kooweerup Regional Health Service	Southern Metropolitan		Rossiter Road	KOOWEERUP	VIC	3981	20

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Tuesday, 16 August 2005

COUNCIL

439

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
155	Latrobe Regional Hospital Nursing Home	LaTrobe Regional Hospital	Gippsland		Cnr Princess Highway & Village Drive	TRARALGON	VIC	3824	20
156	Omeo District Hospital/Hostel	Omeo District Hospital	Gippsland		Easton Street	OMEEO	VIC	3898	4
157	Omeo District Hospital Nursing Home	Omeo District Hospital	Gippsland		Easton Street	OMEEO	VIC	3898	10
158	Lochiel House	Orbost Regional Health	Gippsland		Boundary Road	ORBOST	VIC	3888	26
159	Waratah Lodge	Orbost Regional Health	Gippsland		Boundary Road	ORBOST	VIC	3888	15
160	Andrews House	West Gippsland Healthcare Group	Gippsland	42	School Road	TRAFALGAR	VIC	3824	50
161	Cooinda Lodge Nursing Home	West Gippsland Healthcare Group	Gippsland		Landsborough Street	WARRAGUL	VIC	3820	60
162	St Elmo's Nursing Home	Yarram & District Health Services	Gippsland	85	Commercial Road	YARRAM	VIC	3971	30
163	Edward Street Nursing Home	Eastern Health	Eastern Metropolitan	2-6	Edward Street	UPPER FERNTREE GULLY	VIC	3156	30
164	Monda Lodge Hostel	Eastern Health	Eastern Metropolitan	377	Maroondah Highway	HEALESVILLE	VIC	3777	30
165	Peter James Centre - Northside	Eastern Health	Eastern Metropolitan		Mahoneys Road	BURWOOD EAST	VIC	3151	30
166	Peter James Centre-Mooroolbark Campus	Eastern Health	Eastern Metropolitan	Rear 73-75	Cambridge Road	MOOROOLBARK	VIC	3138	30
167	Auburn House	St George's Health Service	Eastern Metropolitan	98	Camberwell Road	HAWTHORN EAST	VIC	3123	30
168	Cambridge House	St George's Health Service	Eastern Metropolitan	3	Cambridge Street	COLLINGWOOD	VIC	3066	30
169	Riverside House	St George's Health Service	Eastern Metropolitan	2	River Street	RICHMOND	VIC	3121	30
170	Caulfield Hospital Nursing Home	Bayside Health	Southern Metropolitan	294	Kooyong Road	CAULFIELD	VIC	3162	90
171	Montgomery Nursing Home	Bayside Health	Southern Metropolitan	260	Kooyong Road	CAULFIELD	VIC	3162	30
172	Namarra Nursing Home	Bayside Health	Southern Metropolitan	294	Kooyong Road	CAULFIELD	VIC	3162	30
173	Carinya Nursing Home (Frankston Extended Care)	Peninsula Health	Southern Metropolitan	125	Golf Links Road	FRANKSTON	VIC	3199	30
174	Frankston Aged Care Service	Peninsula Health	Southern Metropolitan	125	Golf Links Road	FRANKSTON	VIC	3199	30

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

State owned Residential Aged Care Facilities at 31 May 2005

Number of Facilities	Facility Name	Provider	Planning Region	Street Number	Street Name	Suburb	State	Postcode	Beds in each Facility
175	Jean Turner Nursing Home	Peninsula Health	Southern Metropolitan	14	Cairns Avenue	ROSEBUD	VIC	3939	30
176	Lotus Lodge Hostel	Peninsula Health	Southern Metropolitan	1497	Nepean Highway	ROSEBUD	VIC	3939	80
177	Michael Court Hostel	Peninsula Health	Southern Metropolitan	32	Michael Court	SEAFORD	VIC	3198	18
178	A G Eastwood Hostel	Southern Health	Southern Metropolitan	376	Warrigal Road	CHELTENHAM	VIC	3192	100
179	Allambee Nursing Home Kingston Centre	Southern Health	Southern Metropolitan	376	Warrigal Road	CHELTENHAM	VIC	3192	35
180	Kingston Centre Nursing Home	Southern Health	Southern Metropolitan	376	Warrigal Road	CHELTENHAM	VIC	3192	112
181	Mooraleigh Hostel	Southern Health	Southern Metropolitan	748	Centre Road	BENTLEIGH EAST	VIC	3165	29
182	Yarraman Nursing Home	Southern Health	Southern Metropolitan		Yarraman Road	NOBLE PARK	VIC	3174	30
183	Darley House	Austin Health	Northern Metropolitan		Banksia Street	HEIDELBERG	VIC	3081	60
184	Mary Guthrie House Nursing Home	Austin Health	Northern Metropolitan		Yarra Boulevard	KEW	VIC	3101	20
185	Boyne Russell House	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan	184-186	Victoria Street	BRUNSWICK	VIC	3056	30
186	Cyril Jewel House	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan	68	Hassett Crescent	KEILOR EAST	VIC	3033	45
187	Gardenview House	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan		Poplar Road	PARKVILLE	VIC	3052	21
188	McLellan House Hostel	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan	2	Robinson Street	BROADMEADOWS	VIC	3047	32
189	Merv Irvine Nursing Home	Melbourne Health	Northern Metropolitan	1231	Plenty Road	BUNDOORA	VIC	3083	30
190	Parkville Hostel	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan	83	Poplar Road	PARKVILLE	VIC	3052	120
191	South Stone Lodge Residential Facility	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan	276-290	Princes Highway	WERRIBEE	VIC	3030	30
192	Weighbridge Residential Care Facility	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan	72	Ascot Vale Road	FLEMINGTON	VIC	3031	30
193	Westside Lodge Nursing Home	Melbourne Health	Western Metropolitan		Santiago Street	ST ALBANS	VIC	3021	30
194	Ian Brand Nursing Home	Northern Health	Northern Metropolitan	1231	Plenty Road	BUNDOORA	VIC	3083	30
195	Reg Geary Nursing Home	Western Health	Western Metropolitan	54	Pinnacle Crescent	MELTON	VIC	3337	30
196	Hazeldean Nursing Home	Western Health	Western Metropolitan	211-215	Osborne Street	WILLIAMSTOWN	VIC	3016	40

Number of State owned Facilities = 196

**Education and training: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority — communications staff**

**4980. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Education and training: Office of Strategy and Review — communications staff**

**4988. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Office of Strategy and Review are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Consumer affairs: Motor Car Traders Guarantee Fund Claims Committee — communications staff**

**5070. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs: As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Motor Car Traders Guarantee Fund Claims Committee are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

As the financial year had not lapsed at the date the question was asked, accurate figures can only be provided as at the date the question was posted (17 June 2005). With reference to officers engaged in communications in the Motor Car Traders Guarantee Fund Claims Committee as at 17 June 2005, the answers to the questions are:

- (1) Nil
- (2) Not Applicable
- (3) Not Applicable

**Treasurer: Victorian Managed Insurance Authority — communication staff**

**5224. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Treasurer): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The organization to which you refer does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities.



**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.*

**Wednesday, 17 August 2005**

**Small business: Office of the Small Business Commissioner — advertising**

**2121. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Small Business: In relation to the Office of the Small Business Commissioner's advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of the advertisements.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) (i) In the print media there were four advertisements in each of the Herald Sun, The Age and Australian Financial Review, and 85 appearances in regional newspapers. In total, there were 150 advertisements on radio (being 10 advertisements on each of 15 radio stations).
- (ii) The total amount spent to 30 June 2003 was \$59,980.96.
- (iii) The purpose of the advertisements was to inform the public of the commencement of the Office of the Small Business Commissioner.
- (iv) 1 May 2003 and 30 June 2003
- (b) There are over 100 media outlets in which advertising for the Small Business Commissioner took place in connection with the commencement of the Office of the Small Business Commissioner's activities on 1 May 2003. A series of advertisements were placed in metropolitan, regional and ethnic press across Victoria. In addition advertisements featured on both metropolitan and regional radio.
- (c) The contract was awarded to the Master Agency Media Services.

**Agriculture: Victorian Meat Authority — advertising**

**2195. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to the Victorian Meat Authority's advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The list below describes the advertising undertaken by the Victorian Meat Authority between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003.

- (a) (i) The Victorian Meat Authority did not record the date of approval of the advertising contract because the personnel agency engages the advertising company.
- (ii) The cost of each contract was:
  - \$ 527.34
  - \$2,680.37
  - \$1,771.44
  - \$1,579.27
- (iii) All advertising activities were for the recruiting of new staff. The Victorian Meat Authority engages a personnel agency to recruit all staff and as part of this contract the agency engage the advertising company.
- (iv) one day
- (b) The advertisements were published in The Age newspaper on the following dates:
  - Saturday 10 August 2002
  - Saturday 24 August 2002
  - Saturday 28 September 2002
  - Saturday 17 May 2003
- (c) The contract was awarded to Adcorp Pty Ltd.

**Treasurer: Victorian Funds Management Corporation — advertising**

- 2295. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Treasurer): In relation to the Victorian Funds Management Corporation’s advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:
- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
  - (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
  - (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a)(i) There was only one advertising campaign.
- (a)(ii) The cost was \$5,000 in the defined period.
- (a)(iii) To raise Victoria’s profile in the investment industry and attract national and international attention to Melbourne as a centre for financial innovation.
- (a)(iv) A banner advertisement was placed one per quarter annum.
- (b) Once per quarter annum in “Financial Standard” which is a finance and investment industry newspaper.

- (c) The contract was awarded to Rainmaker Information Pty Ltd.

**Sport and recreation: State Sports Centre Trust — advertising**

**2308. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation: In relation to the State Sports Centre Trust’s advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The State Sport Centres Trust arranged for the following advertising for the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

<b>Date of Advertising</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Location</b>
12/4/03	\$1581.95	Employment advertisement for Aquatic Manager	One issue	The Australian
17/6/03	\$2200.00	SplashOUT advertising	One issue	Port Phillip Leader

The advertising was placed directly by the Trust.

**Transport: Melbourne Port Corporation — media research and public opinion polling**

**2330. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to Melbourne Port Corporation’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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

- (a) Melbourne Port Corporation 2002 Customer and Stakeholder Surveys.

- (b) Date of approval of contract: 11 June 2002 with the duration of the contract: 21 March 2002 to completion of project in November 2002.
- (c) \$48,685
- (d) Nexus Research Pty Limited (261 Bridge Road, Richmond, Victoria 3121).
- (e) The project was put to tender. Twenty three conforming expressions of interest were received. All were evaluated and four companies interviewed.
- (f) The survey reports did not provide any recommendations. The reports summarised the data gained from the questionnaires. This data was used as input into the Corporation’s Planning process.
- (g) No action was required or taken by the Department or Minister.

**Energy industries: Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector — media research and public opinion polling**

**2332. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries: In relation to the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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

As per the accompanying table prepared on advice of the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector:

Title of Research	Approval Date	Contract Duration	Cost	Personnel	Tendered	Recommendations	Actions Taken
Evaluation of Proposed New Television Commercials	1/10/02	Final report delivered 30/10/02	\$23,650	Quantum Market Research	No	That the current campaign be kept with minor modifications to improve message delivery	Recommendations reviewed by the OCEI and television commercials amended where appropriate.
Safety Switches (Community Attitudes)	12/11/02	Final report delivered January 2003	\$13,566	Quantum Market Research	No	Recommendations were not sought. Feedback was sought from the community on the most appropriate means by which the number of Victorian domestic premises with safety switches installed could be increased.	Feedback obtained included in the OCEI’s analysis of ways to increase use of safety switches.
Electrical Safety Advertising (Pre Christmas)	6/12/02	Final report delivered 17/1/03	\$12,000	Quantum Market Research	No	The opportunity exists to reinforce the electrical safety message by exploring alternative approaches to communicating the need for, installing safety switches, communicate the ease and affordability of installation of safety	Feedback obtained included in the OCEI’s analysis of ways to increase use of safety switches.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Wednesday, 17 August 2005

COUNCIL

447

<b>Title of Research</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Contract Duration</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Tendered</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Actions Taken</b>
						switches, and highlighting the importance of employing electricians who are licensed and can supply a certificate of electrical safety.	
Electrical Safety Advertising (Pre Christmas)	9/12/03	Final report delivered January 2004	\$12,900	Quantum Market Research	No	Continuing the campaign is important to deliver action relating to electrical safety through the re-engineered and relaunched executions which have generated solid and improved awareness of OCEI advertising.	Feedback obtained included in the OCEI's analysis of ways to increase use of safety switches.
Electrical Safety Advertising (Pre Easter)	31/3/04	Final report delivered 3/6/04	\$14,900	Quantum Market Research	No	Continuing the campaign is important to deliver action relating to electrical safety through the re-engineered and relaunched executions which have generated solid and improved awareness of OCEI advertising.	Feedback obtained included in the OCEI's analysis of ways to increase use of safety switches.

**Transport: VicTrack — media research and public opinion polling**

**2338. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to VicTrack's media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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

Only one media research or public opinion polling contract has been awarded by VicTrack since 1 January 2002. Details are:

- (a) Community, Business And Transport Users Attitudes to the Redevelopment of Camberwell Station.
- (b) Contract was awarded on 14 May 2004 and will take approximately 2 months to complete.
- (c) The cost is \$31,485.
- (d) The research is being done by Strahan Research
- (e) The contract was awarded via a competitive process.
- (f) No recommendations have been made as the work is not complete.
- (g) No actions were taken by the Department or the Minister as the work is not complete.

**Tourism: Australian Grand Prix Corporation — media research and public opinion polling**

**2355. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Small Business (for the Minister for Tourism): In relation to the Australian Grand Prix Corporation’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

Between 1 January 2002 and the date of the question, 8 June 2004, reports were commissioned from Wallis Consulting Group Pty Ltd and Quantum Market Research.

The total cost of the contracts to prepare the reports was \$146,135, and no individual contract was over \$40,000.

**Commonwealth Games: Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd — media research and public opinion polling**

**2543. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Commonwealth Games: In relation to the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

M2006 engaged Sweeney Research Pty Ltd from July 2002 to February 2003 to undertake public opinion research on the Games logo and brand at a total cost of \$50,750.

In June 2004, M2006 engaged Open Mind Research Group to undertake research on M2006’s proposed advertising at a total cost of \$46,359.

**Attorney-General: Office of the Victorian Privacy Commissioner — office accommodation**

- 3068. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Attorney-General): In relation to the Office of the Victorian Privacy Commissioner's leases of office accommodation currently held, what is — (i) the location of each lease; (ii) the expiry date of the leases; (iii) the cost per metre of each lease; and (iv) the total cost of each lease over the term of the contract.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Office of the Victorian Privacy Commissioner occupies space leased by the Minister for Finance. You may wish to refer this question to the Minister for Finance.

**Major projects: Innovation Building — opening**

- 3703. THE HON. PHILIP DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Major Projects): What was the reason for the delayed opening of the 'Innovation Building', a part of the Digital Harbour Precinct in the Melbourne Docklands.

**ANSWER:**

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

The construction of the Innovation Building was completed about four months prior to the required building contract completion date of 3 July 2004. The official opening of the building was held on 2 July 2004 to suit official dignitaries' diaries.

**Resources: minister's office — alcohol purchases**

- 4075. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Resources: In relation to alcohol purchased by the Minister's Office since 1 January 2002, what was the —
- (a) date of each purchase;
  - (b) value of each purchase; and
  - (c) items purchased.

**ANSWER:**

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

One component of the Ministerial office budget is hospitality expenses. From time to time hospitality is provided for functions held by my office. Hospitality expenses for my office are moderate.

**Major projects: Docklands Authority — interstate and overseas travel**

- 4093. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Major Projects): In relation to interstate and overseas travel by the members and staff of the Docklands Authority in 2003-04:
- (1) How many trips were undertaken.
  - (2) What costs were associated with the travel.

**ANSWER:**

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

Melbourne Docklands Authority was merged with the Urban and Regional Land Corporation in August 2003 to form VicUrban which operates under the provisions of the Victorian Urban Development Authority Act 2003.

During the relevant period, no travel occurred.

**Police and emergency services: Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner — interstate and overseas travel**

**4126. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): In relation to interstate and overseas travel by the members and staff of the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner in 2003-04:

- (1) How many trips were undertaken.
- (2) What costs were associated with the travel.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) There were 25 interstate trips and no overseas travel undertaken by staff of the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner in 2003-04.
- (2) The costs associated with the travel were \$16,913.

**Police and emergency services: Victorian Community Council Against Violence — interstate and overseas travel**

**4131. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): In relation to interstate and overseas travel by the members and staff of the Victorian Community Council Against Violence in 2003-04:

- (1) How many trips were undertaken.
- (2) What costs were associated with the travel.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) Two members of the staff of the Victorian Community Council Against Violence attended a conference in Queensland on 29 July 2003.
- (2) The total cost of the trip was \$2407.00.

**WorkCover: Victorian WorkCover Authority — entertainment expenses**

**4336. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Minister for WorkCover): In relation to the Victorian WorkCover Authority's entertainment expenses incurred in 2003-04, what are the details, in relation to expenses in excess of \$500, including the —

- (a) date incurred;



- (b) cost;
- (c) number of guests;
- (d) purpose; and
- (e) name of service provider.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that the following entertainment expenses over \$500 were incurred during 2003-04.

Date in incurred	Amount	Number of Guests	Purpose	Provider
22 Jul 03	\$1807.68	Head office staff	Organisational Development – Celebration	The Naval & Military Club Vintage Cellars
8 Oct 03	\$607.27	8	Organisational Development – Planning	Punch Lane
31 Oct 03	\$809.33	Head office staff	Organisational Development – Celebration	Elizabeth Andrews
17 Nov 03	\$912.98	14	Organisational Development – Stakeholder engagement	The Australia Club
21 Nov 03	\$621.25	35	Organisational Development – Celebration	Advanced Catering Concepts
05 Dec 03	\$790.00	Divisional	Organisational Development – Celebration	The Naval & Military Club
09 Dec 03	\$1,363.64	17	Organisational Development – Celebration	The Function Point
16 Apr 04	\$1,386.36	50	Organisational Development – Planning	Rydges Melbourne

**Agriculture: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — payments**

**4406. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Agriculture):

- (1) What payments have been made to Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd by the Minister’s department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister’s administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There have been no payments made to Shannon's Way Pty. Ltd. by my private office or any agency or statutory body under the administration of the Minister for Agriculture since 28 October 2003.

However, there have been five payments made to Shannon's Way Pty. Ltd. by the Department of Primary Industries since 28 October 2003. The details are as follow:

Date	Payment	Project Details
4 March 2004	\$6,985.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (strategy workshop and follow up meetings)

Date	Payment	Project Details
14 July 2004	\$5,500.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (development of recommendations for project scope and components)
30 July 2004	\$10,450.00	Development of strategic positioning for the new department, including key message development
30 June 2003	\$770.00	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media
31 August 2004	\$189.20	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media

**Resources: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — payments**

**4424. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Resources:

- (1) What payments have been made to Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd by the Minister’s department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister’s administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There have been no payments made to Shannon's Way Pty. Ltd. by my private office or any agency or statutory body under the administration of the Minister for Resources since 28 October 2003.

However, there have been five payments made to Shannon's Way Pty. Ltd. by the Department of Primary Industries since 28 October 2003. The details are as follow:

Date	Payment	Project Details
4 March 2004	\$6,985.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (strategy workshop and follow up meetings)
14 July 2004	\$5,500.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (development of recommendations for project scope and components)
30 July 2004	\$10,450.00	Development of strategic positioning for the new department, including key message development
30 June 2003	\$770.00	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media
31 August 2004	\$189.20	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media

**Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — overseas trips**

**4638. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Victorian Communities):

- (1) How many overseas trips were undertaken by executive level staff and base line staff of the Department of Victorian Communities in 2003-04.
- (2) What were the destinations.

- (3) What was the purpose of visiting each destination.
- (4) What costs were associated with the travel.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Department for Victorian Communities funded 13 overseas travel for executive and base line staff and reimbursed costs for a staff member to attend two events whilst overseas on recreation leave. The travel was to various destinations and in each case, the purpose was to further the functions of the Department.

The total cost was \$113,879.07

**Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — advertising and credit card expenditure**

**4722. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Victorian Communities): In relation to the Department for Victorian Communities:

- (1) What was the advertising expenditure in 2003-04.
- (2) What was the credit card expenditure in 2003-04.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) The Department for Victorian Communities spent \$1,289,577.24 on advertising during the 2003-04 financial year.
- (2) The Department for Victorian Communities purchased goods and services to the value of \$191,971.00 between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004 with the use of its credit card facility.

**State and regional development: Albury-Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation — advertising and credit card expenditure**

**4826. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs (for the Minister for State and Regional Development): In relation to the Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation:

- (1) What was the advertising expenditure in 2003-04.
- (2) What was the credit card expenditure in 2003-04.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

- (1) Advertising expenditure for the Albury-Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation in 2003-04 was \$58,974. Expenditure relates to advertising of estate releases and land for sale in the Wodonga area.
- (2) Credit card expenditure for the Albury-Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation in 2003-04 was nil.

**Housing: Shepparton estate — redevelopment**

**4921. THE HON. WENDY LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Housing: In relation to the proposed redevelopment of the public housing estate at Parkside Estate, Shepparton:

- (1) What is the time line for the redevelopment.
- (2) Has the Government received a planning permit for the redevelopment; if so, when.
- (3) If a planning permit has not been received for the redevelopment, has an application been lodged with the relevant Council; if so, when.
- (4) What is the budget for the redevelopment over the life of the project.
- (5) How much has been budgeted for this development in 2003-04.
- (6) How much has been spent so far on this development.
- (7) What is the expected completion date of the project.
- (8) Broken down by the number of bedrooms, how many units will be available as a result of this redevelopment for —
  - (a) public housing; and
  - (b) private housing.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) With Shepparton being confirmed as a Neighbourhood Renewal area in mid 2002, an overall master plan was prepared in liaison with VicUrban, the Council and the community for a land sale and VicUrban controlled private unit development.
- (2) An overall planning permit has not been received.
- (3) A planning application was lodged by VicUrban in October 2003.
- (4) In May 2003, an estimated budget allowance of \$13 million was announced for the Parkside redevelopment component. In addition, a budget of \$7.5m for upgrade works related to the Neighbourhood Renewal project has been allocated, including the forward estimate period.
- (5) \$1.78m was allocated for this project in the 2003-04 financial year budget comprising \$1.354m for the Parkside redevelopment component and \$435,000 for the Neighbourhood Renewal component.
- (6) As at the end of April 2005, a total of \$3.08m had been spent on the Parkside redevelopment project and \$3.77m on Neighbourhood Renewal activities.
- (7) Completion dates for the VicUrban project are subject to the final master plan and receipt of planning approvals from Council. In addition, the Office of Housing plans to replace demolished units with 84 new public housing dwellings in Greater Shepparton over the next four years.
- (8) The total number of people the redevelopment will house is subject to the final master plan and receipt of planning approvals from Council.

The 84 replacement public housing units planned for Greater Shepparton is expected to comprise a mixture of one, two, three and four bedroom units.

**Housing: neighbourhood renewal project — Norlane and Corio**

**4927. THE HON. WENDY LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Housing: In relation to the proposed neighbourhood renewal project at the public housing estate at Norlane and Corio:

- (1) What is the time line for the project.

- (2) Has a developer been selected for this project; if so, who.
- (3) Has the Government received a planning permit for the project; if so, when.
- (4) If a planning permit has not been received for the project, has an application been lodged with the relevant Council; if so, when.
- (5) What is the budget for the project over the life of the project.
- (6) How much has been budgeted for this project in 2003-04.
- (7) How much has been spent so far on this project.
- (8) What is the expected completion date of the project.
- (9) Broken down by the number of bedrooms, how many units will be available as a result of this redevelopment for —
  - (a) public housing; and
  - (b) private housing.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) There is no proposal for a new neighbourhood renewal project. There is an existing Neighbourhood Renewal project at Norlane and Corio which commenced in 2002. The housing and physical improvement works associated with the Neighbourhood Renewal program were anticipated to take approximately five years. A three year extension was announced as part of the social policy action plan *A Fairer Victoria*.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) The total budget based on the initial five year program is estimated at \$20.7 million. As the works and activities to be undertaken in the three year extension period are in planning, a budget for the total extended project has not yet been defined.
- (6)
  - (a) \$6.2 million was allocated for housing and improvement works for 2003-04 financial year.
  - (b) \$0.266 million was allocated for all other elements of the Neighbourhood Renewal project in Norlane and Corio for 2003-04 financial year.
  - (c) \$6.47 million was allocated in total for the Norlane and Corio Neighbourhood Renewal project for 2003-04.
- (7) As at the end of April 2005, a total of \$15.2 million had been spent on this Neighbourhood Renewal project.
- (8) Allowing for the three year extension, the Norlane and Corio Neighbourhood Renewal project is now scheduled for completion at the end of the 2008-09 financial year.
- (9) Not applicable.

**Environment: hazardous waste — Nowingi**

- 4940. MS. DIANNE HADDEN** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Environment): In relation to the answer given by the Minister for Major Projects to a supplementary

question without notice on 26 May 2005, on the transporting of toxic waste in inclement weather to the proposed toxic waste facility at Hattah-Nowingi:

- (1) How will the toxic waste be scooped back onto the truck during heavy rains and what measures will be implemented to prevent run-off in the water system and environment.
- (2) Will the Minister place a periodic ban on B-double trucks transporting toxic waste during inclement weather along the preferred route of the Calder Highway to Hattah-Nowingi.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) Under the permit system, vehicles transporting prescribed waste must be equipped with a spill kit to enable a safe and effective clean up should a spill occur. A spill kit typically includes absorbent materials and booms, which would be used to prevent any run-off. The spill kit will enable any spilt waste to be managed regardless of the weather conditions. All wastes being transported to Nowingi will be solid and dry, and therefore unlikely to escape from a vehicle.
- (2) The permit system allows for trucks of different sizes and types to meet specified outcomes and requirements. The Environment Protection Authority applies strict controls on the transport of prescribed waste.

**Education and training: Education and Training — communications staff**

**4950. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training):

- (1) As at 31 May 2005 how many officers in the Department of Education and Training were engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band of each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title of each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Education and training: Adult Multicultural Education Service — communications staff**

**4985. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Adult Multicultural Education Service are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Education and training: Office of Resources and Management and Strategy — communications staff**

**4990. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Office of Resources and Management and Strategy are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Treasurer: Essential Services Commission — communication staff**

**5215. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Treasurer): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Essential Services Commission are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The organization to which you refer does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Multicultural affairs: Victorian Multicultural Commission — communications staff**

**5241. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Victorian Multicultural Commission are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) One officer is engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) The salary band for this officer is \$55,189 - \$62,618.
- (3) The officer is known as Communications and Events Coordinator.

**Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — communications staff**

**5256. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Victorian Communities): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in Community Strengthening and Volunteering Division, Department of Victorian Communities are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) As at 30 June 2005, there were no Departmental staff engaged in communications for the Community Strengthening and Volunteering Division.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Not applicable.



**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.*

**Thursday, 18 August 2005**

**Employment and youth affairs: Office for Youth — advertising and credit card expenditure**

**1830. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs): In relation to the Office for Youth within the People and Community Advocacy Division of the Victorian Communities Department:

- (a) What was the advertising expenditure in 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03, respectively.
- (b) What was the credit card expenditure in 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03, respectively.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

For the period 1 January 2003 to 30 June 2003 the advertising expenditure incurred by the Office for Youth was under \$1500.

The Office for Youth did not have any credit card expenditure during 2002-03.

Prior to December 2002 I was not the Minister.

**Transport: Marine Safety Victoria — advertising**

**2098. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to Marine Safety Victoria's advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

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

Details of advertising contracts awarded by Marine Safety Victoria in the 2002/2003 financial year that cost more than \$100,000 are available at [www.tenders.vic.gov.au](http://www.tenders.vic.gov.au).

The only other advertising contract was with Adtown to design radio, newspaper and billboard advertisements for the introduction of Boat Operator Licensing on 21 October 2002. The total cost of the contract was \$50,000 (excl GST).

**Transport: Urban and Regional Land Corporation — advertising**

**2103. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to the Office of the Urban and Regional Land Corporation’s advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of the advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

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

The time and resources required to fully respond to this question would impose an unreasonable burden on resources. Therefore the following summary has been prepared in response to the question.

All advertising was booked and purchased through the State Government’s Master Agency Media Service agreement which operates through the advertising agencies Optimedia and HMA Blaze.

The purpose of all advertising conducted by the Urban and Regional Land Corporation was to either effectively promote the sale of land within its developments, or to recruit staff or seek Tenders.

The value of campaign advertising (advertising used to sell land) in the financial year ending 30 June 2003 was \$1,286,067.05. The value of advertisements by the media in which they appeared is as follows:

Radio	\$ 69,820.43
Magazines	\$ 54,539.07
Press	\$ 1,012,197.28
TV	\$ 60,021
Outdoor	\$ 89,489.04

Non-campaign advertising (that used to advertise Tenders and job vacancies) accounted for \$367,387.92.

Creative work for these campaigns was undertaken by Bristow Prentice Lambaart Budd, under an existing agreement. The amount spent under this agreement (which also includes production of non-advertising related marketing collateral such as brochures and point-of-sale material) was \$824,249.90 (including GST).

**Tourism: Emerald Tourist Railway Board — advertising**

**2123. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Small Business (for the Minister for Tourism): In relation to the Emerald Tourist Railway Board’s advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

- (a) The Emerald Tourism Railway Board entered into a large number of agreements with a range of media organisations throughout the twelve month period. These agreements were negotiated directly with the suppliers for advertising. It does not enter into advertising contracts.
- (b) The Board spent a total of \$138,936 during the 2002-03 financial year advertising various Puffing Billy products such as the Excursion Trains, Luncheon Trains, Dinner Trains, Wedding Trains and Thomas the Tank Engine events in a range of media including local and metropolitan newspapers, metropolitan and regional radio, regional television, visitors guides, seniors publications and selected magazines. This expenditure also included the production of printed brochures for each of these products, which are primarily distributed through local, metropolitan and regional visitor information centres.
- (c) Advertising agreements were undertaken with the following media/publications during 2002/03:
- a. 3AW, Fox FM, Gold 104
  - b. Prime Television
  - c. Melbourne's Child
  - d. The Age
  - e. Herald Sun
  - f. Yarra Valley, Dandenongs and the Ranges regional brochure
  - g. Official Visitors Guide to Melbourne
  - h. Melbourne Yellow Pages
  - i. RACV Experience Victoria
  - j. Australian Tourism Source
  - k. Educare magazine
  - l. VTOA Great Attractions Map

**Treasurer: Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria — advertising**

**2293. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Treasurer): In relation to Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria's advertising undertaken between 1 July 2002 and 30 June 2003:

- (a) What was the — (i) date of approval of each contract; (ii) cost of each contract; (iii) purpose of the advertisements; and (iv) duration of each advertisement.
- (b) Where and when was each advertisement published or broadcast.
- (c) To whom was each contract awarded.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria advertises widely in the *Weekly Times*, *Stock & Land* and rural media. Expenditure in the period 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 was \$192,581. Because of the volume of small transactions, the cost of researching the data to provide answers in the detail required cannot be justified.

**Major projects: VicUrban — media research and public opinion polling**

**2326. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Major Projects): In relation to VicUrban’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.
- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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

In respect of media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) *What is the title of each poll or item of research?*  
Docklands Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey
- (b) *What was the date of approval and duration of the contract?*  
The contract was approved on 2 September, 2004. The duration is for the survey period.
- (c) *What was the cost?*  
The contract value was \$21,500 ex GST.
- (d) *Who were the personnel conducting the project?*  
Nexus Research Pty. Ltd
- (e) *Was it put to tender?*  
No
- (f) *What recommendations were made?*  
None
- (g) *Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister?*  
No

**Transport: Urban and Regional Land Corporation — media research and public opinion polling**

**2334. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to the Urban and Regional Land Corporation’s media research and public opinion polling conducted since 1 January 2002:

- (a) What is the title of each poll or item of research.
- (b) What is the date of approval and duration of the contract.
- (c) What is the cost.

- (d) Who are the personnel conducting the project.
- (e) Was it put to tender.
- (f) What recommendations were made.
- (g) Were any actions taken by the Department or Minister.

**ANSWER:**

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

No media research or public opinion polling has been conducted by the Urban and Regional Land Corporation since 1 January 2002.

**Agriculture: Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board — capital works funding**

- 2654. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to the Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board's allocation of funds to major capital works, including major maintenance, replacement, and upgrades, what were the priority major projects that were approved for the year 2002-03 and were each of those priority projects achieved.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The priority major projects of Murray Valley Citrus Marketing Board approved for the year 2002-03 were:

- R9 Rodeo LX 4x4 Crew Cab V6 Petrol RTR-546, purchased 31/1/03, consideration \$30,109;
- Holden Berlina Stationwagon SFE-460, purchased 1/5/03, consideration \$28,801; and
- VY Commodore Berlina Sedan. 3.8 litre V6 Auto Engine, purchased 25/6/03, consideration \$29,884.

**Attorney-General: Legal Practice Board — office accommodation**

- 3065. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Attorney-General): In relation to the Legal Practice Board's leases of office accommodation currently held, what is — (i) the location of each lease; (ii) the expiry date of the leases; (iii) the cost per metre of each lease; and (iv) the total cost of each lease over the term of the contract.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

As at 8th June 2004 the Legal Practice Board

- (i) Leased premises at Level 19, 385 Bourke Street, Melbourne.
- (ii) The lease expired on 22nd November 2004.
- (iii) The cost per metre over the life of the lease was \$256.15.
- (iv) The total cost over the life of the lease was \$597,852

The Legal Practice Board also leases premises for the Legal Professional Tribunal. As at 8th June 2004, on behalf of the Legal Profession Tribunal, the Legal Practice Board:

- (i) Leased premises at Level 6, 459 Little Collins Street.

- (ii) The lease is due to expire on 31st July 2006
- (iii) The cost per metre over the life of the lease is expected to be \$164.37
- (iv) The total cost over the life of the lease is expected to be \$643,992

**Attorney-General: Legal Profession Tribunal — office accommodation**

**3066. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Attorney-General): In relation to the Legal Profession Tribunal’s leases of office accommodation currently held, what is — (i) the location of each lease; (ii) the expiry date of the leases; (iii) the cost per metre of each lease; and (iv) the total cost of each lease over the term of the contract.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Legal Practice Board also leases premises for the Legal Professional Tribunal. Please see the Legal Practice Board’s response to this question (LC 3065).

**Transport: Hastings Port (Holding) Corporation — entertainment expenses**

**4283. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Transport): In relation to the Hastings Port (Holding) Corporation’s entertainment expenses incurred in 2003-04, what are the details, in relation to expenses in excess of \$500, including the —

- (a) date incurred;
- (b) cost;
- (c) number of guests;
- (d) purpose; and
- (e) name of service provider.

**ANSWER:**

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

The following relevant entertainment expense was incurred by Hastings Port (Holding) Corporation (HPHC) for the period 2003 until the HPHC ceased to exist on 31 December 2003:

- (a) 16 December 2003
- (b) \$514.00
- (c) 8 persons
- (d) Christmas luncheon for associated entities representatives
- (e) Salix Restaurant, Merricks North

**Commonwealth Games: Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd — entertainment expenses**

- 4349. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Commonwealth Games: In relation to the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd’s entertainment expenses incurred in 2003-04, what are the details, in relation to expenses in excess of \$500, including the —
- (a) date incurred;
  - (b) cost;
  - (c) number of guests;
  - (d) purpose; and
  - (e) name of service provider.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that/as follows:

*Entertainment expenses incurred in 2003-04 financial year in relation to Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd in excess of \$500 (GST inclusive) include:*

*Date: 16/09/03*  
*Cost: \$980.00*  
*Number of guests: 7 (4 staff, 3 non-staff)*  
*Purpose: Discussing Nine Network coverage of Commonwealth Games*  
*Name of service provider: Zafferano*

**WorkCover: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments**

- 4374. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Minister for WorkCover):
- (1) What payments have been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by the Minister’s department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister’s administration since 26 August 2003.
  - (2) On what dates were the payments made.
  - (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that the following payments were made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd:

- a) In relation to the Transport Accident Commission

<b>Amount (including GST)</b>	<b>Payment Date</b>	<b>Description of Project</b>
1,702.80	04 Sep 2003	Professional Fees Aug03
7,332.60	04 Sep 2003	Annual Report 2003
7,082.90	15 Sep 2003	TAC law Employment
7,334.80	30 Sep 2003	Annual Report 2003

Amount (including GST)	Payment Date	Description of Project
591.25	30 Sep 2003	Contact Sep 2003
1,064.25	31 Oct 2003	Contact Oct 2003
1,655.50	13 Jan 2004	Contact Nov & Dec 2003
2,128.50	27 Feb /2004	Contact Feb 2004
1,182.50	31 Mar 2004	Contact Mar 2004
2,010.25	30 Apr 2004	Contact Apr 2004
1,182.50	31 May 2004	Contact May 2004
1,123.38	30 June 2004	Contact Jun 2004
11,000.00	31 Jul 2004	Annual Report
1,182.50	31 Aug 2004	Contact Aug 2004
11,000.00	18 Sep 2004	Annual Report
1,320.00	30 Sep 2004	Contact Sep 2004

b) In relation to the Victorian WorkCover Authority

Amount \$ (Including GST)	Payment Date	Description of project
5,500.00	17 Sep 03	Annual Report 2003
4,730.00	17 Sep 03	Care Model Consultation & Communications
8,470.00	08 Oct 03	Launch VWA Small Business Campaign
1,330.32	22 Oct 03	Care Model Consultation & Communications
2,217.19	22 Oct 03	Care Model Consultation & Communications
11,000.00	29 Oct 03	Annual Report 2003
11,000.00	07 Jul 04	Annual Report 2004
11,000.00	18 Aug 04	Annual Report 2004
11,000.00	10 Nov 04	Annual Report 2004
56,274.55*	10 Nov 04	Work Safe Week 2004
58,749.55*	10 Nov 04	Work Safe Week 2004
1,182.50	17 Nov 04	Professional Fees – Review, editing and redrafting material for announcement of results

\*Multiple payments made on the same day for separate invoices received for various stages/elements of the job completed

**Racing: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd — payments**

**4394. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Minister for Racing):

- (1) What payments have been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by the Minister’s department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister’s administration since 26 August 2003.



- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

**Gaming: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments**

**4433. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Minister for Gaming):

- (1) What payments have been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

**Planning: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — payments**

**4434. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Minister for Planning):

- (1) What payments have been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Neither the Department of Sustainability and Environment nor my Private Office have engaged Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for any planning portfolio related projects since 28 October 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

**Treasurer: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments**

**4454. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Treasurer):

- (1) What payments have been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Treasurer's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Treasurer's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

There have been no payments in the time period specified.

**Environment: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments**

**4459. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Local Government (for the Minister for Environment):

- (1) What payments have been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

No payments have been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or my Private Office to Social Shift Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

**Racing: Social Shift Pty Ltd — payments**

**4475. THE HON. GRAEME STONEY** — To ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Minister for Racing):

- (1) What payments have been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Minister's department or private office or agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) What are the details of the project for which payment was made.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

**State and regional development: Innovation, Industry and Regional Development — alcohol purchases**

**4617. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Small Business (for the Minister for State and Regional Development): In relation to alcohol purchased by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development since 1 June 2003:

- (1) What was the date of each purchase.
- (2) What was the value of each purchase.
- (3) What items were purchased.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

To provide details would be an unreasonable diversion of my Department's resources.

**Agriculture: Primary Industries — overseas trips**

**4641. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Agriculture):

- (1) How many overseas trips were undertaken by executive level staff and base line staff of the Department of Primary Industries in 2003-04.
- (2) What were the destinations.
- (3) What was the purpose of visiting each destination.
- (4) What costs were associated with the travel.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) 5 overseas trips were undertaken by executive level staff and 162 overseas trips by non-executive staff of the Department of Primary Industries in 2003-04.
- (2) There were 44 different nations visited.
- (3) The destinations were visited for a range of industry, science and market programs.
- (4) The costs associated with overseas travel in 2003-04 were \$829,340 which was paid by industry partners and \$526,899 which was contributed by the State of Victoria.

**Innovation: Innovation, Industry and Regional Development — staff**

**4880. THE HON. GORDON RICH-PHILLIPS** — To ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs (for the Minister for Innovation): How many full-time equivalent staff, part-time staff and casual staff are employed in the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development as at 3 May 2005.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

As at 3 May 2005 **687.16** full-time equivalent (FTE) staff were employed by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development. This total included (in FTE's):

Full-time staff -	657
Part-time staff -	30.16 (47 Staff)
Total FTE -	687.16

The department employed 3 casual staff at that time. Please note that casual staff are not reported in the above total.

**Housing: Bendigo estate — redevelopment**

**4918. THE HON. WENDY LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Housing: In relation to the proposed redevelopment of the public housing estate at Long Gully, Bendigo:

- (1) What is the time line for the redevelopment.
- (2) Has a developer been selected for this project; if so, who.
- (3) Has the Government received a planning permit for the redevelopment; if so, when.
- (4) If a planning permit has not been received for the redevelopment, has an application been lodged with the relevant Council; if so, when.
- (5) What is the budget for the redevelopment over the life of the project.
- (6) How much has been budgeted for this development in 2003-04.
- (7) How much has been spent so far on this development.
- (8) What is the expected completion date of the project.
- (9) Broken down by the number of bedrooms, how many units will be available as a result of this redevelopment for —
  - (a) public housing; and
  - (b) private housing.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) Construction of the three-stage redevelopment at Long Gully commenced in April 2002. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by August 2005.
- (2) Developers have been selected for the three stages of this project, namely Big G Trading Pty Ltd (Stages 1 and 3) and Gerard K House Pty Ltd (Stage 2).

- (3) Town planning permits have been received for the redevelopment. The permit for Stage 1 was granted in January 2001, for Stage 2 in April 2002 and for Stage 3 in September 2004.
- (4) All relevant planning permits have been received.
- (5) A budget over the life for this redevelopment project is estimated to be \$12 million.
- (6) A budget of \$5 million was allowed for this development in 2003-04.
- (7) As at the end of April 2005, \$9.7 million has been spent on this project.
- (8) The expected completion date of this project is August 2005.
- (9) A total of 75 new public housing dwellings will be provided by this redevelopment: 43 one-bedroom units, 30 two-bedroom units, 1 three-bedroom unit and 1 four-bedroom unit. The up-grade of 91 existing houses is complete. A further 10 homes will proceed under the Self Build Program. There are no plans for private units as part of this redevelopment.

**Housing: neighbourhood renewal project — Collingwood estate**

**4924. THE HON. WENDY LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Housing: In relation to the proposed neighbourhood renewal project at the public housing estate at Hoddle, Wellington, Johnston and Vere Streets, Collingwood:

- (1) What is the time line for the project.
- (2) Has a developer been selected for this project; if so, who.
- (3) Has the Government received a planning permit for the project; if so, when.
- (4) If a planning permit has not been received for the project, has an application been lodged with the relevant Council; if so, when.
- (5) What is the budget for the project over the life of the project.
- (6) How much has been budgeted for this project in 2003-04.
- (7) How much has been spent so far on this project.
- (8) What is the expected completion date of the project.
- (9) Broken down by the number of bedrooms, how many units will be available as a result of this redevelopment for —
  - (a) public housing; and
  - (b) private housing.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) There is no proposal for a new neighbourhood renewal project. There is an existing Neighbourhood Renewal project which commenced in 2002. The housing and physical improvement works associated with this Neighbourhood Renewal program were anticipated to take approximately five years. A three year extension of the Neighbourhood Renewal project was announced as part of the social policy action plan *A Fairer Victoria*.
- (2) Not applicable.

- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) An overall budget covering both physical improvements and other community building activities is estimated to be \$50 million.
- (6)
  - (a) \$5.2 million was allocated for housing and improvement works for 2003-04 financial year.
  - (b) \$216,000 was allocated for all other elements of the Neighbourhood Renewal project in Collingwood for 2003-04 financial year.
  - (c) \$5.416 million was allocated in total for the Collingwood Neighbourhood Renewal project for 2003-04.
- (7)
  - (a) \$16.084 million has been spent to date for housing and improvement works at Collingwood as part of the Neighbourhood Renewal project.
  - (b) \$781,000 has been spent on all other elements of the Neighbourhood Renewal project to date.
  - (c) In total, \$16.86 million has been spent to date for the Collingwood Neighbourhood Renewal project.
- (8) Allowing for the three year extension, the Collingwood Neighbourhood Renewal project is now scheduled for completion at the end of the 2009-10 financial year.
- (9) Not applicable.

**Education and training: Merit Protection Board — communications staff**

- 4978. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005
- (1) How many officers in the Merit Protection Board are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
  - (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
  - (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Education and training: Office of Learning and Teaching — communications staff**

- 4987. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005:
- (1) How many officers in the Office of Learning and Teaching are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
  - (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
  - (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Education and training: Office of School Education — communications staff**

**4989. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Office of School Education are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Consumer affairs: Patriotic Funds Council — communications staff**

**5071. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Consumer Affairs: As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Patriotic Funds Council are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

The Premier is the responsible Minister for the Patriotic Funds Council. Accordingly, you should refer your question to the Premier.

**Treasurer: Government Superannuation Office — communications staff**

**5216. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Finance (for the Treasurer): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Government Superannuation Office are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The organization to which you refer does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities.

**Education and training: Education and Training — communications staff**

**5249. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Energy Industries (for the Minister for Education and Training): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in the Department of Education and Training are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The nature of the question and given that identical questions have been asked of a number of different educational bodies indicates that this is not a genuine inquiry but a speculative question and as such a response would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

**Victorian communities: Victorian Communities — communications staff**

**5255. THE HON. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Aged Care (for the Minister for Victorian Communities): As at 30 June 2005:

- (1) How many officers in Corporate and Organisational Development Division, Department of Victorian Communities are engaged in communications, including public, corporate and media relations.
- (2) What is the salary band for each of these officers.
- (3) What is the job title for each of these officers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) As at 30 June 2005, 15 Departmental staff (FTE) were engaged in communications in the Corporate and Organisational Development Division.
- (2) The salary bands of these officers ranged from \$44,580 to \$152, 771.
- (3) The job titles of these officers were:
  - Director Corporate Communications
  - Manager Strategic Communications
  - Manager Internal and Stakeholder Communications
  - Senior Communications Adviser
  - Speechwriter
  - Communications Adviser.