

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

27 and 28 November 2012

(Extract from book 18)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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Cabinet Secretary	Mr D. J. Hodgett, MP

Legislative Assembly committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Barker, Mr Clark, Ms Green, Mr McIntosh, Mr Morris, Dr Napthine, Mr Nardella, Mr Pandazopoulos and Mr Walsh.

Standing Orders Committee — The Speaker, Ms Allan, Ms Barker, Mr Brooks, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Hodgett, Mr McIntosh and Mrs Powell.

Joint committees

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Clark, Ms Hennessy, Mr Holding, Mr McIntosh, Mr Merlino, Dr Napthine and Mr Walsh. (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Lovell and Ms Pennicuik.

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Battin and Mr McCurdy. (*Council*): Mr Leane, Mr Ramsay and Mr Scheffer.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Burgess, Mr Carroll, Mr Foley and Mr Shaw. (*Council*): Mrs Peulich.

Education and Training Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Ms Miller and Mr Southwick. (*Council*): Mr Elasmarr and Ms Tierney.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Ryall and Mrs Victoria. (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Bull, Ms Duncan, Mr Pandazopoulos and Ms Wreford. (*Council*): Mr Koch.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McGuire and Mr Wakeling. (*Council*): Mrs Coote, Ms Crozier and Mr O'Brien.

House Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Ms Beattie, Ms Campbell, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Graley, Mr Wakeling and Mr Weller. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Drum, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, and Mr P. Davis.

Law Reform Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Carbines, Ms Garrett, Mr Newton-Brown and Mr Northe. (*Council*): Mrs Petrovich.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Graley, Ms Hutchins and Ms McLeish. (*Council*): Mrs Kronberg and Mr Ondarchie.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Ms Hennessey, Mr Morris and Mr Scott. (*Council*): Mr P. Davis, Mr O'Brien and Mr Pakula.

Road Safety Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Languiller, Mr Perera, Mr Tilley and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): Mr Elsbury.

Rural and Regional Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Howard, Mr Katos, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller. (*Council*): Mr Drum.

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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: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Speaker: The Hon. K. M. SMITH

Deputy Speaker: Mrs C. A. FYFFE

Acting Speakers: Ms Beattie, Mr Blackwood, Mr Burgess, Ms Campbell, Mr Eren, Mr Languiller, Mr Morris, Mr Nardella, Mr Northe, Mr Pandazopoulos, Dr Sykes, Mr Thompson, Mr Tilley, Mrs Victoria and Mr Weller.

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Premier:

The Hon. E. N. BAILLIEU

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party:

The Hon. LOUISE ASHER

Leader of The Nationals and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. P. J. RYAN

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

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Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clayton	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Murray Valley	Nats
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Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn	Polwarth	LP
Brumby, Mr John Mansfield ¹	Broadmeadows	ALP	Napthine, Dr Denis Vincent	South-West Coast	LP
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Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Campbell, Ms Christine Mary	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Newton-Brown, Mr Clement Arundel	Prahran	LP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Noonan, Mr Wade Mathew	Williamstown	ALP
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Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Tarneit	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Pandazopoulos, Mr John	Dandenong	ALP
Delahunty, Mr Hugh Francis	Lowan	Nats	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
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Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Powell, Mrs Elizabeth Jeanette	Shepparton	Nats
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Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
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Helper, Mr Jochen	Ripon	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Eltham	ALP	Trezise, Mr Ian Douglas	Geelong	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Kilsyth	LP	Victoria, Mrs Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Holding, Mr Timothy James	Lyndhurst	ALP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
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Hulls, Mr Rob Justin ³	Niddrie	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Keilor	ALP	Weller, Mr Paul	Rodney	Nats
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Scoresby	LP
Kanis, Ms Jennifer ⁴	Melbourne	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Doncaster	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wreford, Ms Lorraine Joan	Mordialloc	LP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Ballarat West	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
Kotsiras, Mr Nicholas	Bulleen	LP			
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Derrimut	ALP			

¹ Resigned 21 December 2010

² Elected 24 March 2012

³ Resigned 27 January 2012

⁴ Elected 21 July 2012

⁵ Elected 19 February 2011

⁶ Resigned 7 May 2012

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.
Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Assembly.
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, 27 November 2012

Environment and climate change: wildlife — culling

3517. Ms EDWARDS to ask the Minister for Environment and Climate Change — with reference to native wildlife culling in Victoria:

- (1) What justification is required to allow a permit to be issued to allow culling.
- (2) What people and/or organisations are approved to receive a permit to cull.
- (3) What mechanisms are in place to safeguard protected wildlife.
- (4) Which native animals are listed as wildlife to be culled and what numbers.
- (5) On what basis or criteria are wildlife:
 - (a) chosen to be culled;
 - (b) culling numbers determined.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) All native animals in Victoria are protected under the *Wildlife Act 1975*. However, it is recognised that wildlife can, in some circumstances, adversely impact property and crops, degrade biodiversity values and cause economic loss and social disruption.

For example wildlife may:

- Damage built environments or assets (e.g. buildings, houses, sports ovals, fences, fouling farm dams or other products)
- Threaten human safety (e. g. swooping birds, hazards to aircraft safety, animal-vehicle collisions)
- Damage crops and produce (e .g. damage to cereal, grain, fruit, vegetables or flowers or eating stock feed)
- Damage the natural environment (e. g. damage revegetation sites, degradation of natural habitats in a manner that poses a threat to biodiversity).

Active management may also be required where animals are suffering from starvation, malnutrition or diseases.

The ATCW system is designed to strike a balance between the conservation of wildlife and landholders' ability to protect their assets. Where possible, DSE advocates non-lethal measures to alleviate problems caused by wildlife and destruction of wildlife is generally a method of last resort when alternative methods such as exclusion have failed or are not available.

Authorisations are legally binding and include strict conditions to ensure animals are removed or destroyed in a humane manner. The applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and only issued where there is demonstrable need to control wildlife numbers or impacts following consideration of:

- the severity of the problem;
- other measures available to control the problem;

- past management of the problems and efforts to use non-lethal alternatives;
 - the local and broader environmental context; and
 - the conservation status of the species.
- (2) Landowners and land managers, including local government may be granted an ATCW where there is demonstrable need to control wildlife.
- (3) All ATCW include strict conditions to ensure that animals are controlled in a humane manner and that the conservation of the species is not adversely impacted.

Authorised Wildlife Officers make visits to properties, and landowners may be required to prepare a management plan to ensure a holistic approach to managing wildlife problems, including adopting appropriate land management practices. Wildlife Officers operate throughout the state to ensure that ATCW holders abide by conditions issued and can respond to allegations of non-compliance.

Authorised officers inspect a number of ATCW each year. Destruction of protected wildlife without an appropriate authorisation, or breaching the conditions of an ATCW, are serious offences that may result in prosecution.

- (4) ATCW applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Details of the species and the maximum number permitted to be controlled under ATCW permits each year are published on DSE's website.

ATCW permits are generally not issued for threatened species listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. However, a permit could still be granted in cases where a substantial management problem or risk to public health or safety exists.

- (5) Prior to the issuing of an ATCW, the majority of properties are inspected by an authorised Wildlife Officer to assess the veracity of claims made in the application form and to assess the level of damage, inspect attempts to control the damage by non-lethal means and discuss alternative management options.

If the assessment shows that control of the wildlife is necessary, DSE Wildlife Officers determine the species, control method and maximum number to be controlled under the permit.

Environment and climate change: wildlife — culling

3518. Ms EDWARDS to ask the Minister for Environment and Climate Change — with reference to the committee of experts created by the Minister to advise the Department of Sustainability and Environment on native wildlife culling:

- (1) When was the committee created.
- (2) Who is on the committee.
- (3) What are the terms of reference for the committee.
- (4) Is the committee independent and autonomous; if not:
 - (a) does the Minister oversee the committee;
 - (b) can the Minister overrule the committee.
- (5) Are the decisions of the committee legally binding to issuers of permits.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The first meeting of the independent panel of experts was held on 20 March 2012.

(2) The panel has a range of independent people who have expertise in animal welfare, veterinary science and wildlife management and includes representatives from the University of Melbourne, the Bureau of Animal Welfare, Zoos Victoria and the RSPCA, in addition to DSE Regional Services.

(3) Terms of Reference for the panel include the following:

Purpose:	The panel is an independent advisory body to the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) that considers wildlife management issues and Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) permit applications that are complex in nature.
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(4) The panel is independent and autonomous.

(5) The panel's recommendations are not legally binding to DSE.

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Wednesday, 28 November 2012

Health: Ballarat Base Hospital — specialist clinic waiting list

3302. Ms **KNIGHT** to ask the Minister for Ports for the Minister for Health — what is the number of patients currently waiting for an appointment at a specialist clinic at the Ballarat Base Hospital.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- In the lead-up to the November 2010 election, the Baillieu government committed to a statewide audit of outpatient waiting lists and release of outpatient waiting time information.
- Information on outpatient waiting lists has not historically been collected due to a policy decision by the previous health minister Daniel Andrews to not collect thereby keep the information secret.
- To deliver on this commitment, I established an expert panel on waiting list management.
- The Baillieu government is actively working to deliver on this commitment.

Health: Ballarat Base Hospital — specialist clinic waiting list

3303. Ms **KNIGHT** to ask the Minister for Ports for the Minister for Health — what was the number of patients waiting for an appointment at a specialist clinic at the Ballarat Base Hospital as at 30 June 2011.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- In the lead-up to the November 2010 election, the Baillieu government committed to a statewide audit of outpatient waiting lists and release of outpatient waiting time information.
- Information on outpatient waiting lists has not historically been collected due to a policy decision by the previous health minister Daniel Andrews to not collect thereby keep the information secret.
- To deliver on this commitment, I established an expert panel on waiting list management.
- The Baillieu government is actively working to deliver on this commitment.

Health: Ballarat Base Hospital — specialist clinic waiting list

3304. Ms **KNIGHT** to ask the Minister for Ports for the Minister for Health — what was the number of patients waiting for an appointment at a specialist clinic at the Ballarat Base Hospital as at 30 June 2010.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- In the lead-up to the November 2010 election, the Baillieu government committed to a statewide audit of outpatient waiting lists and release of outpatient waiting time information.
- Information on outpatient waiting lists has not historically been collected due to a policy decision by the previous health minister Daniel Andrews to not collect thereby keep the information secret.
- To deliver on this commitment, I established an expert panel on waiting list management.
- The Baillieu government is actively working to deliver on this commitment.

Education: Victorian schools plan

3485. Ms HALFPENNY to ask the Minister for Education — with reference to the schools which received funding through the Victorian Schools Plan:

- (1) How many schools received funding.
- (2) What are the names of the schools.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Responding to this question would require an unreasonable diversion of the department’s resources that cannot be justified at this time.

Education: Victorian schools plan

3486. Ms HALFPENNY to ask the Minister for Education — with reference to each school that received funding through the Victorian Schools Plan:

- (1) What was the total estimated investment (TEI) provided.
- (2) What was the purpose of the funding or project.
- (3) On what date was the funding provided.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Responding to this question would require an unreasonable diversion of the department’s resources that cannot be justified at this time.

Education: Victorian schools plan

3487. Ms HALFPENNY to ask the Minister for Education — with reference to each project funded by the Victorian Schools Plan:

- (1) What is the name of the construction company and project manager.
- (2) What is the status of the project.
- (3) Has any additional funding been provided over and above the initial project contract through which the funding was sourced.
- (4) Has any additional funding been requested to cover shortfalls in funding; if so:
 - (a) how many schools have requested additional funding;
 - (b) what are the names of the schools that have requested additional funding.
- (5) Has any additional funding been requested to complete the original specifications of the building works; if so:
 - (a) how many schools have requested additional funding;

- (b) what are the names of the schools that have requested additional funding.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Responding to this question would require an unreasonable diversion of the department's resources that cannot be justified at this time.

Education: Victorian schools plan

3488. Ms HALFPENNY to ask the Minister for Education — with reference to each completed project funded through the Victorian Schools Plan:

- (1) On what date was the project completed.
- (2) On what date did the contract specify the project would be completed.
- (3) Did each project include all items and works agreed to at the time the project commenced.
- (4) Were any items or works diminished or not proceeded with due to costs.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Responding to this question would require an unreasonable diversion of the department's resources that cannot be justified at this time.

Education: Victorian schools plan

3489. Ms HALFPENNY to ask the Minister for Education — with reference to each yet to be completed project funded by the Victorian Schools Plan:

- (1) What is the status of the project.
- (2) Why is the project incomplete.
- (3) What is the projected time of completion.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Responding to this question would require an unreasonable diversion of the department's resources that cannot be justified at this time.