

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

13 November to 26 November 2015

(Extract from book 18)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
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Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

Speaker:

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER

Deputy Speaker:

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

Acting Speakers:

Mr Angus, Mr Blackwood, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Carbines, Mr Crisp, Mr Dixon, Ms Edwards, Ms Halfpenny, Ms Kilkenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Ms McLeish, Mr Pearson, Ms Ryall, Ms Thomas, Mr Thompson, Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Mr Watt.

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

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

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Ms S. RYAN

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 A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ²	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Napthine, Dr Denis Vincent ³	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma ¹	South-West Coast	LP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁴	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
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Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
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Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ⁶	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
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Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
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Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
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Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

¹Elected 31 October 2015

²Resigned 3 September 2015

³Resigned 3 September 2015

⁴Elected 14 March 2015

⁵Elected 31 October 2015

⁶Resigned 2 February 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; Greens — The Greens;
Ind — Independent; LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals.

Legislative Assembly committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Allan, Ms D’Ambrosio, Mr Morris, Ms Neville, Ms Ryan, Ms Sandell, Mr Scott and Mr Wells.

Standing Orders Committee — The Speaker, Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Mr Brooks, Mr Clark, Mr Hibbins, Mr Hodgett, Ms Kairouz, Mr Nardella, Ms Ryan and Ms Sheed.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.
(*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh. (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge.

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.
(*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Elasmr and Mr Melhem.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon, Mr Northe and Ms Spence.
(*Council*): Ms Patten, Mr Somyurek.

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson, Mr Tilley and Ms Ward. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Young.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards, Ms Kealy, Ms McLeish and Ms Sheed. (*Council*): Mr Finn.

House Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Hibbins, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Richardson, Ms Thomson and Mr Wells. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes.

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley. (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Ms Patten.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward. (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kealy, Ms Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto. (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva.

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ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

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

13 November to 26 November 2015**Bayswater electorate****Question 495**

Question asked by: Member for Bayswater
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 2 September 2015

REPLY:

Seniors can access free public transport for unlimited travel within two consecutive zones on Saturdays and Sundays. Free weekend travel is intended to benefit seniors using public transport in their local areas. It enables seniors on weekends to travel free within Melbourne, or within Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong or other regional cities.

Free weekend travel does not apply to trips that span over three or more zones. Seniors traveling more than three zones will need to pay the published and gazetted fare for their entire journey (50 per cent off full fare). This is reflected in passenger information.

A senior travelling on a weekend from Melbourne to Geelong would normally be charged the Zone 1-4 concession fare (\$4.13). If they made a return journey that day, they would not be charged more than \$8.26 (the concession zone 1-4 fare).

Information regarding travel entitlements is available on Public Transport Victoria's (PTV) website and through the Seniors publications. Recognising that some customers prefer live telephone assistance, PTV also provides a call centre service that is open from 6 am to midnight daily on 1800 800 007.

Bass electorate**Question 534**

Question asked by: Member for Bass
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 3 September 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure and has allocated \$730 million in the 2015–16 State Budget to build, upgrade and maintain school assets across the state. This funding represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State.

The safety of students is our highest priority, and parents can be confident that their children are being educated in facilities where safety is regularly monitored. In keeping with our promise to provide safe learning environments, the Government committed an initial \$42 million, in the 2015-16 State Budget, to increase the scope of asbestos removal and roll out a state-wide asbestos audit of 1500 government schools. This level of funding demonstrates a significant increase from the \$7.5 million dedicated to asbestos audits and removal in 2014-15.

This state-wide audit will identify and prioritise those school buildings containing asbestos to help direct future asbestos-funding programs and is scheduled for completion in March 2016. In addition to the audit a range of asbestos removal projects are currently being delivered, including the demolition of 500 asbestos-containing relocatable buildings as well as the removal and replacement of another 100 relocatables with high quantities of asbestos. Asbestos is also being removed from approximately 125 relocatable buildings earmarked for transfer during the 2015-16 financial year.

As part of the Budget's extensive capital works commitment, more than \$334 million has been allocated to renovate, refurbish or rebuild 83 schools, and all asbestos will be removed from buildings within each construction zone.

The Department of Education and Training oversees a comprehensive Asbestos Management Program for all government schools. This includes the emergency removal of all high-risk material as identified, the provision of expert advice via a 24-hour hotline, and training for school staff to ensure that they are equipped to identify and monitor potential hazards.

In the asbestos audit undertaken of Bayles Regional Primary School in May 2014, no high-risk asbestos was identified. If Bayles Regional Primary School has concerns about the condition of asbestos, it should contact DTZ, the Department's asbestos program manager, for immediate and professional support.

Sydenham electorate

Question 930

Question asked by: Member for Sydenham
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 16 September 2015

REPLY:

Thank-you for your ongoing interest and support of the Government's priority to crack down on dodgy providers.

How the Government is cracking down on unscrupulous providers

The Andrews Government made a pre-election commitment to crack down on low quality providers. That's why on 20 February I announced an urgent review of quality assurance in Victoria's VET system. Most Victorian training providers are doing the right thing, but too many students still aren't getting the skills they need to get a job. As such, an extra \$30 million over the next three years has been allocated to cleaning up the vocational education sector, including onsite auditing and more in- depth monitoring of qualification training and delivery.

On 29 June I released the Government's response to the Review. In this response all recommendations were accepted and I also announced a \$9 million Blitz on low-quality training providers. The Blitz is the first step towards ensuring Victoria's \$1.2 billion training system restores industry and student confidence and provides high-quality qualifications.

Since the beginning of November 2014, \$61.4 million has been recovered and 10 providers have lost their continuing Vic Government contract because of non-compliance (2 prior to the Blitz, and 8 since the beginning of the Blitz). Since the commencement of the Blitz in July, \$9.3 million has been recovered from providers breaking funding rules. Investigations are continuing, with 18 RTOs under case management, and \$10.8 million held while these are underway.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS — VET FEE HELP

To support the Governments' initiatives I have regularly raised issues around quality in the VET system with the Federal Minister; Senator Simon Birmingham and the new Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, Hon. Luke Hartsuyker, and have urged them to follow Victoria's lead on training quality. I have also welcomed the Federal Government's crackdown on dubious practices among VET FEE HELP providers.

Additional funding announced on 20 September 2015

On 20 September 2015 I announced an additional \$30 million will be directed over the next three years to increase contract compliance and to fully implement the recommendations of the Review of Quality Assurance in Victoria's VET System.

The commitment, on top of the \$9 million quality Blitz announced in June, is delivering on the Government's promise to crack down on low quality training providers.

Funding will also go to enhancing the Department's capability to investigate student complaints and providing better information and support for students. Once again, this major increase in compliance action is designed to clean up the training sector and boost employer's confidence in the quality of training and skills of apprentices and trainees.

Lowan electorate

Question 1084

Question asked by: Member for Lowan
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 17 September 2015

REPLY:

It was Victorian Labor that first called for a moratorium on onshore gas in 2012 and committed to hold a Parliamentary Inquiry so that all Victorians could have their say on this important issue.

The Parliamentary Inquiry into Onshore Unconventional Gas commenced in May 2015 and is now well underway thanks to the Andrews Labor Government. To date, more than 1700 submissions have been received and public hearings held throughout regional Victoria.

Unlike the previous Coalition Government, we committed to have an open and transparent process that engages with all affected parties, including farmers, local councils, regional communities, industry and environment groups.

Throughout the Parliamentary Inquiry, and while the Government considers the Inquiry's recommendations, the existing moratorium will remain on all onshore gas drilling, extraction and hydraulic fracturing, as well as a ban on the use of BTEX chemicals.

Carrum electorate

Question 1289

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 6 October 2015

REPLY:

Firstly, I congratulate Kate Gillespie-Jones on her outstanding efforts, and I acknowledge and welcome the growing number of women participating in sport. The Victorian Government is leading the way in its strategy to provide opportunities for more women and girls to get and stay active. Earlier this year I announced an Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation and appointed an expert Advisory Panel to undertake the Inquiry. The Advisory Panel has been investigating how to enhance participation by women and girls in sport and active recreation and to identify ways to increase their engagement in leadership and governance roles. To help inform the Inquiry a series of community consultations have been held in regional centres and in Melbourne to better understand the case for change and to identify practical ideas and actions that could influence change.

The Advisory Panel is expected to deliver their final report, including recommendations and a practical action plan, to me in the coming months. This report will be one of a number of inputs which will help inform and guide Victoria's future investment into women and girls in sport and active recreation.

This year Victoria has invested approximately \$450 000 towards the development and delivery of program initiatives to support greater inclusion and engagement of females in sport and active recreation in Victoria.

In June I announced the \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund that includes a \$10 million Female Friendly Facilities Fund which supports facility development to encourage greater participation by women and girls in sporting and recreational activities. In addition the Government has made a commitment of \$9.6 million over four years for the development of 64 competition ready netball courts in four Inner Melbourne municipalities and support for the continuation of the Country Football and Netball Program.

In October the Ministers of Sport and Recreation from all states of Australia met here in Melbourne. I initiated a discussion seeking a national approach to enhancing the engagement of women and girls in sport and active recreation. Ministers have now agreed to ask the Committee of Australian Sport and Recreation Officials to develop an options paper on approaches to improve women's participation in sport and leadership roles and the profile of women's sport.

Victoria's ongoing investment in sport and recreation actively seeks to ensure that both program and facility design provides benefits to all Victorians, and I am particularly proud of the focus that we have placed on providing more opportunities for women and girls.

Caulfield electorate

Question 2115

Question asked by: Member for Caulfield
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 October 2015

REPLY:

The Level Crossing Removal Project team has consulted with the community throughout the planning phase of the Level Crossing Removal Project at North Road and this will continue throughout the works program.

The project team is currently negotiating a licence agreement with Glen Eira City Council for the temporary occupation of EE Gunn Reserve. This process has included consultation with sporting clubs and users in order to ensure that they are able to continue their sporting activities while this vital piece of infrastructure work is being carried out.

Key commitments made to sporting clubs include, support for any temporary relocation to alternative facilities and meeting any out-of-pocket costs incurred as a result. In addition, the facilities at EE Gunn Reserve will be reinstated at the completion of works to at least the current standard, or to a higher standard.

The project team will also collaborate closely with Council and sporting groups such as the baseball club, cricket club and football club to identify specific opportunities to upgrade facilities and improve the amenity of EE Gunn Reserve as a legacy of the project for the local community. These discussions will be ongoing as the project progresses.

Eltham electorate

Question 2118

Question asked by: Member for Eltham
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 October 2015

REPLY:

I am pleased to advise that a direct bus route to St Helena College will be introduced at the start of the school year. I thank the local member for Eltham for her advocating for this service.

As part of the Mernda bus network review, I have requested that PTV investigate a direct bus route to St Helena Secondary College. This is planned to be introduced for the start of the 2016 school year.

Sandringham electorate**Question 2121**

Question asked by: Member for Sandringham
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 October 2015

REPLY:

The placement of timetable information at bus stops and interchanges is designed to ensure people of all ages, abilities and circumstances are able to access the information they need to travel on the public transport network.

Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) will partner with the bus operator and Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to ensure their customer service-staff are equipped with the necessary information and network knowledge to assist bus passengers at Sandringham station. MTM will make printed bus timetable pamphlets available from its fixed information stand located in the waiting area.

Eildon electorate**Question 2123**

Question asked by: Member for Eildon
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 7 October 2015

REPLY:

Funding for the resurfacing of Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Road in Yellingbo will be considered under a future program.

In the meantime, VicRoads is undertaking additional road treatment works, which include installing curve alignment markers, curve-warning signs on both approaches to the curve, and sealing the shoulder on the outer side of the curve to improve driver safety. VicRoads expects to complete these works by December 2015.

VicRoads will continue to monitor the operation and safety of Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Road in Yellingbo.

Malvern electorate**Question 2845**

Question asked by: Member for Malvern
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 8 October 2015

REPLY:

As part of the Burke Road Level Crossing Removal Project, the project team has undertaken ongoing engagement with the community and key stakeholders at all stages of the project.

Most recently, the project team has been engaging with the local community on the access arrangements to the car park at the new Gardiner Station. Changes to the concept design which was developed early in the planning phase of the project will see the car park entrance moved. This will result in improvements to safety around the station precinct by reducing the interface between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The new design, which is supported by Stonnington City Council, will also reduce rat-running in local streets such as Carroll Crescent.

The project team has consulted with the community on the new design and has received feedback from local residents regarding the change to the car park access. As part of this consultation the team has held a series of meetings with local residents and provided updates on how specific issues are being addressed. Detailed investigations are continuing into the best options for addressing these concerns while balancing the requirements for improving safety and accessibility for all the local community, including residents, road users and station patrons.

Consultation will continue with the local community to ensure the best outcomes are reached and that information is clearly communicated. The project team will work with the community in order to implement the recommended solution. In the meantime, the Burke Road Level Crossing Removal Project is progressing well and works are continuing.

Ivanhoe electorate

Question 2850

Question asked by: Member for Ivanhoe
Directed to: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Asked on: 8 October 2015

REPLY:

Self-determination is one of the over-arching principles of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In his speech reaffirming the Government's commitment to closing the gap in Aboriginal outcomes, on 19 March this year, the Premier stated our clear commitment to the principle of self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians.

This Government is putting Aboriginal people at the centre of decision making. We acted on this commitment earlier this year when Aboriginal community representatives were invited to meet directly with the Premier and myself to identify the issues that they felt mattered to Aboriginal Victorians and to provide advice on a way forward.

On the 9th of September I met with state-wide Aboriginal organisations for the third time this year to continue these important conversations.

Supporting economic prosperity, employment and Aboriginal people's connection to culture are all on the Government's agenda. These objectives are reflected in our \$30 million investment in Aboriginal affairs in this year's State Budget. This is more than seven times the investment in the previous budget.

This funding is being used to:

- Strengthen the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Deliver leadership initiatives to support young, emerging and established Aboriginal leaders
- Create more resilient and sustainable Aboriginal organisations
- Deliver the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy
- Reduce Aboriginal family violence

Furthermore, in August this year, the Premier announced that the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape has been chosen as Victoria's number one priority for UNESCO World Heritage listing. Home to the Gunditjmara people for more than 30 000 years, Budj Bim has been recognised for its unique importance to Victoria and its internationally significant cultural heritage. Budj Bim hosts the only remains of Aboriginal stone houses found in Australia, as well as a sophisticated system of channels, fish traps and weirs used for farming eels.

If successful, Budj Bim will be the twentieth place to be recognised in Australia, and the first for exclusively Aboriginal cultural values.

I am pleased to say that these priorities are all reflective of the intended outcomes of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Dandenong electorate

Question 3676

Question asked by: Member for Dandenong
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 20 October 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Government is committed to affordable energy for all Victorians, and has been taking action to help achieve this.

On 17 October 2015, the Government launched the Victorian Energy Compare independent price comparator, to help customers shop around for energy offers best suited to their needs. This tool helps customers to compare electricity, gas and solar offers from all energy retailers. It also provides support for culturally and linguistically diverse consumers. The tool is independent and easy to use. Statistics show that half of those Victorians using the tool have been able to save more than \$330 a year on their electricity bills.

Combined with the Government's SwitchOn website, Victorian Energy Compare empowers households and businesses to take charge of their bills and be informed about Victoria's energy system.

The Government has also recently legislated to require retailers to publish standing offer tariffs in the Government Gazette on dates or in periods specified by the Minister for Energy and Resources. These changes should protect consumers by preventing retailers from engaging in price following behaviour when they gazette their tariffs.

The Government is conscious of the impacts of energy prices on the vulnerable. At my request, the Essential Services Commission is undertaking a review into best practice financial hardship programs in the Victorian energy sector. This review is considering what regulatory measures are appropriate to ensure retailers give appropriate support to customers experiencing payment difficulties, including measures to help improve energy efficiency and decrease consumption, and consequently reduce their bills.

The Government has also committed to continue the Energy Saver Incentive scheme (also known as the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target or VEET scheme), which provides discounts on energy efficiency services and products. This scheme has been successful in helping Victorians to reduce their energy usage and manage their energy costs. The Government is currently strengthening the scheme to ensure more Victorians can benefit, and legislation is currently before the Parliament proposing new VEET targets across a 5 year period, through to 2020.

In June 2015, the Government released its Energy Efficiency and Productivity Statement which outlines its priorities for improving Victoria's energy efficiency and productivity. Priority action areas include improving the energy performance of households and directly supporting vulnerable households to lower their energy bills, through energy efficiency. The Government is currently developing the Energy Efficiency and Productivity Strategy to set out its detailed plan for action.

Prahran electorate

Question 3679

Question asked by: Member for Prahran
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 20 October 2015

REPLY:

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and Yarra Trams undertook consultation on proposed changes to Route 8 tram services in July 2015.

The proposed changes to the Route 8 tram would:

- Increase the frequency, capacity and the number of low floor tram services operating along Toorak Road;

- Improve the ability to access the Western CBD from the South East suburbs;
- Provide additional benefits to the users of all other St Kilda Road tram routes by allowing more routes to operate with a 10 minute frequency including the neighbouring routes running along Commercial Road and High Street.

PTV is currently considering the feedback received during this consultation. The feedback is being used to assess a range of options for St Kilda Road tram services and to help ensure that the future design of the tram network meets the needs of customers.

South Barwon electorate

Question 3681

Question asked by: Member for South Barwon
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 20 October 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has delivered a metro style service for Geelong passengers with trains every 10 minutes in the morning peak and every 20 minutes off peak on weekdays. As part of an integrated public transport network, V/Line must balance the needs of all customers along their rail corridors.

It should be noted that there is a service scheduled to depart Marshall at 7.41 am and arrives at Southern Cross Station at 8.47 am. This service should fulfil Mr Bayliss' needs.

Regular reviews of all timetables will continue to take place to improve train services.

Yan Yean electorate

Question 3682

Question asked by: Member for Yan Yean
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 20 October 2015

REPLY:

Speed limits are assessed on an as needs basis in line with changes in land use and development, road safety considerations, or in response to public requests.

In line with Speed Zone Guidelines, speed limits are determined to provide an appropriate balance between safety and mobility, with consideration given to factors such as the number of access points, the nature of the road environment and road user types.

VicRoads also encourages a consultative approach to the setting of speed limits. Not only do stakeholders expect speed limits to be credible, they also expect an adequate level of consultation and public notification. Feedback from key stakeholders such as Victoria Police, local councils, Public Transport Victoria and the local community is an important consideration in helping to determine the most appropriate speed limit.

Both the Wallan Secondary College and Plenty Valley Christian College currently have school speed zones in operation during school times. The school speed zone program began in July 2003 to reduce speed limits on Victorian roads where there is an access gate to a school. In recent times, this program has also extended to crossings that are remote from a school by considering factors including exposure, the potential severity of an incident and the likelihood of an incident.

VicRoads has determined that the speed zones outside both schools are in accordance with the current Speed Zoning Guidelines and are appropriate and consistent with other locations on similar roads across the state. VicRoads would welcome the opportunity to consider particular requests for speed zone changes.

Caulfield electorate**Question 3688**

Question asked by: Member for Caulfield
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 21 October 2015

REPLY:

I am informed that Railway Place, Balaclava is listed on the Port Phillip City Council registrar of roads as a local road.

I understand that VicTrack infrastructure staff have conducted an onsite inspection of the rail embankment alongside Railway Place and have found the rail embankment to be in a good state of maintenance and no evidence of encroachment of the rail embankment onto the laneway.

VicTrack would be pleased to offer to meet the resident and other interested parties onsite to inspect the laneway and rail embankment to review the landowner's access to their property via Railway Place.

Carrum electorate**Question 3691**

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 21 October 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises the importance of supporting children and families through high-quality early childhood programs and services. Evidence shows that child participation in early learning programs provides the foundations for a range of better outcomes later in life, including improved health and wellbeing; social development; and skills for learning.

The recent announcement of minor grants delivered through the Children's Facilities Capital program form part of the Government's \$50 million investment in the early childhood sector through the building and upgrading of kindergartens and children's centres across Victoria.

I was very pleased to hear that a number of early childhood services in the Carrum area were successful in their applications for grants during the 2015-16 round of the Children's Facilities Capital Program, including two refurbishment grants for Seaford Kindergarten and Goodstart Early Learning Carrum Downs — Arcadia Street.

These minor grants allow early childhood education and care facilities to undertake minor refurbishment projects, and purchase digital hardware to enhance their delivery of high-quality early learning programs.

Frankston electorate**Question 3693**

Question asked by: Member for Frankston
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 21 October 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government supports and promotes breastfeeding as an important determinant of maternal and child health and wellbeing. Evidence shows significant immediate and long term positive health outcomes of breastfeeding for both mothers and infants.

Peninsula Health provides breast feeding services at Frankston Hospital and Hastings Community Centre. In addition to these services, Peninsula Health also operates a drop-in breastfeeding centre at Karingal Place Neighbourhood Centre.

Peninsula Health is in the process of reviewing the sustainability of the drop-in breastfeeding centre in Karingal and is working with Frankston Council to determine the most appropriate model and location for this type of breastfeeding support service within their catchment area. Peninsula Health is also ensuring that local mums and relevant community members are consulted before any final decision is made on the future of the drop-in breastfeeding centre in Karingal.

The drop-in breastfeeding centre in Karingal continues to run as normal. In addition to this service, breastfeeding support services can be accessed at Frankston Hospital and Hastings Community Centre.

Bundoora electorate

Question 3888

Question asked by: Member for Bundoora
Directed to: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Asked on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government recognises the risk that underinsurance and non-insurance of property poses for Victorians, particularly those on low-incomes. The Department of Health and Human Services conducts research on a range of topics to ensure policy, program and service responses support the needs of disadvantaged Victorians.

Research by Good Shepherd and Brotherhood of St Lawrence shows that key barriers to property insurance for low-income earners are lack of trust, lack of affordability and flexibility of payments, unsuitability of products and lack of education and financial literacy. In October 2015, Good Shepherd Microfinance announced that, with Suncorp, it will address the issue of underinsurance in Australia by providing an affordable insurance product for low income earners.

The department will continue to engage with research and evaluation produced by the community sector, academia and insurers to monitor the success initiatives for low income earners.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Question 3890

Question asked by: Member for Pascoe Vale
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

I announced on 28 August 2015, at the Melbourne Western Hepatitis Action Forum, a stand-alone strategy to address viral hepatitis in Victoria. The strategy will be informed by the national hepatitis B and C strategies and consultations held with Victorians.

On 28 October 2015, I hosted a Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, which brought together key experts and people affected by hepatitis to determine priorities for action. The Roundtable helped to prioritise key issues that will directly inform the development of a bold and innovative Victorian strategy to address hepatitis B and C.

Viral hepatitis is a significant and complex health issue and I am pleased that the Department of Health & Human Services is working on a comprehensive strategy.

The last Victorian hepatitis strategy was released in 2005 and expired in 2009 making this the first Victorian-specific viral hepatitis strategy to be developed in over 10 years.

A strong focus of the Victorian viral hepatitis strategy will be on reducing stigma and discrimination on individuals, families and communities through community mobilisation and improving health literacy. There will also be a strong focus on increasing our testing, treatment and chronic disease care efforts.

Local communities will benefit from greater awareness and education of viral hepatitis, clear referral pathways in their local primary care district, peer based programs to reduce stigma and skills training for general practitioners to prescribe treatments.

Consultation workshops have also been held on HIV, Aboriginal sexual health, and sexually transmissible infections in young people, in preparation for a series of state blood borne virus and sexually transmissible infection strategies.

The Department is now working on consolidating the information we have received from experts and the community, and I look forward to releasing a strategy for viral hepatitis in 2016 when this work is complete.

Shepparton electorate

Question 3893

Question asked by: Member for Shepparton
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

The timetable that ran on the grand final eve public holiday was a Saturday timetable. This is in line with service provision for all other public holidays. For the Shepparton line, this results in the two midday services not operating, which is similar to a Sunday. As part of continuous service improvements, we will review this timetable for future public holidays. The Grand Final Public holiday provided an opportunity for people to attend a range of events across regional Victoria.

Box Hill electorate

Question 6475

Question asked by: Member for Box Hill
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 12 November 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has received the Department of Education and Training's incident report into the asbestos incident at Kerrimuir Primary School.

The Review found that the school had acted appropriately and in accordance with all requirements under the Asbestos Management Plan by fencing off the area to students and calling the asbestos hotline.

The Review found that the asbestos contractor's governance processes were responsible for the failure to respond within the required time frame.

The Department will address this incident with the asbestos contractor to improve their governance, systems and processes.

The building debris in the soil was found to contain non-friable asbestos, which was removed by certified asbestos removal contractors on 24 and 31 October. These works were supervised by an Occupational Hygienist who performed air quality monitoring throughout the works to ensure safety. No airborne fibres were detected during this work and the asbestos risk is deemed very low.

A ground surface inspection of the Kerrimuir Primary School has been conducted covering the entire school grounds. During this inspection, no asbestos containing materials were found and a clearance certificate has been issued.

Bentleigh electorate**Question 6478**

Question asked by: Member for Bentleigh
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 12 November 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to implementing its election commitments. This includes our \$225 000 commitment to fund an upgrade of Bentleigh West Kindergarten.

Following a request by Glen Eira Council to use this funding to enable the upgrade of two kindergartens in the district, I am pleased to advise that both Brady Road Kindergarten and Bentleigh West Kindergarten will receive an upgrade from this commitment.

The Department of Education and Training is working closely with Council to ensure that the projects proceed as soon as possible.

As the local Member, I congratulate you on working with Council and your local communities to achieve the best outcome for families and children in the Bentleigh area.