

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**7 August to 20 August 2015**

**(Extract from book 11)**

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## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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**Deputy Speaker:**

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

**Acting Speakers:**

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Ms Kilkenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Ms McLeish, Mr Pearson, Ms Ryall, Ms Thomas,  
Mr Thompson, Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Mr Watt.

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**Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:**

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**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**

<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>
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
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Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>2</sup>	Gippsland South	Nats
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Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
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Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
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McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 2 February 2015

<sup>2</sup> Elected 14 March 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, Mr Mulder, 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 Elasmr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell.

**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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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

*Answers to the following questions on notice were published in the questions on notice database in the period shown. Questions have been incorporated from the question 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.*

**7 August to 20 August 2015**

**Housing, disability and ageing**

**283.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing — according to the most recent data collected by the Department of Health and Human Services:

- (1) In the area managed by the Carlton managing office, Western Melbourne local area, West Division:
  - (a) what is the total number of public housing properties;
  - (b) what is the current vacancy rate in public housing;
  - (c) what was the vacancy rate in public housing at 30 June 2014.
- (2) In the area managed by the North Melbourne managing office, Western Melbourne local area, West Division:
  - (a) what is the total number of public housing properties;
  - (b) what is the current vacancy rate in public housing;
  - (c) what was the vacancy rate in public housing at 30 June 2014.
- (3) In the Melbourne City Council local government area:
  - (a) what is the total number of public housing properties;
  - (b) what is the current vacancy rate in public housing;
  - (c) what was the vacancy rate in public housing at 30 June 2014.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Department of Health and Human Services publishes vacancy rate data and the total number of public housing properties by division, local area, managing office and LGA. This data is regularly updated and is available for access at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au>.

**Agriculture**

**296.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Minister for Public Transport for the Minister for Agriculture — What steps is the Government taking to address the discrimination faced by guide dog carers, trainers and handlers when using taxi services.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, Section 7(4) states that a visually impaired person, a hearing impaired person, or a person training a guide dog may, at all times and in all places be accompanied by a dog kept and used, or trained by him or her as a guide dog.

The Andrews Labor Government has been working with Guide Dogs Victoria and Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs to develop a joint education campaign to highlight access rights for guide dogs and puppies in training. This campaign builds on existing, well recognised branding.

A new window sticker for restaurants, cafes and taxis has been developed. The sticker was launched by me on 29 April 2015 for International Guide Dog Day. The wording is 'Welcome - Guide Dogs, Seeing Eye Dogs and puppies in training can enter' and is jointly branded for both organisations.

The Government has printed 5000 of these stickers and provided them to the two organisations, for distribution throughout the community. The organisations have also been provided with printing artwork should they want to produce additional stickers.

My department has also created a new page on the pets website [www.depi.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/guide-dogs-and-seeing-eye-dogs](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/guide-dogs-and-seeing-eye-dogs) to educate people about the access rights of guide dogs and puppies in training. Information on this page clarifies that in Victoria, guide dogs (and seeing eye dogs) are legally able to travel on taxis, and are quiet, well behaved, non-aggressive and completely clean at all times. When travelling, guide dogs are trained to sit quietly at their handler's feet and will not disturb or lick the driver. The campaign information emphasises that it is illegal for taxi drivers to pass up a passenger because they have a guide dog. Individuals who are discriminated against can contact the Taxi Services Commission to lodge a formal complaint.

### Planning

**304.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Minister for Planning — will the Minister remove the Melbourne City Council gerrymander, which gives business two votes and residents only one.

#### ANSWER:

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Local Government. The member will need to redirect her question to the Hon Natalie Hutchins.

### Planning

**305.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Minister for Planning — when will the Minister review the residential zones in the City of Melbourne, and will he take into account the recommendations of the City of Melbourne.

#### ANSWER:

- The Victorian Government has committed to conduct an independent review of the process of applying the residential zones
- The review will commence in the second half of the year. This will allow the current zones to settle and to ensure relevant data is available to provide a more holistic response to municipal housing needs.
- It is anticipated that outcomes of the review will also provide protocols for best practice consultation and the appropriate role of the Minister, councils and the community in the planning process.
- The government will ensure that any future application of the residential zones throughout our neighbourhoods will be undertaken in a clear, consultative and transparent manner.

### Planning

**306.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Minister for Planning — will the Minister reinstate third party notice and appeal rights in the Capital City Zone.

#### ANSWER:

- Melbourne City Council are the Responsible Authority for administering and enforcing the Melbourne Planning Scheme for a proposal with a gross floor area less than 25 000 sqm. I am the Responsible Authority for proposals above this size.

- Within the Capital City Zone, third party notice and appeal rights exist for a limited range of uses. Buildings and works and the majority of uses encouraged in the Capital City Zone are exempt from third party notice and appeal rights. These rights have existed since the introduction of the new format Planning Schemes in 1998.
- I do not intend to reinstate these rights at this point in time.

### Energy and resources

- 356.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Minister for Energy and Resources — will the Government commit to an alternative model for a Victorian Renewable Energy Target (RET) now that the federal Parliament has refused to remove section 7C from the federal RET.

#### ANSWER:

The Victorian Government supported retaining the national Renewable Energy Target (RET) at 41 000 gigawatt hours and is disappointed at the reduction in the target to 33 000 gigawatt hours. Prior to the RET's amendment, we asked the Federal Government to remove the legislative barrier to states having their own RET schemes. If this barrier had been removed, we would have been able to reinstate the Victorian Renewable Energy Target scheme to top up the national RET.

The Victorian Government is currently developing a Victorian Renewable Energy Action Plan, which will outline a comprehensive set of measures to encourage renewable energy investment in Victoria, protect our environment and boost jobs across the state. This document will be preceded by a Renewable Energy Roadmap which will identify the Government's objectives and immediate priorities with respect to renewable energy.

Members of the public will be given the opportunity to make submissions during a consultation phase following the release of the Roadmap.

### Energy and resources

- 357.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Minister for Energy and Resources — does the Government plan to renew Petroleum Exploration Permit (PEP) 168, expiring on 6 June 2015, PEP 163, expiring on 18 October 2015, and PEP 169, expiring on 24 October 2015.

#### ANSWER:

Under the Petroleum Act 1998, a petroleum exploration permit can only be renewed once: The permit holder can however apply for a suspension of conditions and extension of term, for a period up to 12 months, under the Petroleum Act 1998. Such applications can be lodged annually and must meet the criteria outlined in the Permit Conditions and Administration Guidelines if they are to be approved.

PEP163 has already been renewed once and therefore cannot be renewed further. The permit holder for PEP163 however has lodged an application for a 12 month suspension and extension of the permit term. The application is pending assessment and if approved, the permit will be extended until 18. October 2016.

The permit holder of PEP168 has not lodged an application for renewal of its permit at this time, however may do so in the future. A suspension and extension of the permit term for PEP168 was however approved on 5 June 2015, extending the permit term to 6 June 2016.

The permit holder for PE169 has also not lodged an application for renewal of its permit but has lodged an application for a 12 month suspension and extension of the permit term. The application is pending assessment and if approved, the permit will be extended until 24 October 2016.

### Treasurer

- 358.** Ms SANDELL to ask the Treasurer — can the Treasurer confirm whether the Government is committed to an unconventional gas industry in Victoria.

**ANSWER:**

The question is misleading as the government has never made such a commitment. The Andrews Government understands the community concerns in relation to unconventional gas. That is why we have referred it to an inquiry to thoroughly examine the issues that have been raised.

I look forward to the committee's report on the science and the evidence of the use of these techniques in other jurisdictions.