

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

25 March to 14 April 2016

(Extract from book 5)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

HANSARD¹⁵⁰



1866–2016

Following a select committee investigation, Victorian Hansard was conceived when the following amended motion was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 June 1865:

That in the opinion of this house, provision should be made to secure a more accurate report of the debates in Parliament, in the form of *Hansard*.

The sessional volume for the first sitting period of the Fifth Parliament, from 12 February to 10 April 1866, contains the following preface dated 11 April:

As a preface to the first volume of “Parliamentary Debates” (new series), it is not inappropriate to state that prior to the Fifth Parliament of Victoria the newspapers of the day virtually supplied the only records of the debates of the Legislature.

With the commencement of the Fifth Parliament, however, an independent report was furnished by a special staff of reporters, and issued in weekly parts.

This volume contains the complete reports of the proceedings of both Houses during the past session.

In 2016 the Hansard Unit of the Department of Parliamentary Services continues the work begun 150 years ago of providing an accurate and complete report of the proceedings of both houses of the Victorian Parliament.

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Employment	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Industry, and Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. L. D’Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. J. F. Garrett, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills	The Hon. S. R. Herbert, MLC
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
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

**OFFICE-HOLDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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
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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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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
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
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Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
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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
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
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Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
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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, Mr Clark, 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 Elasmarr 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 Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto. (*Council*): Ms Bath and 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.

25 March to 14 April 2016**Niddrie electorate****Question 3896**

Question asked by: Member for Niddrie
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Government wants to see councils that are open, accountable and reflecting the needs of their community. Key to this is our Fair Go Rates System which will give ratepayers greater surety about what their rates bill will look like into the future, ensuring greater value for money and encouraging councils to listen and engage when it comes to the needs of their community.

The legislation came into operation on 2 December 2015, which means that the Fair Go Rates System will be implemented in the 2016-17 financial year.

I have determined the cap for the 2016/17 financial year to be set at 2.5 per cent based upon the Consumer Price Index forecast by the Department of Treasury and Finance for 2016/17.

While the Fair Go Rates system imposes a cap on rate rises, it doesn't mean essential services and facilities will not be funded. In fact, the system will encourage better-planned projects, with more consideration of what the community needs.

Our Fair Go Rates System will ensure the community gets more of a say - and that the councils are listening.

Rowville electorate**Question 6732**

Question asked by: Member for Rowville
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 9 February 2016

REPLY:

It was the previous Coalition Government who removed High Capacity Signalling from the Cranbourne Pakenham line rail upgrade at the eleventh hour in the lead up to the election in 2014. The Andrews Government is upgrading signalling on the Cranbourne Pakenham line and undertaking a trial of High Capacity Signalling on the network.

The previous Coalition Government promised a train line to Rowville and released plans that included 5.8 kilometres of elevated rail up to 17 metres in height. However the previous Coalition Government did not build a rail to Rowville stating that the Melbourne Metro rail project was required first to allow for more trains to enter the city. The previous Coalition Government then scrapped the Melbourne Metro rail project.

The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with delivering the Melbourne Metrorail project which remains an essential pre-cursor to a Rowville rail line.

90% of the land required for a rail corridor to Rowville is already in public ownership.

Prahran electorate**Question 6758**

Question asked by: Member for Prahran
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 11 February 2016

REPLY:

South Yarra is well served by public transport with train, tram and bus services running through the area. Trains currently run through South Yarra station just under every two minutes on average in the morning peak.

A new station at South Yarra is not in the scope of Melbourne Metro. Making provision for Melbourne Metro to stop at South Yarra would be expensive and require a number of properties to be acquired. The cost to do this would substantially outweigh the benefits for public transport passengers.

Upon completion of Melbourne Metro, travellers using South Yarra station will be able to access more frequent, less crowded services on the Frankston and Sandringham lines. These services will run every few minutes into Flinders Street station, with the Frankston line gaining exclusive use of one of the City Loop's four tunnels. These high frequency, 'turn up and go' services will connect to every line on the metropolitan network, including the new Melbourne Metro stations, via Caulfield station and the new underground rail system.

I am aware of community concerns around passenger congestion at South Yarra station. Although a new station at South Yarra is not in the scope of Melbourne Metro, that does not mean that improvements to South Yarra station will not occur in the future.

Public Transport Victoria monitors station use across the rail network, including at South Yarra station, and opportunities to upgrade the station will be considered in this context. PTV will work with the local community, public transport users and key stakeholders, when identifying opportunities to upgrade the station.

Sunbury electorate**Question 6799**

Question asked by: Member for Sunbury
Directed to: Minister for Industry
Asked on: 23 February 2016

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Sunbury, Josh Bull, for his question and his strong commitment to growing jobs in his electorate.

As a valued member of the Andrews Labor Government, the member for Sunbury is well aware that we are committed to the states manufacturing sector and doing everything in our power to ensure it continues to play an important role in our economy long into the future.

The Victorian Government released Towards Future Industries: Victoria's Automotive Transition Plan on 7 December 2015 to assist workers, businesses and communities affected by the closure of the major car manufacturers in Australia to meet the challenges ahead and embrace a new future. The Plan includes two new programs that will benefit industry in your electorate:

- the \$5 million Automotive Supply Chain Transition Program (ASCTP) provides up to \$65 000 for eligible supply chain companies to get the targeted, intensive and tailored support they need to make a successful transition into new markets and sectors
- the \$33.1 million Local Industry Fund for Transition (LIFT) the Government provides grants of up to \$2 million to stimulate private investment that creates new sustainable jobs and economic activity in the regions most impacted by the closure of the car companies, including \$10.6 million for projects in Melbourne's north (including the Hume local government area, encompassing Sunbury).

We are also extending the Back to Work scheme to provide an incentive to businesses to employ eligible unemployed or retrenched workers. Businesses hiring a retrenched automotive worker full time will be able to receive a one-off payment of \$7000 (or \$5250 for a part-time worker). Employers also stand to receive a payment of up to \$4000 where they can provide accredited training to the new employee.

The Victorian Government's Back to Work plan identifies a number of priority sectors with the potential growth to take our economy forward. To support the transition of the states economy, the Victorian Government has established a \$200 million Future Industries Fund to accelerate growth in the priority sectors. Strategies that will guide activities and investment for the future were released on 17 March 2016.

The Future Industries Fund includes three flagship programs to support industry growth:

- The \$20 million Sector Growth Program provide grants of up to \$1 million for consortia to undertake projects aligned with the Future Industries Sector Strategies that will create new jobs and drive growth, productivity and competitiveness of Victorian businesses.
- The \$5 million Future Industries Manufacturing Program provides grants of up to \$500 000 to assist companies to implement new manufacturing technologies and processes.
- The \$20 million New Energy Jobs Fund provides grants of between \$500 000 and \$1 million to support projects that create long-term sustainable jobs, increase the uptake of renewable energy generation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and drive innovation in new energy technologies.

Businesses can explore export and investment opportunities with assistance from the Victorian Government through the Trade Mission Program and access to the global network of 18 international Victorian Government Business Offices in strategic international locations.

And Small Business Victoria offers a range of programs and services tailored to small businesses, including seminars and workshops to improve skills to start, run and grow a business, specialist advice through the Small Business Mentoring Service, assistance to develop and implement strategies to become internationally competitive through the Grow· Your Business program, and access to up to \$10 000 through the SuccessMap program to build business planning and management capability.

I look forward to joining you at the local industry forum in Tullamarine in the near future.

Mildura electorate

Question 6800

Question asked by: Member for Mildura
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 23 February 2016

REPLY:

In Victoria, most birds can only be sold from a private residence or a registered pet shop, with the exception of some natives. The current legislation was introduced in 1994 in response to the broad and unregulated sale of many types of animals, caged birds included, from flea markets, car boot sales and other unsatisfactory situations. Animal welfare for these animals was in many cases completely unacceptable, confined to small cages without appropriate food or water, while waiting to be sold.

Under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, caged birds can currently only be sold from a private residence or a registered pet shop, unless the sale is approved under the Wildlife Act 1975. A 'pet shop' must be located in a permanent location, and open not less than five days a week (excluding public holidays). The Wildlife Act 1975 outlines a definition of 'wildlife' that does not provide for the approval of the sale of any non-native species of birds or other animals. The definition of a caged bird under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 is, therefore, any bird that is not exempt under the Wildlife Act 1975.

I am aware that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) offer an amnesty to the sale of certain native bird species and approve a number of bird sales each year. However, exotic bird species have never been included in the amnesty and therefore the sale of exotic species from bird sales has been a long-standing contravention of the law. A list of bird species covered by the amnesty can be obtained from DELWP. Only species listed under the amnesty are exempt from s96 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

In May 2015, it was brought to the attention of biosecurity officers at the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources that large bird sales were being held at various locations around Victoria and staff from the department have been in contact with organisers since to discuss the laws regarding bird sales.

I appreciate the cooperation that has been shown by organisers in making some changes to the way they run their sales by introducing an expressions of interest system instead, in order to comply with the law.

I understand that for some aviculturists and exotic bird hobbyists the changes to the functioning of birds sales may have been unexpected. I must emphasise, however, that there has been no change to the law, or the way it is regulated. The sale of exotic species of birds outside of pet shops and private residences has been continuously banned in Victoria for more than 20 years.

The Government is investigating possible changes to the current legislation that could allow the large sales of exotic species to occur legally under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, while also ensuring strict animal welfare protections are in place, and adhered to. I have instructed my department to discuss animal welfare management with the Victorian Avicultural Council ahead of me considering any changes to the law.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Question 6803

Question asked by: Member for Pascoe Vale
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 23 February 2016

REPLY:

Thank you for raising your concerns on behalf your community.

These are exceptional circumstances. There are children living in Australia, including 37 born here who under the Turnbull Government will be sent to Nauru.

As I mentioned in my letter, Victoria is willing to take full responsibility for these children and their families, including in the provision of housing, health, education, counselling and support, maternal and child health and kindergarten. Everything they need to land on their feet.

We're happy to do this because I know, before too long, they'll be paying us back in spades.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister did not accept our offer to keep these children in Victoria.

There are infants among this group who were born in this country. Sending them to Nauru will needlessly expose them to a life of physical and emotional trauma. Sending these children to a life of trauma on a sparse Pacific island is not a fair solution. The Prime Minister's response is disappointing. Sadly, little appears to have changed since this Prime Minister replaced his predecessor.

Croydon electorate**Question 6813**

Question asked by: Member for Croydon
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

The daily cost of rail replacement coaches is between \$250 000 - \$300 000. However, this will reduce with the uplift of rail services from 21 March 2016.

Re-railing works at North Melbourne are to be funded out of V/Line's regular maintenance budget.

At this stage it is premature to provide an exact estimate of current or future costs.

Gippsland East electorate**Question 6815**

Question asked by: Member for Gippsland East
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian Government greatly appreciates the work of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA) volunteers including those of Gippsland, Victoria, who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

As you may be aware, the then Economic Development, Infrastructure and Outer Suburban Interface Services Committee (the Committee) conducted an inquiry into marine rescue services in Victoria. The Committee's report was tabled on 3 September 2014 and made 43 comprehensive and detailed recommendations in relation to management of marine rescue services across the State.

The government's response to the Inquiry, tabled in Parliament on 11 February 2016, sets out a plan for a more coordinated approach to building Marine Search and Rescue (MSAR) capability in the State and to better support volunteers. The proposed reforms will introduce new common standards and training in the marine search and rescue sector, critical for safe and consistent service delivery and better enable marine search and rescue units to work together during operations.

The government's response is available at www.emv.vic.gov.au/latest-news/victorian-marine-search-and-rescue-services/.

On 9 March, I met with the Coast Guard and the Boating Industry Association of Victoria who raised the importance of having a coordinated approach with all marine rescue services and the development of an efficient interface between volunteer services and government agencies. Coast Guard also raised concerns regarding future funding arrangements.

As a result of our discussions and the almost immediate commencement of a consultation process, Coast Guard has ceased its campaign of restricted services.

The framework now being developed by the Victorian Government is part of ensuring we have a robust and sustainable marine rescue service for future generations.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Essendon electorate**Question 6816**

Question asked by: Member for Essendon
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

We are working continuously to assist people find a pathway to employment, especially those living in public housing.

As part of our Back to Work scheme \$5000 is available to businesses that employ a social housing tenant. A further \$4000 is available when accredited training is provided to an eligible employer.

Together with partner agencies we also support Work and Learning Centres that are located near public housing estates to assist people in these communities.

There is a Work and Learning centre in Carlton that provides:

- career guidance
- vocational training
- foundation skill courses
- links to local employers
- support services

I would be happy to discuss further ways we can create employment opportunities for people in Essendon Fields, including at the Hyatt Place Hotel.

Ferntree Gully electorate**Question 6817**

Question asked by: Member for Ferntree Gully
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised:

The Labor Party made a commitment prior to the November 2014 State Election to install 40 km/h electronic speed limit signs for school speed zones at three locations within the Monbulk electorate. The Member for Monbulk, the Hon James Merlino MP, and I, announced this commitment in August 2014. I am pleased to advise that the Andrews Labor Government delivered on this commitment in January 2016.

VicRoads will continue to consider the installation of electronic speed limit signs throughout the state and prioritise each versus many other competing safety needs.

Carrum electorate**Question 6818**

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) is running an extensive community consultation and engagement process throughout 2016. All of the local community are invited to get involved and have their say on what improvements they would like to see in their local area through this program to remove eight level crossings between Cheltenham and Frankston.

As designs are developed throughout 2016, the community and stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback.

The first opportunity to be involved is happening during March and April and is already underway. This includes station pop-ups, where flyers promoting community drop-in sessions have been handed out to approximately 8 000 commuters and letterbox drops to more than 65 000 households and businesses. Community drop-in sessions, have started with four already complete and another five over the coming weeks. An online engagement tool, Social Pinpoint, has already had hundreds of comments from community members and will be open for several more weeks.

In mid-2016, the community will have a second opportunity to provide feedback, when the Level Crossing Removal Authority has identified and developed feasible design options.

With the third opportunity at the end of the year on the recommended design, ahead of a tender process in 2017 and start of construction in early 2018.

Eildon electorate**Question 6819**

Question asked by: Member for Eildon
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring that Victorian cyclists stay safe on our roads.

VicRoads advises me that cycling on regional roads is becoming increasingly popular and that there have been crashes involving cyclists on roads in the Eildon electorate.

In response to this safety concern, the Victorian Government is making an unprecedented investment through its \$100 million safer cyclists and pedestrians fund in building infrastructure that keeps cyclists and pedestrians safe on our roads.

As with many roads in regional Victoria, motorists and cyclists are being asked to share the road and respect each other's space and right to use the road network. VicRoads responds to this challenge by issuing permits for many on-road cycling events like the Giro della Gran Fondo, to facilitate a controlled interaction between motorists and cyclists.

There are also a number of local initiatives by our community road safety groups to provide education to both parties to ensure that safety is the number one priority.

Mordialloc electorate**Question 6820**

Question asked by: Member for Mordialloc
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Mordialloc for his question, and the fantastic work he has done advocating for strong protection of the coastal environment in his electorate. As the Member is aware, when the Council initially submitted the coastal management plan, I requested amendments including a revision to the wording on page 15 which referred to the cessation of planting overstorey tree species to protect private bay views which was inconsistent with the Victorian Coastal Strategy and Council's Foreshore Planting Community Engagement Strategy.

The revised plan will ensure that it is consistent with the Victorian Coastal Strategy and Council's Foreshore Planting Community Engagement Strategy. I notified Council that the amended plan was approved on 16 January 2016.

South Barwon electorate**Question 6829**

Question asked by: Member for South Barwon
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 25 February 2016

REPLY:

I agree that the services across the V/Line network, disrupted by an increased rate of wear on the wheels of VLocity carriages, have been well below the level regional passengers deserve.

V/Line and PTV have been working hard to rectify the wheel-wear problems, which have caused these disruptions; through an accelerated recovery program. As a result, there has been an improvement in service levels on all affected regional routes. From March 21 2016, V/Line returned another 43 train services to the network, meaning fewer coach replacements will be needed. More than 90 per cent of services across the regional network will run as trains, with the services targeted towards the areas and times of greatest patronage and need.

On the Geelong line, seven train services were returned, resulting in just 10 of 108 daily services running as coaches.

This interim timetable, which is published on the V/Line and PTV websites, will provide passengers with greater certainty as they plan their travel, while works continue to fully restore services by mid-year.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to a strong program of investment to improve public transport services in regional Victoria. The 2015-16 State Budget allocates \$257 million in funding to purchase an extra 21 VLocity carriages, which are due to be delivered by 2018. This is in direct contrast to the previous government, who failed to order a single train for regional Victoria in two years.

The Andrews Labor Government are also preparing the Regional Network Development Plan, the first of its kind to address the short, medium and long term public transport needs of regional Victoria.

Buninyong electorate**Question 6830**

Question asked by: Member for Buninyong
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 25 February 2016

REPLY:

The Western Distributor involves widening of the West Gate Freeway, a tunnel under Yarraville, a second major river crossing and an elevated road along Footscray Road connecting to CityLink and the city.

The Western Distributor will be a great benefit for drivers from Ballarat and the surrounding region. It will save Ballarat drivers 20 minutes in the peak and improve the reliability of their travel by creating smoother flowing traffic. The \$5.5 billion project will create 5600 jobs, including jobs for regional Victorians, and boost the Victorian economy by \$11 billion.

A rigorous Environmental Effects Statement (EES) process is underway to assess the project's potential environmental, social and technical impacts. The project's final scope and design, including the length and location of tunnel entrances, will be guided by the EES process and in consultation with community members, local government and industry.

The consultation will commence with community sessions in mid-April 2016 and will enable community members to be well involved and informed every step of the way.

Morwell electorate**Question 6831**

Question asked by: Member for Morwell
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 25 February 2016

REPLY:

On 17 March 2016, I launched our Government's blueprint for driving economic growth and creating new jobs for Victorians in key priority sectors.

I also announced a \$20 million Sector Growth Program to support the strategies, boost economic growth and create jobs as part of our \$200 million Future Industries Fund.

The sectors primed for growth are medical technologies and pharmaceuticals, new energy technologies, food and fibre, defence technologies, construction technologies, transport technologies, international education, and professional services.

These sectors have been chosen for their potential to deliver extraordinary economic growth and the capacity to create high-skill, high wage jobs throughout Victoria, including the Latrobe Valley.

In addition to the Future Industries Fund, the Government has also established the \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, which will provide funding support to all of regional Victoria, including the Latrobe Valley.

With regards to the Latrobe Valley Industry and Infrastructure Fund you refer to, I am advised by my department that this program closed in June 2014.

It is disappointing to see the local Member and then Minister for Energy and Resources could not save the Fund from being axed by his own government despite 62 000 Victorian workers losing their jobs during the Coalition's term.

I would like to assure the Member for Morwell that the Andrews Labor Government will continue to support the development of our state's future industries and deliver sustained jobs growth for all Victorians.

Macedon electorate**Question 6832**

Question asked by: Member for Macedon
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 25 February 2016

REPLY:

Thank you for your question, I commend you for the concern and commitment that you continue to show for your electorate.

The 2014-15 Commonwealth Budget announced significant changes to public hospital funding arrangements under the National Health Reform Agreement. As a result of these savage cuts Victoria's hospitals will lose \$17.7 billion over the next ten years, this is the equivalent of 2.9 million elective surgeries or nearly 32 million dialysis sessions.

The federal Liberal Government's decision to reduce health service funding increases on the basis of Consumer Price Index and population growth, instead of the actual growth in services they deliver will hurt Victorian hospitals and patients.

The Andrews Labor Government will continue to call on the Turnbull Government to reverse these savage cuts and this harmful decision. The Victorian Government is working with the Commonwealth to explore options for funding reform and ensure long term sustainable funding for our hospitals.

We are standing by our health services and unlike the former Victorian Liberal Government who cut \$1 billion from our hospitals, this Government will continue to invest to ensure Victorians can receive the high quality care they need and deserve.

Further to these cuts, the Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool has advised and been supported by the Commonwealth Treasurer to reduce Commonwealth funding for public hospitals in Victoria by an additional \$73.2 million in 2015-16 and \$36.6 million ongoing. These cuts are already impacting the total funding available for hospitals and this will flow on to affect all local health service budgets.

Gembrook electorate**Question 6833**

Question asked by: Member for Gembrook
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 25 February 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to providing employment opportunities to Victorians with a disability.

The Victorian Government Land Monitor analysed the land transaction in question, verified that the transaction is legal, transparent and conducted in accordance with the highest standards of probity, relevant legislation and Victorian Government policy, and approved the transaction to proceed.

On the advice of the Government Land Monitor, under provisions of the Victorian Government Land Transactions Policy and Guidelines, the Minister for Planning has approved the private treaty transaction be conducted and the land sold to Outlook Victoria.

Broadmeadows electorate**Question 6836**

Question asked by: Member for Broadmeadows
Directed to: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Asked on: 25 February 2016

REPLY:

The Gambling Regulation Act 2003 (the Act) requires club venue operators to contribute at least 8.33 per cent of the club's gaming revenue to approved community purposes or activities.

The claiming of operating costs and expenses is allowed as the existence of clubs is recognised as an important benefit to the community.

Under the Act, hotel venue operators are required to pay an additional 8.33 per cent gaming machine taxation which is directed to the Community Support Fund (CSF).

Funds from the CSF are used for a range of important community purposes. Under the Act, the first call on the CSF is the operation of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, gambling related research and programs to minimise harm from problem gambling. Other purposes to which funds from the CSF may be applied include drug education, treatment and rehabilitation, financial counselling and support for families in crisis, youth programs, sport and recreation, and arts and tourism.

In 2015, the government announced a review of gaming machine arrangements (the review). Since 2012, approved clubs and hotels own and operate their own gaming machines under the authority of entitlements that expire on 15 August 2022. The review will help government determine the arrangements to be put in place for the operation of gaming machines from that date.

The review will consider whether revenue from gaming is fairly distributed. An examination of the structure of gaming machine taxes and the tax differential between clubs and hotels, including how clubs demonstrate their community benefit, will form part of the review.

Consultation with industry, community and government stakeholders will be undertaken during the course of the review.

Narracan electorate**Question 6837**

Question asked by: Member for Narracan
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 25 February 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government understands the importance of easing congestion and reducing travel times for the growing population in south-east Melbourne. This is why we are investing in the Level Crossing Removal Project: Caulfield to Dandenong, when combined with the purchase of the 37 new high capacity trains, the project will boost capacity to accommodate an extra 11 000 passengers in the morning peak.

This upgrade of the rail corridor will also deliver significant improvements in the reliability of V/Line services that currently operate on the line.

The proposed design for the removal of the nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong has made sure the future provision of an additional two tracks (one of which would be dedicated for regional V/Line services) is not precluded.

Dandenong electorate**Question 6905**

Question asked by: Member for Dandenong
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 8 March 2016

REPLY:

Removal of the Chandler Road level crossing, along with the level crossings at Heatherton Road and Corrigan Road, will transform Noble Park into a safer, more accessible place for local residents, business owners and visitors.

Relieving road congestion is just one of the many great benefits of separating the road from the rail line. Currently, the boom gates at Chandler Road are down for 67 minutes during the two-hour morning peak, frustrating commuters and local residents alike.

Removing the level crossing will also make getting around Noble Park simpler and safer for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Instead of a railway line dividing the community, there will be easy connections from both sides of the rail corridor to the shops, cafes and services on Railway Parade. There will be safe pedestrian access on both sides of Chandler Road, and a pedestrian and cycle path that will connect with the Eastlink trail via Yarraman Station to the east and Noble Park Station to the west.

There will also be new open space and community facilities opposite the shopping centre in Railway Parade, which will be developed in partnership with locals and Council.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority will engage directly with surrounding businesses about construction activities that may impact them and will work with local traders to establish a strategy to increase trade and operations.

Radio announcements and roadside signage will be used to notify the local community about planned works, along with updates on the Public Transport Victoria (PTV), VicRoads and Level Crossing Removal Authority websites.

Shepparton electorate**Question 6910**

Question asked by: Member for Shepparton
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 8 March 2016

REPLY:

Public Transport Victoria does not have the capacity to ascertain the home address of travellers boarding trains at Seymour railway station using data from their registered myki card.

If a traveller chooses to register their myki card then they are required to enter their postal address, this will not necessarily equate to their home address.

Pascoe Vale electorate**Question 6911**

Question asked by: Member for Pascoe Vale
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 8 March 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to responding to community concerns about graffiti vandalism.

I am pleased to advise that applications for the government's 2016-17 Graffiti Prevention Grants are now open. Victorian Councils are invited to apply for grants of up to \$25 000 to partner with community groups to deliver local government initiatives. This includes environmental design initiatives such as vertical gardens, plants, murals and public art at graffiti hotspots and anti-graffiti education initiatives to engage the community, particularly young people. Councils interested in applying for a Graffiti Prevention Grant can find more information at the Community Crime Prevention website: crimeprevention.vic.gov.au/graffitigrants

The government is also continuing to support the Community Correctional Services' Graffiti Removal Program (GRP), which puts supervised teams of offenders on community orders to work removing graffiti from vandalised state and local government assets, as well as community assets and some private property.

The City of Moreland has been an active partner with the Graffiti Removal Program since 2006 and approximately 174 435 square metres of graffiti has been removed from community assets across the municipality in this time. To put this into perspective, that amount of graffiti would cover 8.6 MCG playing fields. In this financial year alone, 13 722 square metres of graffiti has been removed.

Rowville electorate

Question 6912

Question asked by: Member for Rowville
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 8 March 2016

REPLY:

The Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) was deliberately introduced into Victoria from the 1850s for recreational hunting. Victorian habitats have proved highly favourable for the fox - it has established in all terrestrial environments from inner urban areas to alpine heaths, rainforests, coasts and the Mallee.

In urban areas it is particularly difficult to control fox numbers. There are limitations on traditional control measures such as shooting and baiting. In Rowville, efforts to exclude foxes from residential properties are more effective than directly targeting fox populations. Actions include ensuring chicken coops are fox-proof and fastened nightly, clearing fallen fruit from trees and using secure compost and waste bins.

Typically, fox control on public land in Victoria aims to reduce the impacts of fox predation on native wildlife, including threatened species. Ark projects are long-term, large scale fox mitigation projects. Ark projects are coordinated by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and/or Parks Victoria (PV) (dependent on the land management arrangements in place). Cross agency steering groups made up of representatives from relevant agencies i.e. local councils, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, DELWP and PV guide and support delivery of these projects. Ark projects include monitoring activities to assess effectiveness of projects. Effectiveness is measured through reduction in fox numbers and increases in native wildlife. Collectively the Southern Ark, Glenelg Ark, Grampians Ark and Central Highlands Ark projects cover more than 1.25 million hectares of predominantly high value public land across the state.

There are coordinated activities that occur locally. Parks Victoria, for example, is directing \$5000 towards soft jaw trapping of foxes within a contained area of the Dandenong Valley Parklands. Knox and Monash city councils provide additional funding for this collaborative project aimed at protecting the threatened Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*).

There is also \$5800 p.a. project focused on fox baiting at Lysterfield Lake Park (Parks Victoria). This 3 year Good Neighbour Program (GNP) funded project complements fox control efforts being undertaken on adjoining freehold properties. The next round of GNP applications is now open. The GNP provides funding for DELWP and PV staff to coordinate pest plant and animal control works along the public-private land interface, specifically to prevent invasive species moving from public to private land.

Local businesses and organisations also participate in fox eradication programs. For example exclusion efforts by the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne include the installation of nine kilometres of feral-proof fencing. The fencing is 1.8 metres tall, with a floppy top to prevent foxes climbing over, and wire below ground level and set

back from the fence line to stop foxes digging under. Surveillance of the perimeter is undertaken weekly to make sure there are no new holes.

Mornington electorate

Question 6920

Question asked by: Member for Mornington
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 9 March 2016

REPLY:

Transport services supporting students from Balcombe Grammar School are provided through Public Transport Victoria; I have referred this matter to The Hon. Jacinta Allan, Minister for Public Transport to respond.

The Andrews Labor Government, through the Department of Education and Training, provides a conveyance allowance for eligible students to support families in rural and regional Victoria with the cost of transporting their children to the nearest government school/campus or appropriate denominational school.

A conveyance allowance boundary was introduced from 1 January 2013 to better define metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria. Students attending schools within the Mt Martha postcode were provided with an exemption from the boundary change due to limited transport infrastructure availability in these areas (at that time-2013).

I am advised that **230** students attending Balcombe Grammar School in 2015 (full year) were in receipt of a conveyance allowance payment, totalling **\$94 728**. The Term One, 2016 conveyance allowance data identifies that **164** students are in receipt of the conveyance allowance payment, totalling **\$17 950**. It is anticipated that this number will increase as Balcombe Grammar has yet to submit all student applications for the conveyance allowance.

Carrum electorate

Question 6921

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 9 March 2016

REPLY:

I share your concerns about securing funding for the final two years of the Gonski Agreement. The Commonwealth Government has indicated it will not meet its commitment to the Gonski Agreement in 2018 and 2019, putting over \$1 billion in Commonwealth funding to Victorian schools at risk. This includes an estimated \$6 million to \$6.5 million in the electorate of Carrum. This decision compromises the ability of schools to provide high-quality education to all students, particularly those in need.

I have raised these issues with Commonwealth Government Ministers through the national Education Council, and I am seeking to secure a fair and sustainable approach to funding all schools. I hope that the Commonwealth Government is willing to honour the funding agreements and partner with Victoria to develop funding arrangements post-2017.

Burwood electorate**Question 6966**

Question asked by: Member for Burwood
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 9 March 2016

REPLY:

I refer to the matter you raised in the Legislative Assembly on 9 March 2016 regarding Protective Services Officers (PSOs). I also note that I have already responded to a similar question from you in an Adjournment Debate on 8 March 2016.

Victoria Police is continuing to recruit, train and deploy 1036 Protective Services Officers (PSOs) to 216 rail stations across the rail network. I am advised that PSOs are currently deployed to 177 rail stations, with Victoria Police committed to deploying PSOs to the remaining stations, including Auburn, Willison, Hartwell and Alamein by June 2016.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE RESPONSE DATED 8 MARCH 2016:

I refer to the matter you raised in the Legislative Assembly on 11 February 2016 regarding Protective Service Officers.

Victoria Police is continuing to recruit, train and deploy 1036 Protective Services Officers (PSOs) to 216 rail stations across the rail network. I am advised that PSOs are currently deployed to 177 rail stations, with Victoria Police committed to deploying PSOs to the remaining stations, including Auburn, Willison, Hartwell and Alamein by June 2016.

Under Victorian law, I cannot direct the Chief Commissioner about the allocation or deployment of police officers or PSOs to or at particular locations in accordance with section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013.

The role of PSOs is to address crime, violence and anti-social behaviour, and to increase perceptions of safety on the rail network. To date, PSOs have undertaken a significant amount of work, issuing more than 57 000 infringement notices for a wide range of offences including anti-social behaviour, alcohol, drugs and graffiti offences. PSOs have detected people with outstanding warrants and provided assistance, including medical assistance, to commuters.

I note your comments about the Night Network trial and the effect the extended hours of public transport may have on behaviour within your community. To support the Andrews Labor Government's Night Network trial of 24 hour public transport on weekends, the government has provided funding to Victoria Police for an additional 109 PSOs and 62 transit police officers.

These additional resources form part of the current PSO and transit police workforce, with PSOs patrolling premium train stations and transit police providing roving patrols on all train lines during the 12-month trial.

Further, all stations on the metropolitan train network have monitored CCTV coverage and an emergency assistance button for passenger safety.

Essendon electorate**Question 6967**

Question asked by: Member for Essendon
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 9 March 2016

REPLY:

Small Business Victoria (SBV) delivers a range of programs and services that assist all Victorians wishing to start a business. SBV would be delighted to work with the City of Moonee Valley to arrange tailored Starting Your Business Workshops for your constituents from the Horn of Africa interested in starting a business.

Each year the Small Business Victoria Workshops program delivers more than 350 low-cost, practical workshops covering 22 topics. They are delivered in partnership with local councils.

The program is flexible and is often tailored to suit a variety of different cohorts, including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. Over the past year Small Business Victoria delivered 15 workshops for CALD communities, including workshops for aspiring women business owners. Over 260 people attended these workshops.

These tailored workshops have been on topics such as Starting Your Business, Business Planning Essentials, Understanding Marketing, Your Business in a Digital World, Develop Your Online Strategy, Effective Networking and Pricing for Maximum Profit.

The Starting Your Business workshop is also offered with a free individual mentoring session with an experienced business mentor provided through the Small Business Mentoring Service.

The Small Business Mentors have experience mentoring business aspirants from African communities. Workshop participants who require an interpreter can also request this service when registering for their free mentoring session.

Bass electorate**Question 6968**

Question asked by: Member for Bass
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 9 March 2016

REPLY:

This question should be redirected to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Hon Luke Donnellan MP, as this matter falls within his portfolio.

Frankston electorate**Question 6969**

Question asked by: Member for Frankston
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 9 March 2016

REPLY:

The Community Renewables Solar Grants Initiative was launched on 30 January 2016 to help Victorian lifesaving clubs save money on their electricity bills and facilitate the uptake of renewable energy by Victorian communities. Under the initiative, Victorian lifesaving clubs can apply for grants to install solar panel systems of up to 5kW, allowing clubs to reduce their energy costs and allocate more of their funds toward the critical aspects of their role, such as training and patrolling our beaches.

The Frankston Life Saving Club is the first club to receive grant funding. I visited the club in April 2016 to witness the installation of the first solar panel system under this initiative.

This is the first Life Saving Victoria club to receive grant funding. I look forward to making further announcements as solar panel systems are progressively installed at Life Saving Victoria Clubs across Victoria.

Yan Yean electorate

Question 6980

Question asked by: Member for Yan Yean
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

I thank Ms Green for the question raised regarding the new Mernda South Primary School and Mernda Central Prep- Year 12 School.

These schools are being delivered through the New Schools Public Private Partnership (PPP) Project which will see 15 high priority new schools open across a number of Victoria's fastest growing metropolitan and regional communities. The first tranche of schools will open in the 2017 school year (including Mernda South PS and Mernda Central P-12 School) and the second in 2018. Learning Communities Victoria (LCV) is the consortium appointed to deliver the Project and include Watpac as builder, ClarkeHopkinsClarke as architect and Spotless as facilities managers.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to delivering the Education State and recognises that providing a first class education starts with investment in school infrastructure. The 2015-16 State Budget delivers a \$111 million package to support the delivery of 10 new schools in Melbourne's growth and established areas.

These much needed new schools will ease the significant enrolment pressures experienced by many existing schools in Victoria's growth areas. Mernda is a rapidly growing area and Government is committed to delivering first class educational facilities and new social infrastructure to meet the needs of this rapidly growing community.

In addition to delivering the schools, LCV will also provide:

- 11 YMCA Community Hubs which are additional multi-purpose spaces in each school. The Community Hubs are available for school use during the day and the YMCA will run Out of Schools Hours Care and other programs for the community before and after school times;
- expanded indoor gymnasiums built to Netball Victoria competition standards;
- A Learn to Swim pool at Mernda Central;
- a hydrotherapy pool at North Geelong Special Developmental School;
- a partnership with CERES to deliver environmental sustainability programs;
- commercial kitchens at 4 schools, enabling the delivery of hospitality related VET programs; and
- 6 Early Learning Centres to be operated by the YMCA including and Integrated ELC at Mernda South combining the City of Whittlesea Child and Family Centre.

Each of the schools will also include outdoor hard courts and sporting ovals for outdoor sports and play.

The schools have been designed with the local community in mind and will act as community hubs, providing recreational and gathering spaces for their communities.

The Principals of each of these new schools will work with their local communities, including local sporting clubs, to encourage after hours use of the school and grounds.

Local communities will be updated throughout the Project, with information sessions to be scheduled in the first half of 2016 to inform local families about the new school facilities and the community services being delivered. This will also be an opportunity for the community to meet the school Principals and the PPP partners such as the YMCA and CERES.

Eildon electorate

Question 6983

Question asked by: Member for Eildon
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

The Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 allows for shorter vehicle registration periods of less than 12 months for eligible pensioners, Health Care cardholders and for some vehicles operated by, or on behalf of, incapacitated persons. Current legislation does not provide for discretion to offer short-term periods more generally.

VicRoads is currently reviewing the system of registration options, including the ability to pay registration in instalments. The community will be advised if there are any changes as a result of the review.

Niddrie electorate

Question 6984

Question asked by: Member for Niddrie
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

The survey works and geotechnical drilling began in early March and will continue for three to four weeks. Drilling is being undertaken at eleven locations along Buckley Street, just off Buckley Street in Flower Street, Leslie Street and VicTrack land that is occupied by car parking. In order to minimise the impact on traffic, planned drilling is taking place during the day with restricted working hours at night and on weekends.

The Impact on Constituents and local communities

There will be temporary road closures for a length of about 300 metres on Buckley Street and adjacent side streets between Mount Alexander Road and Flower Street, and temporary closures to car parks adjacent to the train station. Pedestrian access and access to local businesses will be maintained at all times.

Whilst the drilling is not expected to create excessive noise or disturbance, there will be some dust and noise during drilling activities and the works will require the use of large vehicles.

Informing the Level Crossing Removal Authority of the removal of the Buckley street level crossing

By providing information about the underground conditions and the physical properties of soil and rock at the site. This information is required to design earthworks and foundations for proposed structures. It will also determine if there is ground water at the site that will need to be taken into consideration during design and subsequent construction.

Melbourne electorate**Question 6985**

Question asked by: Member for Melbourne
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

We recognise the plight of the Oromo people and are committed to supporting the Oromo community living in Victoria. Since 1999, the Victorian Government has provided funding to the community for a range of programs, festivals and events to support the preservation of the Oromo history and culture and the continuation of the Oromo language.

I also wish to advise that the 2016-17 Multicultural Grant Programs opened recently. Communities can apply for funding through a range of streams to promote social cohesion and encourage greater participation and inclusiveness within Victoria's diverse communities.

I encourage the Oromo community in Victoria to consider applying for a grant by visiting the website at www.multicultural.vic.gov.au, or by contacting Hakan Akyol, Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship.

Narre Warren South electorate**Question 6986**

Question asked by: Member for Narre Warren South
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

Thank you for your question. As you know from your role as Ambassador for the Casey Tech School, the Andrews Labor Government's Tech School initiative will establish ten state of the art Tech Schools as learning centres of excellence, using leading edge technology, discovery and innovation to deliver the advanced education and training that Victorian school students need to flourish in the rapidly changing global economy. The Tech Schools will deliver high-tech STEM-based taster and enrichment programs linked to the new Victorian Curriculum for Years 7 - 12 with the aim of connecting children to future skills, opportunities and emerging industries. This innovative project is an important part of the Education State Initiative.

I thank you for your contribution in chairing meetings that, through extensive consultation with the with local partnership comprising schools, local industry, tertiary institutions and local government, have contributed to the development of the vision for the Casey Tech School. Central to the development of the Tech Schools is that they are locally driven proposals. This consultation specifically aims to ensure that the Tech School programs and facilities are suitable for local requirements and address the needs identified by the local partnerships, as each Tech School will deliver general and industry-specific programs tailored to the location of the Tech School.

As you know each Tech School will be located on the site of a TAFE or University to support student connections with tertiary and employment opportunities, and I am excited to advise that a public announcement of the locations of the remaining nine Tech Schools is expected in the coming weeks. The location of the Casey Tech School was announced on the 29 March 2016, and Chisholm's Berwick campus was confirmed as the host.

The announcement of the sites will mark a critical shift into the implementation phase of the Tech Schools initiative - allowing commencement of the establishment of governing bodies and design and construction processes. A Tech Schools Summit will be held on 26 April 2016 and will provide an opportunity to engage and connect key stakeholders from education and industry and we move into the next phase, showcase global best practice on STEM education, and build on the existing curriculum development and program planning work for the Tech Schools.

South-West Coast electorate**Question 6987**

Question asked by: Member for South-West Coast
Directed to: Minister for Industry
Asked on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to growing and retaining jobs across Victoria, including in regional Victoria. Since being elected, the government has delivered strong job creation in regional Victoria with 11 900 new jobs created and the regional unemployment rate falling to 6.5 per cent.

In terms of Alcoa, the Victorian Government is well aware of the importance of the smelter to the local economy but most importantly to the people of Portland.

We are engaging positively with Alcoa to ensure the best possible outcome. The issues surrounding the future of Portland Aluminium are complex and involve a number of internal and external factors.

The Victorian Government will not abandon Victorian industry and Victorian workers. We will stand with them and work closely with all relevant parties to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Dandenong electorate**Question 6988**

Question asked by: Member for Dandenong
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

Since the Andrews Labor government was elected, \$189.6 million of additional recurrent funding has been allocated to schools in the Dandenong electorate through the 2015 and 2016 Student Resource Package allocations, an increase in funding of over 13 per cent. The increase also includes the Education State investment in equity reform of \$4.8 million.

Also, there has been a \$10 million allocation of capital funding to schools in the Dandenong electorate in the 2015-16 State Budget. Dandenong High School has received \$3 million and Lyndale Secondary College has received \$7 million for modernisation works.

Carrum electorate**Question 7006**

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 22 March 2016

REPLY:

Every student has the right to feel safe at school. We know that safe, supportive and respectful learning environments lead to positive outcomes.

Our Government has zero tolerance of any type of bullying, harassment or discrimination in our schools. There is a range of initiatives and programs available to Victorian schools to help them create safe and inclusive environments.

The Victorian Government introduced respectful relationships into the new Victorian Curriculum from 2016 in Prep to year 10 to support students to learn how to build healthy relationships, focusing on challenging negative attitudes that lead to prejudice, discrimination and violence.

Bully Stoppers is another effective resource in creating safe and inclusive schools and respectful relationships. The program's name and its pledge to - 'Make a stand. Lend a hand' - were chosen from a student competition. It has practical advice and resources to empower school leaders, teachers, parents and students to play their part in stopping bullying when they see it.

In the 2015-16 Budget, the Victorian Government provided an additional \$1.04 million to increase existing funding to Safe Schools Coalition Victoria to expand its program into every Victorian government secondary school by the end of 2018, supporting same sex attracted and gender diverse students in creating inclusive environments for all.

The Safe Schools program matters because 75 per cent of same sex attracted and gender diverse students experience verbal or physical abuse and 80 per cent of this abuse occurs in schools. Tragically, same-sex attracted young people are six times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers.

We are absolutely committed to supporting same sex attracted and gender diverse students and we are absolutely committed to creating inclusive environments for all.

The Victorian Government will fund the Safe Schools Coalition Victoria program into the future, with or without Federal Government support.

We will meet our commitment that every Victorian government secondary school is a member of Safe Schools Coalition Victoria by the end of 2018, because it saves lives.

A majority of government secondary schools have now signed up to Safe Schools Coalition - and currently in Victoria 252 Victorian government and non-government schools are members of the Safe Schools Coalition.

Ringwood electorate

Question 7016

Question asked by: Member for Ringwood
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 23 March 2016

REPLY:

I appreciate your constituent's concerns regarding the prevalence and dangers of the drugs in the community.

Victoria Police plays a crucial role in the government's road safety strategy, by enforcing the road rules through finely balancing routine patrols, booze buses and special operations targeting high risk areas, or times of high risk, with a highly visible police presence. As part of this approach, Victoria Police conducts random roadside drug testing to detect drivers travelling while affected by certain illicit drugs.

I am advised that over the recent Easter long weekend, Victoria Police conducted Operation Nexus. This state-wide campaign, targeting dangerous driver behaviour, saw 1600 motorists stopped for drug testing by police. Of those tested, 218 were found to have been affected by drugs. During Nexus, police also detected 3330 speeding offences, 1089 unregistered vehicles and impounded a total of 90 vehicles.

Random roadside saliva testing is aimed at making Victoria's roads safer for everyone by reducing the incidence of drug driving. The government has announced a total of \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses to maintain the level of 100 000 roadside random drug tests per year, for the next two years.

The majority of Victoria Police's drink and drug driving enforcement efforts are through booze and drug bus activity. The effectiveness of police road safety enforcement is focused on a key factor that the risk of being tested is a strong deterrent, for people not driving after drinking alcohol or using drugs.

Gippsland East electorate

Question 7018

Question asked by: Member for Gippsland East
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 23 March 2016

REPLY:

I confirm that the Macalister Irrigation District (MID) 2030 Phase B Project: Southern- Tinamba Modernisation Project will receive \$20 million from the Agriculture Infrastructure and Jobs Fund.

The Delivering Victorian Infrastructure (Port of Melbourne Lease Transaction) Bill 2015 has passed Victorian Parliament, allowing the port of Melbourne to be leased. This transaction will fund a number of projects through the \$200 million Agriculture Infrastructure and Jobs Fund as outlined in the government's Regional Statement released on 17 November 2015. The Andrews Government's commitment to supporting this project and other MID modernisation works is reaffirmed in the Water for Victoria Discussion Paper released for public consultation on 16 March 2016.

Yan Yean electorate

Question 7025

Question asked by: Member for Yan Yean
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 23 March 2016

REPLY:

Yarra Valley Water (YVW) is managing odour issues in the vicinity of the Painted Hills Sewage Pumping Station in Doreen and is working on resolving them as a matter of urgency. In simple terms, the issue is caused by blockages in the pumping station and the sewage sitting in the pipes longer than average, resulting in the sewer system being unable to naturally ventilate itself.

YVW is already delivering immediate and longer-term actions to rectify this issue and improve sewerage pipes in the area.

YVW will be altering the network to improve its ability to direct sewage flows away from Doreen and reduce the likelihood of odours caused by stagnant sewage in the sewerage system. It is expected that this work will resolve the odour issues in the long term. Planning for this work is well advanced and is ready for construction in the coming months. YVW expect the works to be completed by June 2016.

YVW has also undertaken the following actions to address the issue:

- Installing odour filters at the pumping station and odour loggers to monitor their effectiveness.
- Altering the network controls to reduce the amount of stagnant sewage in the system.
- Checking and re-sealing manholes in the immediate area to ensure the odour is not able to escape.
- Investigating chemical treatment of the sewage to further reduce the impact.
- Sending letters to approximately 800 customers on 25 February 2016, to ensure a wide section of the community (whether impacted or not) is informed of progress.

YVW advises me that the immediate actions have addressed the issues for customers within the immediate area. However, a long-term resolution to this issue remains a priority and YVW will continue to engage with customers on an individual basis as concerns arise.

Rowville electorate**Question 7034**

Question asked by: Member for Rowville
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 24 March 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian desalination plant can produce up to 150 gigalitres of water annually - which represents more than one third of Melbourne's use last year (415 gigalitres).

Melbourne Water's bulk water charges already include costs of the Victorian Desalination Plant for an annual security payment to AquaSure. These provide for the VDP's construction and availability in a state of readiness to provide water when it is needed. These payments amount to \$607 million in 2016/17 and is already built into existing water prices to customers.

The cost of a 50 gigalitre water order for 2016/17 is an extra \$27.9 million for the year. This cost will be recovered from the customers of the Melbourne water retailers through increases on water bills. For a 50 gigalitre order this equates to an extra annual cost of about \$12 a year on a typical residential customer's bill.

Sunbury electorate**Question 7035**

Question asked by: Member for Sunbury
Directed to: Treasurer
Asked on: 24 March 2016

REPLY:

Small Area Labour Market data for the year to the December quarter 2015 indicates that the unemployment rate in the Hume Local Government Area has decreased by an estimated 1.3 percentage points compared with the year to the September quarter 2014.

These numbers echo the strong performance across Victoria. Since November 2014, total employment in Victoria has increased by 100 700 people, with full time employment up by 52 900 people. These job numbers have already outperformed the four-year job numbers seen under the previous Liberal Government.

The Andrews Labor Government continues to make responsible investments to ensure that all Victorians can get a job and compete in the global economy.

The Government's jobs plan included the Back to Work Scheme, through which \$100 million was made available to provide financial assistance to businesses hiring people at risk of being excluded from the labour market, including unemployed youth, the long-term unemployed and retrenched workers. The Government has also invested in growing business in Victoria through the \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund and the \$508 million Premier's Jobs and Investment Fund, which lay the foundation for growth across our entire economy. In addition, the Government is investing \$200 million, through the Future Industries Fund, to grow Victoria's high growth industries and invest in emerging sectors.

I am pleased to note that 14 Back to Work Scheme payments have been made in Sunbury in the first three quarters of the operation of the Scheme.

The Government expanded the Back to Work Scheme to give employers greater access to support under the Scheme. This includes increasing payment amounts, adding to eligible employee categories and reducing eligibility requirements for some cohorts. These payments may support eligible employees including the young unemployed, long-term unemployed, automotive retrenched workers, apprentices and trainees, and disabled workers.

Most of these changes came into effect for eligible employees hired from 1 November 2015. Payments made under the Scheme have grown 26-fold in the last two quarters (1 October–31 December 2015, and 1 January–31 March 2016) compared to the number of payments made in the first quarter of operation (1 July–30 September 2015).