

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

22 and 24 March 2011

(Extract from book 4)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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Economy and Infrastructure References Committee — Mr Barber, Ms Broad, Mrs Coote, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and Mr Somyurek.

Environment and Planning Legislation Committee — Mr Elsbury, Mrs Kronberg, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

Environment and Planning References Committee — Mr Elsbury, Mrs Kronberg, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

Legal and Social Issues Legislation Committee — Ms Crozier, Mr Elasmarr, Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue, Mrs Petrovich and Mr Viney.

Legal and Social Issues References Committee — Ms Crozier, Mr Elasmarr, Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue, Mrs Petrovich and Mr Viney.

Joint committees

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

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

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

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Coote and Ms Crozier.

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

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

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): Mr O'Brien and Mr O'Donohue. (*Assembly*): Ms Campbell, Mr Eren, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella and Mr Watt.

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. W. A. LOVELL

Leader of the Opposition:

Mr J. LENDERS

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

Mr G. JENNINGS

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. R. HALL

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Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.
Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.
Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.
The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.*

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

Environment and climate change: East Gippsland fire

97. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Health (for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the recent major fire in East Gippsland that was listed on the Department of Sustainability and Environment's website as '6KM ESE NOWA NOWA TOSTAREE-PRINCES HWY', what was the source of its ignition.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Tostaree fire was reported to the Department of Sustainability and Environment by the Mount Nowa Nowa fire tower at 1304 hrs on 1 February 2011 and was declared contained at 1502 hrs on 4 February 2011, burning 11 365 hectares.

A fire investigation has been conducted; however, the final report has not been completed.

The source of the fire has been identified as a smouldering tree stump, which may have been alight for some months. It may not have been obvious that the stump was smouldering as the embers may have been underground.

Roads: Francis Street, Yarraville — truck curfew

102. MS HARTLAND — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Roads): In relation to truck curfews on Francis Street:

- (1) Are cameras on Francis Street, Yarraville, being used to photograph and subsequently prosecute offenders breaking truck curfew restrictions.
- (2) Since the installation of Francis Street cameras in 2007, what are the results of monitoring in terms of truck's numbers on Francis Street, during curfew hours and outside curfew hours.
- (3) How many hours per week are VicRoads personnel physically at Francis Street to enforce the curfew.
- (4) How many hours per week are there no VicRoads personnel at Francis Street to enforce the curfew.
- (5) Since 1 January 2007 how many prosecutions have occurred of trucks breaking curfew laws.
- (6) What numbers of trucks travelled Francis Street during curfew hours in each of the calendar years 2007 to 2010.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) The cameras are not used to directly enforce the truck curfew restrictions. A photograph of a truck on Francis Street is insufficient to constitute a curfew infringement as a number of trucks have local destinations and are therefore exempt from the restrictions. The height detection cameras identify the times of truck activity and

allow more efficient allocation of enforcement resources. This enables VicRoads to undertake follow-up activities with various drivers and transport companies.

- (2) A comparison of the average weekday truck numbers for two locations along Francis Street from 2007 to 2010 are summarised below.

DAILY TRUCK COUNTS					
Notes: - Average weekday truck numbers - Weekday curfew hours apply from 8.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m.					
Location	Time Period	March 2007	March 2008	March 2009	March 2010
Francis St east of Williamstown Rd	24 Hours	5566	5800	5527	5690
	Curfew Hours	689	778	731	674
Francis St west of Williamstown Rd	24 Hours	2526	2678	2506	2408
	Curfew Hours	118	159	155	33

- (3) Curfew times apply for 101 hours per week. Over the past 12 months VicRoads has averaged 6 to 7 hours per week patrolling Francis Street during curfew hours. Targeted enforcement activities are undertaken on varying days and times.
- (4) VicRoads enforcement personnel are not patrolling Francis Street for an average of 94 to 95 hours of the weekly curfew times. It should be noted that in addition to on-site enforcement, VicRoads officers liaise with transport companies to encourage better compliance with the curfews.
- (5) From January 2007 to January 2011, 278 infringements have been issued to truck drivers for disobeying the truck restrictions in Francis Street. None of these infringements have been challenged requiring prosecution through a court process.
- (6) VicRoads does not collect traffic counts on Francis Street for a whole year. Counts will vary according to day of week or weekend, holiday periods and seasonal factors.

Roads: truck action plan

103. MS HARTLAND — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Roads): In relation to the ‘Truck Action Plan’:

- (1) Will a night-time (8.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m.) truck curfew be implemented for Moore Street, Footscray.
- (2) Will the government seek federal government funding —
 - (a) for all of the \$380 million ‘Truck Action Plan’;
 - (b) for elements of the ‘Truck Action Plan’; if so, which elements; and
 - (c) to build the West Gate Freeway ramps, connecting the West Gate Freeway and Hyde Street.
- (3) What other initiatives will be implemented to reduce road freight and the number of trucks on residential streets.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) In relation to Moore Street in Footscray, there are no current proposals to provide a truck curfew as part of the Truck Action Plan project.

- (2) The Victorian government is reviewing its priorities for submission to Infrastructure Australia. Any submission to Infrastructure Australia on the Truck Action Plan would be based on the review of the scope of the project.
- (3) The coalition government is committed to providing an effective and sustainable transport system to support all Victorians within the constraints of available funding. The consideration of other initiatives to reduce the effects of road freight on residential areas will be considered in this context.

Ports: rail freight — target

- 104. MS HARTLAND** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Ports): In relation to targets for freight on rail, does the coalition government have a target for freight on rail; if so, what is the target.

ANSWER:

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

The question raised here, which was also raised as Question No: 105, has been responded to by the Minister for Roads.

Roads: rail freight — target

- 105. MS HARTLAND** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Roads): In relation to targets for freight on rail, does the government have a target for freight on rail; if so, what is the target.

ANSWER:

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

The government supports growing freight on rail and is carefully assessing a range of possible policy initiatives and projects to develop an effective coordinated package which produces real measurable improvements in rail's performance.

In the meantime we shall continue to work with rail freight operators and others in the rail freight supply chain to identify ways in which rail volumes can be increased.

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Thursday, 24 March 2011

Health: Ballarat base hospital — helipad

98. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the development of a helipad at the Ballarat base hospital, has the minister sought and received advice from the Department of Health.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The government is advancing the implementation of its election commitments and is being supported by all relevant departments, including the Department of Health.

Health: Ballarat base hospital — helipad

99. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the development of a helipad at the Ballarat base hospital, has the minister consulted with —

- (a) Air Ambulance Victoria;
- (b) Ballarat Health Services;
- (c) Ballarat City Council; and
- (d) the community.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The minister has consulted with a variety of relevant stakeholders in the Ballarat community and with relevant service providers.

Health: Ballarat base hospital — helipad

100. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the funding required to develop a helipad at the Ballarat base hospital, has the government sought and received advice from the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The government is advancing the implementation of its election commitments and is being supported by all relevant departments, including the Department of Treasury and Finance.

Health: Ballarat base hospital — helipad

101. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: When will the construction of a helipad at the Ballarat base hospital begin.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The construction of the helipad, a part of the government’s election commitment, will be subject to normal budget process. Construction will begin as the technical specification and construction issues are progressed.

Agriculture and food security: Department of Primary Industries — staff

117. MR PAKULA — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security):

- (1) What is the total number of executive and non-executive staff employed by the Department of Primary Industries who were either —
 - (a) made redundant (whether voluntarily or involuntarily);
 - (b) had employment terminated by the department; or
 - (c) whose employment ceased as a result of a voluntary separation or resignation.
- (2) What is the total gross cost of all payments made to these staff as a result of these redundancies, terminations and separations, between 2 December 2010 and 2 March 2011 inclusive.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) A total of 86 staff separated from the Department of Primary Industries between 2 December 2010 and 2 March 2011, for reasons such as retirement, death, transfers to other departments and contracts ending.
- (2) The total gross cost of all payments made to these staff for the period 2 December 2010 and 2 March 2011, including notice, severance, leave and other entitlements was \$1 158 196.88.

Regional and rural development: Regional Growth Fund

157. MR LENDERS — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Regional and Rural Development): In relation to the comment made by a spokeswoman for Deputy Premier Peter Ryan stating that more than double the annual funding for projects in regional Victoria would be provided by the Regional Growth Fund than under the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF):

- (1) What are the RIDF figures used as the basis for this claim.
- (2) How much funding will be available under the Regional Growth Fund for infrastructure only.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) Between 2000–01 and 2009–10 the previous government provided \$611 million to the Regional Infrastructure Development fund (RIDF). This figure was also inclusive of funding for the Small Towns Development Fund (STDF). This equates to average funding of \$61.2 million per annum for the combined RIDF and STDF.

Infrastructure funding in Ready for Tomorrow for the RIDF (\$260 million) and STDF (\$43 million) over five years would have maintained this annual average allocation.

- (2) The government has indicated that it will make \$500 million available through the Regional Growth Fund during its first term of government.

While the exact split of the funding between infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects will be dependent in part on locally identified and developed priorities, the majority of funding is expected to be infrastructure based, through initiatives including the Energy for the Region Program and the Local Government Infrastructure Fund.

Public transport: Metcard and myki tickets — usage

164. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Public Transport):

- (1) How many validations/touch-ons were recorded by Metcard/myki tickets at each of Melbourne's metropolitan railway stations in 2010.
- (2) How many validations were recorded by Metcard tickets across the whole of the metropolitan system in December 2010, January 2011 and February 2011.
- (3) How many touch-ons were recorded by myki tickets across the whole of the metropolitan system in December 2010, January 2011 and February 2011.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) In 2010 there were 115 450 009 Metcard validations and 16 815 737 myki touch-ons recorded at Melbourne's metropolitan railway stations.
- (2) December 2010 (16 874 152), January 2011 (14 928 332) and February 2011 (17 129 775).
- (3) December 2010 (3 186 382), January 2011 (3 143 344) and February 2011 (4 304 192).