

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**3, 4 and 5 May 2011**

**(Extract from book 6)**

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**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.

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**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Tuesday, 3 May 2011**

**Melbourne Markets: relocation**

**Raised with:** Minister for Major Projects

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 9 February 2011

**REPLY:**

The Melbourne Market Relocation Project was announced by the former Bracks Labor some seven years ago in 2004. Construction on the Epping site commenced in December 2009.

The project has been the subject of massive financial blow-outs, mismanagement and a merry-go-round of responsible ministers. Starting first in 2004, the project was with the former Minister for Agriculture and the Department of Primary Industries and then was subsequently transferred to the Minister for Major Projects and the former Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development in 2009.

Labor ministers Mr Batchelor and Mr Cameron said, 'The markets redevelopment will be completed by 2010'. The project is still a long way from completion.

What was originally a \$300 million project has been beset with millions of dollars of waste, project delays and complete mismanagement by Labor. For instance, Labor paid out millions to a developer to settle a failed attempt at this project. Treasury now estimates the project cost has blown out to over \$670 million as a result of Labor's mismanagement.

Given the prolonged history of this project and its complete mismanagement by the previous Labor government, a thorough review of the project is necessary. The review will weigh up the costs of proceeding with the relocation to Epping against staying at the Footscray Road site.

There are a number of important considerations to weigh up — the welfare of the market, the needs of the port of Melbourne, costs already incurred at Epping and, if the market were to remain at Footscray Road, the costs associated with bringing the current site up to standards required by regulatory authorities.

I have spent time meeting with representatives from the market, industry groups and the City of Whittlesea among others. All these views will be taken into account in the government's decision on the future of the wholesale market.

I want the best possible outcome for the wholesale market within the options available.

**Port Phillip planning scheme: amendment****Raised with: Minister for Planning****Raised by: Mr Tee****Raised on: 10 February 2011****REPLY:**

On 18 January 2011, I met with the City of Port Phillip to discuss a number of matters, including council's review of the planning scheme controls pertaining to land surrounding the Shrine of Remembrance and further south to the St Kilda Junction. This review seeks to define a preferred character for the area surrounding the Shrine of Remembrance. It will revise the design objectives and requirements of the relevant design and development overlays in relation to overall height limits, podium heights and building setback controls for the areas outlined above.

Council expressed concern that development applications were typically exceeding the preferred height limits in the area (up to 20 levels above the preferred maximum heights in one circumstance). As a result of these discussions and responding to the request by council, I agreed to introduce mandatory height controls on an interim basis through a planning scheme amendment. The interim controls will ensure that the vistas and backdrop of the Shrine are protected while council completes a strategic review of the most appropriate controls for this area. The controls are in place for two years while council undertakes this work. These interim controls follow discretionary controls put in place by the Brumby Labor government.

There were three planning permit applications before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) at the time of my decision, which sought approval for development that is greater in height than the heights prescribed in the design and development overlays. Both council and I were of the opinion therefore, that there was a level of urgency in needing to implement the interim height controls.

Community and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken as part of council's strategic review. Once the review is complete, a planning scheme amendment will then be initiated with the opportunity for formal public submissions.

The decision to introduce interim mandatory height controls is supported by the *Victorian Coalition Plan for Veterans' Affairs* which seeks to 'protect Victoria's war history by establishing planning guidelines to prevent high rise buildings from overshadowing important landmarks'.

I hope that this resolves any misunderstanding regarding the reasons behind my decision to introduce the interim height controls. In light of the above, I do not consider it necessary for an investigation to be undertaken into the circumstances leading to the approval of this planning scheme amendment and I trust you are not also seeking an inquiry into the rationale for the implementation of discretionary controls by the Brumby Labor government in 2010 for exactly the same area.

**Wind farms: guidelines****Raised with: Minister for Planning****Raised by: Mr Ramsay****Raised on: 2 March 2011****REPLY:**

I note the honourable member for Western Victoria's concerns regarding the impacts of wind farm development on communities. I also agree with him that commonwealth energy and carbon pricing policies will have a significant influence on the rate of development of approved wind farms in Victoria.

The main objective of the government's policies on wind farms is to restore fairness and certainty to the planning system for wind farms. The policies will continue to support the role of wind energy as an important contributor to sustainable delivery of Victoria's future energy needs.

The government's wind farm policy intentions will be implemented into the planning system after further consideration. The first stage of this implementation occurred with amendment VC78.

Amendment VC78, gazetted on 15 March 2011, amends the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes in Victoria to remove my decision making powers regarding 30+ megawatt wind energy facilities. Councils are now the responsible authority for all planning permit applications for the use and development of land for the purpose of a wind energy facility.

Amendment VC78 also makes other changes to strengthen wind farm policy by promoting greater consideration of local amenity impacts, introducing additional application requirements, and updating the New Zealand wind farm noise standard and introducing new guidelines — Policy and Planning Guidelines for Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria (March 2011).

The Department of Planning and Community Development will work with local government, the Municipal Association of Victoria and other agencies to support the transition and assist ongoing implementation. In cases where a proposal straddles local government boundaries or presents particularly complex issues beyond the technical expertise or resource capacity of a council, the option to refer a project to the Minister for Planning is available.

Implementation of the coalition's remaining policy commitments in relation to wind farms is under way, and includes consideration of:

- that the placement of turbines will be no less than 2 kilometres from the nearest home unless a contract between the resident and wind farm developer is agreed.
- the establishment of a shared payment system for landowners whose properties are within 1 kilometre of the nearest turbine;
- the establishment of 'no-go' zones for wind farms; and
- the exclusion of wind farms in or near national and state parks, designated tourist areas and designated regional population growth corridors;

I have asked the Department of Planning and Community Development to consider your concerns during the development of further policy in relation to wind farms.

### **Latrobe Valley: Moe call centre**

**Raised with: Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations**

**Raised by: Mr Viney**

**Raised on: 2 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

Following the announcement of 114 job losses at the Telstra call centre in Moe from April 2011, my department has provided timely, appropriate and direct assistance to affected workers in a number of ways.

Regional Development Victoria met with Telstra management to discuss a program of support for workers prior to the cessation of their contracts. This support included the Back to Work information seminars, which were delivered to Telstra workers over four sessions during the week commencing 21 March 2011.

Further, in conjunction with Skills Victoria and the Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE, Telstra workers in Moe were assessed and registered for 80 hours of subsidised training through the Skill Up program, and had the opportunity to liaise directly with these service providers through Back to Work. To date, 96 of the 114 affected staff have made contact with the local TAFE to enquire about courses.

In addition, eligible candidates can also access opportunities for subsidised skills training through the Victorian Training Guarantee.

The government's response to the job losses at Telstra in Moe offer a strong indication of our commitment to building the capacity of workers in the region, to improving the opportunities available to them, and ensuring that adequate support is given.

### **Bridges: Yackandandah Creek**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads**

**Raised by: Ms Darveniza**

**Raised on: 22 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

During the recent December 2010 floods, the Yackandandah Creek Bridge was severely damaged and VicRoads' bridge and engineering experts have concluded that it needs to be replaced.

The flood waters scoured the material around the piers resulting in four piers not being sufficiently supported and losing their structural integrity. An initial cost estimate had shown that the costs to replace the bridge were only slightly higher than repairing it.

A replacement bridge delivers greater benefits to the community like providing a much safer bridge that satisfies current standards and will provide a 100-year service life.

The bridge works will also involve minor improvements to the Kiewa Valley Highway approach to the bridge which will enable the bridge to be widened, thereby improving safety for drivers.

Prior to the bridge construction, a number of matters need to be addressed including relocating the telecommunications assets that are attached to the bridge, completing a detailed structural design and a cultural heritage assessment and other environmental investigations.

VicRoads expects to have all these requirements fulfilled by June 2011, the completion of the tender process and construction to begin in September 2011 with the bridge to be open for traffic in May 2012.

On 28 March 2011, community information sessions were held in both Falls Creek with the Falls Creek Chamber of Commerce (approximately 10 attendees) and in Tangambalanga with a significant number of interested community members (approximately 200 attendees) attending to hear about plans for the bridge and express their views.

VicRoads received feedback on the issues important to the community and explained the steps that were needed to get the bridge open for use as soon as possible. This meeting was also an opportunity to talk to the community about enhancements that have either happened or planned for the Lindsay Road detour route.

A number of concerns were raised about the detour route, and VicRoads is endeavouring to address these matters. Already there has been improved signage along the length of the detour and speed restriction signs of 70 kmph at the intersections of the Kiewa Valley Highway and Lindsay Road and the Kiewa Valley Highway and Wodonga-Yackandandah Road installed. These speed restrictions signs will be in place until the Highway is reopened.

VicRoads will also complete works to remove small vegetation from the roadside edge, grade and install material to the road shoulders, enhance the warnings for drivers of approaching intersections and increase the number of road and roadside reflectors for night travel. These improvements should make a significant difference for road users.

VicRoads acknowledged the inconvenience and frustration that is being felt by the community and businesses through the loss of this important piece of infrastructure and wish to reaffirm that every effort is being made to reinstate this bridge as soon as possible.

Regular updates will be provided to the community on the progress of this bridge replacement. Road users are encouraged to be patient and allow a little more time to travel.

### **William Ruthven Secondary College: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 22 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

The government has made a commitment to focus on upgrading government primary and secondary schools across the state. Priority projects were identified in the *Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Plan for Education*, released in November 2010.

The needs of schools involved in planning for building projects under the previous government's capital program will be given due consideration during the budget process and in determining future priorities for the building program. This includes William Ruthven Secondary College.

### **Higher education: regional campuses**

**Raised with:** Minister for Higher Education and Skills

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 23 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

The Victorian government is committed to increasing access to tertiary education for students in regional areas. A lack of affordable student accommodation in regional centres prevents many regional Victorians from participating in tertiary education. The Victorian government is supporting two regional student accommodation projects to help address this problem.

On 8 March, 2011, Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development Peter Ryan announced the Victorian Government will contribute \$5 million towards a new regional student accommodation project at the University of Ballarat which will provide 200 new student places. The \$26 million student accommodation development will provide 75 new places at the university's central campus and a further 125 places at the Mount Helen campus.

The Ballarat accommodation development project will also create 92 indirect, ongoing jobs and 53 local construction jobs, which will in turn have significant flow-on effects in the Ballarat community.

The remaining \$21 million towards the Ballarat accommodation project will include contributions from the university and the commonwealth government, through the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). State funding is subject to commonwealth government funding support under the NRAS.

I was also pleased to announce on 31 March, 2011, that the Victorian Government will contribute \$10.275 million towards new regional student accommodation for Deakin's Warrnambool and Waurn Ponds campuses, providing a total of 411 new student beds. That figure will comprise 100 student beds at Warrnambool and 311 student beds at Waurn Ponds.

This \$10.275 million is part of a larger \$51.4 million to be spent on infrastructure at Deakin, with the balance to be sourced from cash reserves held within Deakin University. State funding is subject to commonwealth government funding support under the NRAS.

In addition to providing badly needed student accommodation in these regional areas, this project will create 100 new direct jobs and 180 indirect construction jobs with significant flow-on effects in production and income that will strengthen the local communities.

### **Manufacturing: western suburbs**

**Raised with: Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade**

**Raised by: Mr Elsbury**

**Raised on: 23 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

I would like to thank Mr Andrew Elsbury, the member for the Western Metropolitan Region, for continuing to advocate the importance of the manufacturing industry for Victoria and in particular, Melbourne's west.

I am pleased to respond that this government has commenced implementing its election commitment as stated in the Government's Stronger Industry and More Jobs Policy.

Manufacturing is a major contributor to the Victorian economy, attracting investment and creating jobs. It employs 308 700 people or 10.7 per cent of the state's workforce and contributes \$30.8 billion or 10.5 per cent of the state's GSP, to the Victorian economy.

The western metropolitan region of Melbourne comprising the local council geographical authorities of Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong, Wyndham, Brimbank, Melton and Hobsons Bay is home to over 45 000 businesses of which 9.3 per cent are manufacturers. Most of these are small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Of the businesses in the region with greater than 100 employees, it is worth noting that nearly 20 per cent are in the manufacturing sector. The west's manufacturing sector is among the largest of any region in Australia, providing work for approximately 34 000 Victorians. Major manufacturing employers in the west include Toyota, Qenos, Mobil, Nufarm and Olex Australia.

I am currently undertaking a series of business roundtables across the state. On 17 March, I met with 18 businesses from Melbourne's west at Whitten Oval in Footscray. Comprising primarily manufacturing companies, the roundtable provided an opportunity for the government to listen to the concerns of business and discuss future opportunities.

Manufacturing businesses, including those based in Melbourne's west, continue to face challenges, including the rise in competition from low-cost countries, increasing input costs, competition from the resources sector for skilled labour and investment and the strength of the Australian dollar.

As minister responsible for the manufacturing industry, I can advise that the government has asked the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC), to develop a new strategy to support the manufacturing sector into the future.

The Department of Business and Innovation's office at 2 Devonshire Road, Sunshine, is tasked to engage with businesses and manufacturers across the west metropolitan region to provide information, encourage investment,

promote skills development and support export growth through a range of programs and services. I encourage businesses in Melbourne's west to utilise the services offered at this office.

### **National Foods: factory closures**

**Raised with: Minister for Agriculture and Food Security**

**Raised by: Mr Lenders**

**Raised on: 23 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

National Foods has announced that last year it undertook a review of its cheese manufacturing sites in Simpson and Campbellfield and in other locations across the nation. As a result of that review, National Foods plans:

- to invest \$132 million to upgrade its cheese manufacturing facility in Burnie, Tasmania; and
- wind down and close its operations at Simpson and Campbellfield in Victoria, affecting 133 people.

Victoria is Australia's largest state for dairy production. The former Labor government neglected the dairy industry and neglected manufacturing. National Foods' decision to invest in and consolidate its cheese manufacturing in Tasmania as opposed to Victoria is a further sign of the failure of the former government to adequately engage with industry or deliver a manufacturing plan for regional Victoria.

For almost a century, Victoria has led Australia as a manufacturing powerhouse, exporting products to the world and creating the bedrock of our state's jobs market. The manufacturing sector declined under the Brumby Labor government, with Victoria's share of the national manufacturing industry falling sharply from 31.3 per cent in 2000 to 27.5 per cent in 2009.

Victoria has lost more than 40 per cent of the manufacturing jobs lost in Australia since 2000.

The coalition government has established a Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) inquiry to inform the strategic direction and growth of Victoria's manufacturing industry. The government is committed to putting in place the right policy settings that will revitalise our manufacturing industry, create new jobs and grow the manufacturing sector's contribution to our broader economy.

The coalition government will work with all Victoria's dairy manufacturers, including National Foods, to identify opportunities to help expand the sector in Victoria.

Despite the opportunities to supply increased food and fibre products to the world, agricultural exports flatlined over recent years under Labor. Agriculture was a very low priority for the former Brumby government as evidenced by Labor's failure to produce or release an agriculture policy prior to the 2010 state election.

The coalition government is committed to investing in job creation in regional Victoria and working with regional communities and has established legislation for the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund. The Deputy Premier has policy responsibility for implementing the Regional Growth Fund on behalf of the government, reflecting the central importance placed on enhancing prosperity and career opportunities across country Victoria.

With regard to job opportunities at National Foods' Simpson operation, it is too early to tell what if any impact the decision might have on existing employees. National Foods do not own the factory, it is leased from the factory owners Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Company. Any assessment of potential future job impacts is premature as Warrnambool Cheese and Butter will need to consider its future intentions for the facility.

National Foods has a factory at Allansford, also in south-west Victoria. It is possible there could be opportunities for existing Simpson employees to relocate to Allansford following the closure of National Foods' Simpson operations, but again, it is too early to be specific.

**Wangaratta High School: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Ms Darveniza

**Raised on:** 23 March 2011

**REPLY:**

The government has made a commitment to focus on upgrading government primary and secondary schools across the state. Priority projects to be included in the building program for the government's first term were identified in the *Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Plan for Education*, released in November 2010.

This government is aware that a third stage of capital works for Wangaratta High School was planned under the previous government's capital program. The needs of Wangaratta High School will be given due consideration when determining future priorities for the school building program.

**Rail: Hoppers Crossing station**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 23 March 2011

**REPLY:**

Hoppers Crossing railway station is a host station and is staffed from 6.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m.

I am advised that the railway station is compliant with commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* requirements.

The railway station car park was expanded in September 2010 by a further 283 spaces and now has a total capacity for 586 car spaces, significantly improving access for commuters.

Hoppers Crossing railway station will remain a host station at this time.

**Higher education: Gippsland**

**Raised with:** Minister for Higher Education and Skills

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

**REPLY:**

I thank the member for acknowledging the importance of my decision to initiate a tertiary education planning exercise for the Gippsland region. The work to be undertaken by an expert panel chaired by Professor Kwong Lee Dow will, as the member points out, be an important extension to the work Professor Lee Dow undertook for the previous government.

The member seeks to link budget savings with the development of the tertiary plan. There is no connection. The cost of the planning exercise will be met by departmental funding. The intent of the planning exercise is to increase the opportunities for study at a tertiary level within the region.



Gippsland students will be advantaged by the positive outcomes I expect will be generated from this planning exercise.

With reference to the schools infrastructure issues the member raises, the Baillieu government has made a commitment to focus on upgrading government primary and secondary schools across the state. Priority projects to be included in the building program for the first term of government were identified in the Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Plan for Education, released in November 2010.

The government is aware that other schools were involved in planning for building projects under the previous government's capital program. The needs of these schools will be given due consideration during the budget process and in determining future priorities for the building program.

### **Liquor licensing: fees**

**Raised with:** Minister for Consumer Affairs

**Raised by:** Ms Pulford

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the adjournment matter raised on 24 March 2011 regarding the impact of the renewal fee for packaged liquor licences on Wayne and Heather Cupples, who are the licensees of the Minimay General Store.

Under the Liquor Control Reform Regulations 2009, the director of liquor licensing may waive or reduce liquor licence fees if he is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so, having considered the matters specified in the regulations.

An application under the fee waiver or reduction scheme was received by the Department of Justice from the Minimay General Store in respect of their liquor licence renewal fee for the 2011 calendar year, and that the director of liquor licensing reduced the fee payable on 7 March 2011 from \$1625.30 to \$200.00. This reduced fee, which is equal to the renewal fee for a renewable limited licence, was paid on 31 March 2011.

I trust that the above information addresses the matter you have raised.

### **Higher education: Gippsland**

**Raised with:** Minister for Higher Education and Skills

**Raised by:** Mr Scheffer

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

The development of a Gippsland Tertiary Education Plan presents many opportunities for the region and its communities. I have asked Professor Kwong Lee Dow to chair an expert panel to oversight the development of the Gippsland Tertiary Education Plan. Professor Lee Dow is joined on the panel by Dr Michele Allan and Mr John Mitchell.

The panel will consult widely and will undertake a public engagement and consultation process. This will include consultation with a wide range of groups, including tertiary education providers, but also include for example students, teachers and employers. I thank the member for his acknowledgement of and interest in the existing providers of Monash University, Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE and East Gippsland TAFE. There is also a strong adult and community education and private provider presence in the area. I encourage all interested parties to

participate fully, and to lend their local knowledge and expertise to improve tertiary education attainment in Gippsland.

### **Rail: Altona loop service**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

My previous response to your adjournment debate matter of 3 March 2011 [ref: ADJ000038] addresses the questions you have raised regarding the new metropolitan timetable.

Mr Norman Gray AM, deputy director of public transport, and Mr Huw Millichip, senior transport planner from the Department of Transport (DOT), attended the community meeting regarding the new train timetable for the Werribee line on Tuesday, 29 March 2011.

As you are aware, along with officers from DOT, I met with a group of residents from the Altona area on 13 April 2011 to discuss their concerns. DOT's experts explained in detail why the changes were made.

### **Planning: Avondale Heights development**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr Tee

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I am advised that it has been the standard practice of the former government for requests for briefings on development projects from members of Parliament to be requested through the Minister for Planning's office and for ministers' advisers to attend such meetings.

It is recognised that members of Parliament are key stakeholders and VicUrban is ready to provide briefs on any of its projects, including the Avondale Heights project.

VicUrban and its development partner Australand have been meeting with the council and members of the community to better understand the issues associated with this site.

I am advised that the new development proposal for the site will approximately halve the number of dwellings originally applied for and that no homes will exceed two levels.

VicUrban advises me that it will continue to consult with the community and key stakeholders regarding its development proposal for the Avondale Heights project. This government's procedures are consistent with those of the previous government.

On 27 April 2011, Mr Hulls was briefed by VicUrban on the Avondale Heights project. His adviser and my chief of staff were also in attendance at the briefing.

**Energy: government policy**

**Raised with:** Minister for Energy and Resources

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

**REPLY:**

No member of my staff made any comment to the *Age* regarding the terms of reference for the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee (EDIC) parliamentary inquiry as claimed by Mr Lenders. Moreover, the newspaper article to which Mr Lenders referred made no reference whatsoever to my senior adviser, Ms Sarah Leslie. Notwithstanding this fact, Mr Lenders chose to falsely claim that Ms Leslie was quoted in the article and went on to impugn Ms Leslie's professionalism.

I am appalled that Mr Lenders would mount a public attack on a member of my staff without any factual basis whatsoever. I can only assume that Mr Lenders' statements have been made in reckless ignorance of the facts rather than as a deliberate misrepresentation in order to damage the reputation of my adviser, and, by extension, my reputation. I trust that Mr Lenders will now make a formal apology to Sarah Leslie in the same forum in which he falsely maligned her — the Legislative Council.

**Road safety: Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Police and Emergency Services

**Raised by:** Mr Ondarchie

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

**REPLY:**

I refer to the adjournment item raised by you on 24 March 2011 about road safety and accidents in the Northern Metropolitan Region and your invitation to me to visit community groups in the Northern Metropolitan Region to discuss ways to decrease the number of collisions and fatalities particularly amongst young drivers.

Unfortunately, due to many competing priorities I am unable to meet with your community groups at this stage, however, I sympathise with your concerns and I am very much aware of the issues you have raised. I will certainly continue to liaise with you regarding these critically important matters. You and your constituents can be assured of our unrelenting efforts, on a number of fronts, to resolve the problems you have highlighted.

It is clear that young Victorian drivers are overrepresented in crashes and resultant serious injuries and fatalities. In addition, I am aware that speed and alcohol are the main contributors to fatalities Victoria wide.

In terms of education and accident prevention, VicRoads works in collaboration with other road safety partners to provide a range of traffic safety education resources and programs to prepare children and young people to become safe and independent road and transport users. The graduated licensing system also ensures that young Victorian drivers gain adequate supervision and experience before moving to a full licence, including restrictions on driving high-powered vehicles, use of hand-held devices, and passenger limits.

In addition, the Road Safety Act is currently being reviewed, including the driving adequacy and appropriateness of existing sanctions in preventing antisocial driving behaviour often by young and inexperienced drivers. Amendments are currently being prepared to the Road Safety Act in relation to tightening up the 'hoon' laws, for example introducing 30 days impoundment for the first hoon offence rather than 48 hours as currently exists.

Road safety cameras also form part of the broader road safety strategy by enforcing compliance with speed limits and traffic signals.

I have recently requested the Victorian Auditor-General to independently audit the rigour and effectiveness of the existing road safety camera system and in particular, to review decisions about fixed and mobile camera site selection.

Finally, a key element of our attack upon this inappropriate and dangerous behaviour continues to evolve in that the first 450 of the additional 1700 front-line operational police we will add to Victoria Police in our first term will be deployed by 30 June 2011. Many of these officers will be located within the areas to which you refer — a significant weapon in this ongoing battle.

Thank you for taking the time to raise these matters with me.

### **Public sector: enterprise bargaining**

**Raised with:** Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations

**Raised by:** Mr Elasmar

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

The question relating to the Victorian government's public sector wages funding policy does not fall within my portfolio responsibility but under the portfolio of the Minister for Finance, the Hon. Robert Clark.

### **Puppy farms: code of practice**

**Raised with:** Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 24 March 2011 with regard to the government's pre-election statements on the regulation of illegal puppy farms.

Cruelty or matters likely to cause cruelty to animals can be prosecuted under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (PCA act). Very significant powers and penalties exist for inspectors authorised under the PCA act to intervene and protect the welfare of companion animals. In addition, significant powers exist under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (DA act) for local government councils to register and regulate the management of dog breeding businesses.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is preparing proposals to implement the government's election policy that will strengthen legislation for the regulation of illegal dog breeding establishments. Significant key stakeholder consultation is occurring on the government's election proposals and statements.

A review of the Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Establishments is proposed to start in late 2011 following completion of the current review of the Pounds and Shelters Code. This should update standards to current community expectations. It should be noted that compliance with such codes is mandatory under the DA act. Any enterprise fitting the description in the DA act of a domestic animal business breeding dogs for profit must comply with the standards in the code of practice. It is already a requirement for such a business to be registered with a council. Councils are responsible to ensure compliance of such businesses. The government proposes to amend this definition to ensure that all breeding establishments are subject to the legislation.

As of 13 April 2011 I have authorised Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) inspectors to have powers under the DA act to take compliance action for enforcement of the mandatory standards at dog

breeding establishments. This will complement their animal cruelty investigation responsibilities and will assist councils in enforcement actions against illegal puppy farms.

In February 2011 DPI compiled a list of all council registered domestic animal businesses (such as pet shops, breeding and rearing operations, greyhound establishments, training enterprises, pounds and shelters and boarding establishments) and provided them with copies of the current codes of practice relevant to their enterprises. Thank you for your interest in the government's intentions with regard to the regulation of illegal puppy farms.

### **Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business: media release**

**Raised with: Attorney-General**

**Raised by: Mr Viney**

**Raised on: 24 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

The colour of the application guide and form is changed primarily for the purposes of version control. This allows the contractor (currently Australia Post), applicants, organisations and the WWC Check Unit of the Department of Justice to identify easily that the application form being used is the current version.

The most recent change to the application guide and form was required due to amendments in 2010 to the *Working with Children Act 2005* and the *Child Employment Act 2003*. These changes were principally to the body of information contained within the 'Guide for Applicants', and incorporated changes such as:

- specific information for supervisors of child employees;
- statements informing applicants as to their obligations, such as notifying the department within 21 days of changes to their employment details and notifying of relevant changes in circumstances;
- the disclosure by the department of information to commonwealth or state persons or bodies with similar functions or powers to those of the Secretary to the Department of Justice; and
- information about WWC Check renewals.

Drawing attention to the change in the colour of the form and guide is an important part of the communication strategy around the renewals process and serves to minimise waste and delay caused by applicants submitting forms that are now out of date.

Changing the colour of the form does not increase the cost of its production.

### **Yarraville West Primary School: portable classroom**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Mr Finn**

**Raised on: 24 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

Six 2-storey relocatables have been provided through the Building the Education Revolution Program. These are the only 2-storey relocatable buildings at Victorian government schools.

I am advised that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is investigating issues related to relocatable buildings.

**Montmorency Primary School: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Mrs Kronberg

**Raised on:** 24 March 2011

**REPLY:**

The government has made a commitment to focus on upgrading government primary and secondary schools across the state. Priority projects to be included in the building program for the government's first term were identified in the *Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Plan for Education*, released in November 2010. This included an allocation of \$4 million for a capital project at Montmorency Primary School.

This government will fulfil its commitment to Montmorency Primary School and give due consideration to the project during the budget process and in determining future priorities for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's building program.

**Premier: departmental briefing**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 5 April 2011

**REPLY:**

The meeting the Treasurer attended on 7 April was in fact a ministerial council meeting, the Ministerial Council on Federal Financial Relations. I am advised that Mr Lenders has received portfolio briefings arranged by the offices of other ministers, and that he has requested and participated in a number of bill briefings provided by my department.

The area of federal-state relations is of course a wide cross-portfolio area. I have been concerned that, despite an unprecedented cut in GST payments by the commonwealth to Victoria, the opposition has raised no concern about this issue. That is in spite of the fact that it will have a serious impact on Victoria's finances and all portfolios. I would be pleased to arrange for a briefing for the shadow minister on this very pressing matter in federal-state relations which Victoria currently faces, if he so wishes.

**Shire of Macedon Ranges: ministerial visit**

**Raised with:** Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 6 April 2011

**REPLY:**

The Macedon Ranges is acknowledged for its food and wine culture, scenery and tourist attractions. It is understood that Kyneton and in particular Piper Street is attracting significant attention from journalists and tourists for its hatted restaurants, bistros and gourmet shops.

There is a significant arts culture in the region and Mount Macedon is well known for its gardens and historic homes.

Manufacturing and farming in the region is strong with thriving meat works, horse studs, vineyards, horticulture enterprises and poultry producers.

I would welcome an opportunity to visit the region and my office will arrange a suitable time.

### **Country Fire Authority: Northern Victoria Region stations**

**Raised with:** Minister for Police and Emergency Services

**Raised by:** Ms Broad

**Raised on:** 7 April 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the adjournment debate raised in the Legislative Council regarding the rebuilding of the Toolangi, Buxton, Reedy Creek, Wandong and Glenburn Country Fire Authority (CFA) fire stations in Victoria's Northern Region.

The Baillieu government is funding the construction of 38 new rural fire stations planned for completion by June 2011 at a cost of \$14.3 million and six new regional fire stations planned for completion by June 2012 at a cost of \$14 million. The Country Fire Authority has advised that Reedy Creek is a satellite to Strath Creek, which has been provided with a 1B station scheduled to open on 30 April 2011, and is part of the \$14.3 million government commitment for new rural fire stations.

Further expansion of the CFA rural fire station replacement program and funding for key regional and urban CFA fire stations upgrades is currently under consideration by the government. The priorities and schedule of replacement of CFA rural fire stations has been determined by CFA, giving full consideration to community need, and fire fighting operational requirements.





**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 4 May 2011**

**Schools: Western Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Mr Eideh**

**Raised on: 6 April 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

In making a decision about Altona P-9 College the government will assess what educational delivery outcomes will provide the best possible educational opportunities for students in this and surrounding communities.

The government has made a commitment to focus on upgrading government primary and secondary schools across the state. Priority projects to be included in the building program for the government's first term were identified in the *Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Plan for Education*, released in November 2010.

The government is aware that other schools were involved in planning for building projects under the previous government's capital program. The needs of these schools will be given due consideration during the budget process and in determining future priorities for the building program.

The government is taking a proactive approach to ensuring all schools that are entitled to receive commonwealth National Schools Pride — Building the Education Revolution funding in fact do so and that all the proposed buildings are constructed.



**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Thursday, 5 May 2011**

**Wannon Falls Reserve: management**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Mr Koch

**Raised on:** 9 February 2011

**REPLY:**

I thank Mr Koch for his invitation to visit the Wannan Falls Scenic Reserve and I am pleased to accept this invitation to meet with the reserve managers, the Southern Grampians Shire Council, and adjoining land-holders, with the objective of reviewing and if required improving the management of the reserve.

I appreciate the real need to effectively manage fuel loads across this popular reserve and all public land in Victoria. The government is committed to the responsible management of public land and reducing the risk of bushfire.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment will continue to work with the Southern Grampians Shire Council on bushfire management in the Wannan Falls Scenic Reserve.

**Environment: television recycling**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 2 March 2011

**REPLY:**

In November 2009, state and commonwealth environment ministers agreed that the Australian government would implement regulations to support an industry-led scheme to collect and recycle televisions and computers. The scheme will be managed and funded by industry and there will be no recycling costs to householders. The regulation will ensure that the scheme is robust and effective, and equitable to all TV and computer producers.

The television and IT industries, through Product Stewardship Australia (PSA) and the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) have led the development of this important initiative. They are working with governments (including EPA Victoria) to fast track the design of a scheme which is expected to be introduced later this year.

I understand that the digital television switchover due to occur on May 5 may lead to an increase in the number of televisions becoming available for disposal. I am currently seeking advice on this issue and will be happy to provide further information when it becomes available.

**Environment: illegal dumping**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 2 March 2011

**REPLY:**

The government takes illegal disposal of waste very seriously. It is an issue that spans a range of wastes, from cigarette butts, to dumped household goods, to more significant and systematic illegal dumping and land filling. These are being actively addressed by government through partnerships between the Victorian Litter Action Alliance (VLAA) and its member bodies, which include Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Sustainability Victoria, VicRoads, Regional Waste Management Groups, local government, and non-government and community organisations.

The EPA operates a strike force to address illegal dumping. This strike force is targeting larger scale waste dumping and illegal land filling. It also supports the great work undertaken by local government by taking decisive action against those whose actions warrant a greater penalty than allowed for under the litter provisions.

The strike force is complemented by the EPA Litter Prevention Officer Program which will employ litter prevention officers to be stationed in various Victorian local councils. This program is funded through the Victorian Litter Strategy. The initiative incorporates a range of measures including education, enforcement and capacity building to ensure we successfully tackle litter and illegal dumping.

I encourage your constituents to report any specific incidents of littering associated with motor vehicles that they witness to the EPA Litter Report line on 1800 35 25 55 or via the internet at <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/Reporting/litter.asp>. Specific observations of more significant illegal dumping of waste should be reported to EPA's Pollution Watch Line on 9695 2777.

**Water: smart meters**

**Raised with:** Minister for Water

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 22 March 2011

**REPLY:**

The *Living Melbourne, Living Victoria* roadmap was prepared by the Living Victoria Ministerial Advisory Council. The roadmap was released on 11 March 2011, in line with our commitment to deliver it within our first 100 days of government.

The ministerial advisory council is an independent group established to provide strategic advice to government.

The roadmap, provided to the Minister for Water, presents the finding from the council, including strategic reform priorities and the high-level changes required to deliver the objectives of the government's *Living Melbourne, Living Victoria* policy.

The government's policy commitments for water include the aim of basing at least 60 per cent of the average consumer water bill on consumption as opposed to fixed charges.

However, the government has also stated that this aim would be subject to the findings of the ministerial advisory council for its *Living Melbourne, Living Victoria* policy.

I have asked the MAC to undertake further work, including:

- a more detailed description of the eight proposed reform priorities set out in the roadmap and associated policy and legislative changes required; and
- a high level analysis of the nature and impact of these changes across government, service providers and the community.

Government will respond in due course to the recommendations made by the council.

### **Wallan-Kilmore bypass: construction**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads**

**Raised by: Ms Broad**

**Raised on: 23 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

The government stands by its pre-election commitment to deliver the Kilmore-Wallan bypass by 2017. VicRoads has already commenced detailed planning investigations to determine a suitable alignment for the bypass.

This process will involve extensive consultation with the local community and it is important that this process is afforded an appropriate and realistic time frame. It is our expectation that the necessary planning approvals will be obtained by 2014.

Construction of this significant piece of infrastructure is expected to take three years, which will ensure the project is delivered by the end of 2017, which is consistent with the government's pre-election commitment.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Roads, Edward O'Donohue, MP, has met with the Shire of Mitchell to reaffirm this commitment.

VicRoads is collaborating with the shire in the development of structure plans for Wallan and Kilmore, to ensure that land use and transport planning is integrated to cater for the predicted development of these township and the benefits and opportunities which will come from this significant investment.

### **Rail: Altona loop service**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Ms Hartland**

**Raised on: 5 April 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

Metro provided a passenger impact statement to the director of public transport as per its contractual requirements.

Capacity on the Altona loop is constrained by the single track sections, which limits the number of trains that can reliably operate in either direction. Duplication of the track through the Altona loop is not possible at this time without significant land acquisition and/or road realignment. The patronage demand through the Altona loop area does not justify the works at this time. Service improvements have been delivered through the Laverton rail upgrade, which will be fully implemented from May 2011.

The Laverton rail upgrade will enable additional train trips to be introduced on the Werribee line that will start and finish at Laverton railway station. The upgrade has also provided infrastructure to improve the reliability of both Werribee line and V/Line trains.

When a train bypasses its scheduled route, or does not complete the full journey, Metro incurs a performance penalty under the operational performance regime (OPR). The OPR is used to monitor performance against targets and calculate bonus or payment penalties. Commencing July 2010, the government imposed on Metro an additional 12 month performance benchmark focused on reducing instances of Altona loop bypassing. The introduction of the May 2011 timetable will further reduce the instances of Altona loop bypassing through the segregation of Laverton trains from the main line trains.

### **City of Greater Dandenong: tree pruning**

**Raised with:** Minister for Energy and Resources

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 7 April 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 7 April 2011 on behalf of the Greater Dandenong City Council in relation to the impact of the *Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2010* (regulations) on municipal street scapes.

I appreciate the council's concerns about the potential deterioration of suburban amenity, and note that the regulations are intended to strike an appropriate balance between ensuring electrical safety and reliability, and maintaining the amenity and livability of our communities.

I have met with the director of Energy Safety Victoria (ESV), Mr Paul Fearon, on this matter. As you noted in your statement, ESV has established a collaborative process with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), and representative councils, to settle a practical approach to administering and complying with the regulations.

I have also met with the Mayors of Stonnington, Bayside and Boroondara city councils to discuss this matter and the process currently under way.

The regulations currently distinguish between low and high bushfire risk areas, with the requirements for urban areas designed to manage the electrical safety and reliability risks relevant to these areas. The government is maintaining an active interest in the consultation occurring between local governments and ESV and is confident that this will deliver an outcome that will more effectively balance the safety, reliability and amenity objectives. Ultimately, the safety of the community needs to be assured.

I encourage the City of Greater Dandenong Council to actively engage with ESV in the development and implementation of the electric line clearance plans. In response to the council's request for an exemption, the power to issue exemptions under regulation 10 of the regulations rests with ESV and I do not have the power to intervene.

I trust this information is of assistance.