

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**5, 6 and 7 April 2011**

**(Extract from book 5)**

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

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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, 5 April 2011**

**Geelong: arts precinct**

**Raised with: Minister for the Arts**

**Raised by: Ms Tierney**

**Raised on: 8 February 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am pleased to confirm the Baillieu government's commitment to the revitalisation of the Geelong Cultural Precinct, by allocating \$15M through the Regional Development Fund to commence the redevelopment of the Geelong Cultural Precinct.

Geelong's Cultural Precinct brings new life to the local economy of Geelong and its region.

The Geelong Performing Arts Centre has delivered quality arts and entertainment programs to the regional community for over 30 years, and the Geelong Gallery is one of the state's most important regional galleries, with a significant high quality collection.

A master plan for the redevelopment of Geelong's Cultural Precinct was developed in 2010 by Regional Development Victoria, in conjunction with Arts Victoria and Major Projects Victoria. The master plan incorporates development plans for the council-owned Gallery and Library-Historical Centre, as well as fully costed Concept Design options for the redevelopment of the state-owned Performing Arts Centre.

Staging of the precinct development will be determined in line with local priorities.

**Schools: building program**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Mr Scheffer**

**Raised on: 9 February 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian government recognises the importance of education and developmental services to Victorian students and families and to the broader community and economy.

The Victorian government has committed to a savings target across government over four and a half years. The government's *Plan for Better Financial Management* (2010) outlines areas in which the savings are to be achieved, including through general administrative efficiencies and reduced expenditure in areas such as government advertising, consultants and travel.

These savings targets will be shared across departments and are not limited to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Consistent with government parameters, planned savings measures will not impact on service delivery.

As part of the 'Plan for Education' the government committed to upgrading all government primary and secondary schools across the state. The government has stated its intentions to reorganise the priority list to ensure that schools in desperate need of an upgrade have funds committed to them as a priority. This plan outlines the government's priority schools that will be initially targeted for upgrades.

Initial advice indicates that, regrettably, a number of schools classified as upgraded by the previous government have only received minimal funding. While schools have been able to implement valuable capital works upgrades, the government needs to consider what classifies a school as rebuilt, renovated or extended. This needs to be done in light of the impact of *Building the Education Revolution* funding.

To ensure schools have greater control, the government has also committed to giving Victorian principals the option to manage major capital works at their schools. This will enable schools to design projects in consultation with government, as well as giving them responsibility for sourcing a project manager and overseeing the construction process out of the total capital works funding allocated. Schools that require assistance from the department will be able to access it, however this will be at the discretion of the school.

A maintenance audit of all government schools will be conducted in the 2011 school year. This will provide government with more detailed information on the condition of the government school facilities on a school-by-school basis. We will continue to work with school communities to deliver projects at the schools we have announced and also to determine future capital works requirements.

### **Planning: environmental assessment process**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr Barber

**Raised on:** 1 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

The concerns with respect to the environment effects statement or EES process and the request that the Environment and Natural Resources Committee (ENRC) conduct a new inquiry into it are noted.

The EES process has been subject to three inquiries over the past decade. The first was by the Environment Assessment Review Advisory Committee, appointed by the previous government in 2002. The committee held public hearings and made recommendations for substantial changes.

Secondly, in 2008–09 the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission was asked by the previous government to conduct an inquiry into various aspects of environmental regulation in Victoria, including the EES process. It made a range of recommendations, including to make amendments to the *Environment Effects Act 1978* and the associated ministerial guidelines, and to introduce more far-reaching legislation for projects of state significance.

Thirdly, ENRC held its own inquiry into the EES process in 2009–10. Unfortunately, it failed to report by the time the last Parliament expired. Nonetheless, 58 submissions were received and extensive hearings were held, so there is the benefit of diverse stakeholders' input to inform this government's policy considerations.

After three inquiries in the last decade, I do not believe that a fourth inquiry is needed.

### **Schools: Bannockburn**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Ms Pulford

**Raised on:** 1 March 2011

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Bannockburn Primary School has an approved master plan to develop a new P-9 school on an identified site in the new residential growth development of Bannockburn. Alternative sites have previously been rejected as the preferred location is adjoining the future community sport, recreation and learning precinct recently acquired by the local government authority (LGA).

Offers to purchase the preferred site, based on valuer general market assessment have not been accepted. Negotiations are continuing and an outcome is expected shortly. Subject to an acquisition agreement being reached, the school will be invited to complete further design planning to develop a cost estimate for consideration in a future capital works budget allocation.

The Grampians region is continuing to keep the school and the LGA informed of developments. Senior regional staff attended their shire council meeting on March 22 and explained progress.

**Schools: Western Victoria Region**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Ms Tierney**

**Raised on: 1 March 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The government is continually monitoring the rate of growth across Melbourne and many regional areas of Victoria and is delivering the necessary infrastructure, such as schools, to meet the needs of a growing population.

In particular the government is working to deliver significant new public infrastructure projects including a number of new government schools in the growth areas that include the Surf Coast region and Melbourne's western suburbs.

The government is committed to constructing a new, stand-alone, full secondary school in Torquay, to be ready by 2013. When opened, this school will also provide for additional primary school capacity at the existing Torquay College by providing new specialist facilities for Years 7 to 9 at the new secondary college.

In Melbourne's west, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development continues to work with agencies including the Growth Areas Authority, Department of Planning and Community Development and local councils to deliver schools, particularly in and around the growth areas of Wyndham Vale and Melton.

**Special schools: Officer**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Mr Scheffer**

**Raised on: 1 March 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

In January a meeting was convened with representatives of the Shire of Cardinia and the southern metropolitan region of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to commence the process of implementing the government's election commitment to establish a new specialist school in Officer.

The department has indicated its clear preference to co-locate the new specialist school in Officer with the secondary college, the construction of which was also an election commitment of government.

The site for the secondary college is currently being purchased by the Department from VicUrban and a request has been made to VicUrban to purchase an additional parcel of land in excess of 3 hectares adjacent to the secondary college site.

The department has considered the first draft of the precinct structure plan for Officer and has, along with the Shire of Cardinia, designated the new site for the development of a co-located specialist school and secondary college. The draft precinct structure plan will be available for public comment in the near future.

In mid-March a meeting of the specialist schools for Casey and Cardinia group was held to enable department officers to brief the group on the likely demand for specialist schooling in the long term, and on the progress in planning for the new school.

At that meeting the department proposed the establishment of a multi-mode specialist school. This proposal was strongly supported by the group, as it accorded with the outcomes of the research undertaken by its members in the months since the election.

Considerable progress has been made in the planning for the new specialist school in Officer and it is expected to be operating effectively within this term of government.

### **Sunshine College: western campus**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Mr Finn**

**Raised on: 1 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

There is need for consolidation and the construction of a modern purpose-built facility on the western campus of Sunshine College. Such a project would enhance modern approaches to teaching and learning and offer an outstanding range of applied and academic learning opportunities and pathways for students.

A master plan has been developed proposing a 7–12 secondary school on the existing western campus following demolition of the existing school buildings. The project would result in the school consolidating four small campuses onto a single campus.

The project would support the development of an educational precinct that becomes a centre of excellence in the provision of vocational/applied learning and work based education and teacher training.

It is the highest priority regeneration project for the Western Metropolitan Region.

This project will be considered in the context of all budget priorities.

**Aviation industry: Geelong**

**Raised with:** Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry

**Raised by:** Mr Koch

**Raised on:** 1 March 2011

**REPLY:**

I would like to thank Mr David Koch, the member for the Western Victoria Region for continuing to advocate the importance of the aviation industry for Victoria and the Geelong community.

I am pleased to respond that the Baillieu government has placed the Geelong region and Avalon Airport at the centre of its election commitments as stated in the Victorian Liberal-Nationals coalition plan for the aviation industry.

As Minister for the Aviation Industry, I will continue to underline this fact to the Geelong community and the people of Victoria as I have done at the recent Australian International Airshow at Avalon Airport.

The tenth Australian International Airshow was indeed a tremendous success, with a record crowd of over 180 000 people making it the largest event of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Baillieu government is already taking steps to secure this world class event beyond 2015 as it does wonders in raising the international profile of the Geelong region and Avalon Airport as a centre for the aviation industry.

Avalon Airport is already home to various aviation businesses that employ 1100 people living in the Geelong Region. It also hosts some of Qantas' most important maintenance activities for its national and international fleets and is a hub for various commercial airlines including Jetstar, Tiger Airways and Sharp Airlines.

The Baillieu government would now like to see Avalon secure itself as the state's second international airport. The airport is in the process of finalising a master plan for a 7500 square metre international terminal.

To support the implementation of Avalon Airport as Victoria's second international airport, the government has also committed to building a new rail line to link Avalon Airport to Melbourne and Geelong. An investment of \$50 million has been committed in the government's first term for design and planning, land acquisition, and preliminary construction works of the rail link.

The government is overseeing the development of a feasibility study for a new Geelong regional airport to support recreational and general aviation activity. This feasibility study will be completed before the end of the year.

The government will also make a bid for a Red Bull Air Race fixture in the Geelong region if the organisers decide to continue this spectacular international competition.

The Baillieu government will continue to engage with and encourage the involvement of the community in and around the Geelong region to ensure the initiatives I have just mentioned come to fruition. These initiatives will no doubt boost opportunities for tourism, infrastructure growth and quality of life improvements throughout Geelong, to the Bellarine Peninsula, Barwon and western Victoria.

**Black arion: control**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 2 March 2011

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 2 March 2011 regarding the presence of the North European Black Slug (*Arion ater*) in Apollo Bay.

The North European Black Slug (*Arion ater*) is native to western and central Europe, Scandinavia, Spain, UK, Ireland, Austria, the Czech Republic and North America. The slug was first identified as an exotic species in the Otways region in 2005, and is also present in New South Wales and South Australia. Museum of Victoria records show the first identification of the slug in Victoria was in 2001, indicating it has been present here for 10 years. Due to their distribution and the length of time elapsed since the slugs were first detected, eradication is not considered possible. Generally they do not damage amenity or horticultural crops except when present in high numbers.

Information available on the ecology of the slug indicates outbreaks are more prevalent in warmer weather between November and March especially following periods of rain. The wet and humid conditions experienced over summer 2010–11 would help explain the significant increase in slug activity observed. The slugs preference for warm, moist habitats would help explain why its past activity has been predominantly confined to the Dandenong Ranges and Otways region of Victoria, and why the current increase in activity has been observed around Apollo Bay.

Slug populations naturally decline with the onset of warm dry weather and cooler winter conditions. Normal control methods include baiting, soil cultivation to dry out eggs and hand picking and immersion in salty water if the problem is on a small-scale garden level.

Further details on slug control are available via the web on a number of sites including:  
<http://www.pioneerthinking.com/tv-slugs.html>.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Floods: Cranbourne Carlisle Primary School**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Mr Tarlamis

**Raised on:** 2 March 2011

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The health and safety of students and staff are paramount.

Cranbourne Carlisle Primary School was flooded during a significant rain event on the evening of Friday, 4 February 2011. Following the flood, school staff, departmental staff, Country Fire Authority personnel and staff from the facility management team worked tirelessly to make the school ready for teaching and learning.

The facility management contractor advised the department that the school was fit to be reopened on Wednesday, 9 February 2011. A number of similarly flood-affected schools in the southern metropolitan region of Melbourne also re-opened on the same day. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has no record of

providing any “initial assessment that found that a full week was needed to dry out the sodden carpets in the buildings”.

The following actions were taken to reinstate the school and prevent the growth of mould:

- Removal of excess water in the school through “brooming out” surface water and use of a truck-mounted vacuum cleaning unit to clean and pump out water;
- Extensive cleaning, drying and mopping of the school buildings by cleaning crews working throughout the day and night;
- Drying the carpets through natural ventilation, use of the school’s night purge system and the use of up to 60 blow driers;
- De-humidifying inside the school to remove moisture with up to 13 dehumidifiers;
- Use of non-hazardous, anti-mould and anti-bacterial chemicals to prevent or inhibit the growth of mould and mildew.

A list of these routinely used chemicals, along with relevant material safety data sheets (MSDs), was provided to the school council president and the school principal at a meeting on 14 February 2011.

After concerns were raised about the possibility of lingering health and safety risks, and in agreement with the school, an independent health, safety and environmental consultant was engaged to test indoor air quality. Testing was undertaken on 1 March and 7 March 2011. A report is being prepared and will be available shortly. The department will continue to monitor conditions at this school to ensure the health and safety of staff and students.

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

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Ms Hartland**

**Raised on: 2 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

Metro inherited a tangled web of lines where trains cross from one track to another. In peak hours, delays compound across the network affecting thousands of passengers. Metro has advised the government that it needs to build a higher capacity, higher reliability railway with a timetable that is simple and can be expanded to meet Melbourne’s future growth.

The previous government’s contract with Metro required the introduction of a new or ‘greenfields’ timetable within 18 months of the commencement of Metro’s franchise on 30 November 2009. In May last year, Metro planned to develop and implement a new timetable by May 2011.

There may have been costly commercial implications if the government had declined to allow Metro to introduce this new timetable.

As you are aware, there will be some changes to the way trains on the Werribee and Williamstown lines operate. Under the new timetable, there will be an average 11-minute train frequency from Werribee in the morning peak, with trains operating express from Laverton to Newport, providing a significant time saving. This adjustment has been made to allow the introduction of an additional peak V/Line service from Geelong and will also provide three additional Metro peak period services.

Under the new timetable, the Altona loop will be serviced by trains operating between Laverton and the city during peak periods. This will provide a more reliable service to these stations, and increase available capacity in the morning peak due to the trains originating at Laverton rather than Werribee. To accommodate this change, the

frequency of peak period train services to the Altona loop will reduce from a train every 20 minutes to a train every 22 minutes.

During the off-peak period, a shuttle service will operate on the Altona loop from Laverton to Newport and return every 20 minutes. This significant change will provide a more reliable service on the Werribee line, including the Altona loop, by more evenly spacing train services. A 20-minute service will also operate on the Williamstown line.

Future stages of this new timetable will see other Melbourne rail lines operating independently from each other to further minimise the impact of disruptions on rail users. Metro will continue to make one or two timetable changes in each year of its franchise.

I have stressed to Metro that it is most important that passengers are kept fully informed about these timetable changes. Full details of the timetable change are expected to be announced soon.

### **Floods: northern Victoria**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Darveniza

**Raised on:** 3 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

The Victorian government is committed to repairing the damage to the state's rail freight network from the recent floods, to ensure that the grain currently being stored in northern and other parts of Victoria can be transported by rail.

I have been advised by the Department of Transport that all lines have been re-opened as at 10 March 2011, with the exception of the Sea Lake and Manangatang lines due to substantial damage to a bridge south of Inglewood at Arnold. Works have started on repairing this bridge and the anticipated completion date is the end of April/early May 2011.

Industry representatives have been kept informed of the progress of repairs and line re-openings throughout this period. V/Line has responded to the need to repair the freight and passenger lines with the lines being opened as quickly as possible. Speed restrictions are in place until permanent repairs can be done at a later date with minimal inconvenience to rail users.

I am advised by the Department of Transport that V/Line estimates the total damage to the network to be in the order of \$25 million. Until all works have been completed, this remains only an estimate.

### **Floods: market gardens**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Elsbury

**Raised on:** 3 March 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 3 March 2011 regarding the impact of the February floods on market gardeners in Werribee South.

My office in collaboration with your office has scheduled meetings with market gardeners for 27 April 2011.



Thank you for raising this matter with me. I look forward to my discussions with the market gardeners of Werribee South.

### **Schools: Torquay**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Ms Tierney**

**Raised on: 3 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Surf Coast Secondary College (interim name) will commence on 1 January 2012. This new secondary college will initially cater for years 7 to 10, operating from the current year 7 to 9 facilities on the Torquay College site thus ensuring that all students currently enrolled at Torquay College will be able to continue their secondary education in Torquay.

When the new facilities for Surf Coast Secondary College are completed in 2013, secondary school students accommodated on the Torquay College site will move to the new stand-alone site in Torquay North, thus enabling Torquay College to accommodate primary school students in these permanent buildings.

Plans and processes are well under way in relation to the site and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is currently in negotiations to purchase an identified site by the middle of this year so that construction can begin as planned later this year. The department has already engaged an architect and initial work has commenced on the design and development phase in planning these new facilities.

A detailed project plan has been developed and current milestones are being met to ensure the new secondary college is able to accommodate the year 7–11 program in 2013 and years 7–12 in 2014. The project is on track and the government's commitment to delivering a locally catered comprehensive educational program will be maintained.

Regardless of the change in provision the year 10 program would have been accommodated on the current site. The department had always planned for this to occur as any new facilities that were proposed under the previous model would not have been ready during 2012.

Enrolment forms for the new secondary college can be collected from Torquay College.

Increasing primary school capacity in Torquay is one of the government's highest priorities in the education portfolio. Work is currently being undertaken to determine the most appropriate model for increasing primary school capacity in Torquay, including site identification.

### **Minister for Energy and Resources: briefing**

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

**Raised by: Mr Lenders**

**Raised on: 3 March 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

In his letter to me of 16 December 2010 Mr Lenders requested "a briefing with appropriate senior department officials on the resources portfolio regarding machinery of government and administrative matters". As there are no machinery of government changes in this portfolio, no briefing would be required, and I replied in writing on

15 February 2011 to that effect. This is in contrast to the agriculture portfolio where there are machinery of government changes.

On 16 February, Mr Lenders' electorate officer emailed a suggested agenda for discussions on both agriculture and resources to the office of the secretary to DPI. The secretary's office forwarded that agenda to my office. The matters raised for discussion included, for example, "adequacy of existing resources" to address the effect of the floods, and "future plans for coal allocation".

Clearly, matters of this nature are outside both the scope of Mr Lenders' request of 16 December 2010 and the conventional briefing on departmental structure that may be made available to shadow ministers on request (not that any such request has been received from Mr Lenders).

Instead, the matters on Mr Lenders' agenda go to issues of policy, and when returning a call from Mr Lenders' electorate office, my adviser rightly requested that Mr Lenders contact me directly with any such questions.

Mr Lenders has subsequently made incorrect and misleading comments about my actions and those of my staff. I trust that Mr Lenders' statements were made out of ignorance of the facts.

I remain willing to facilitate a briefing for Mr Lenders to cover strictly factual information regarding the resources portfolio, in accordance with the usual conventions.

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 6 April 2011**

**Schools: Bannockburn**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Ms Tierney**

**Raised on: 24 March 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Bannockburn Primary School has an approved master plan to develop a new P-9 school on an identified site in the new residential growth development of Bannockburn. Alternative sites have previously been rejected as the preferred location is adjoining the future community sport, recreation and learning precinct recently acquired by the local government authority (LGA).

Offers to purchase the preferred site, based on valuer general market assessment have not been accepted. Negotiations are continuing and an outcome is expected shortly. Subject to an acquisition agreement being reached, the school will be invited to complete further design planning to develop a cost estimate for consideration in a future capital works budget allocation.

The Grampians region is continuing to keep the school and the LGA informed of developments. Senior regional staff attended their shire council meeting on March 22 and explained progress.



## WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

**Thursday, 7 April 2011**

**Murray-Darling Basin: federal plan**

**Raised with:** Minister for Water

**Raised by:** Mr Drum

**Raised on:** 3 March 2011

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government has stated publicly that it does not support the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's (MDBA) guide to the proposed basin plan (the guide) in its current form.

Since commencing my responsibilities as Minister for Water, I have actively communicated Victoria's concerns with the guide to the MDBA, to the Federal Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon. Tony Burke MP, and ministers from other basin governments.

These efforts contributed to a 17 December 2010 agreement by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council (MDBMC) to support a new process for the basin plan going forward that will more fully involve state governments and basin communities. Basin ministers also encouraged the MDBA to release the proposed basin plan according to a timetable that allows it to take into account the findings of the House of Representatives committee inquiry into the socioeconomic impacts of the basin plan, chaired by Mr Tony Windsor MP.

To help progress the MDBMC's commitment I wrote to Minister Burke outlining my own proposal for a new engagement process.

I also provided the former chair of the MDBA, Mr Michael Taylor, AO, with the Victorian government's submission on the guide that outlines in detail Victoria's concerns with the proposals. Victoria's submission can be found on the MDBA's website.

As this issue progresses, the challenge for all basin governments is to put in place the right settings to protect the environment, support the needs of communities and to allow our food and fibre industries to continue to grow.

I will continue to seek to ensure that northern Victorian communities have a say in decisions that affect their future.

