

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

8 and 9 February 2011

(Extract from book 2)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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Cabinet Secretary	Mr D. J. Hodgett, MP

Legislative Council standing committees

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

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, Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue, Mr Pakula, Mrs Petrovich and Mr Viney.

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

Joint committees

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Council*): Mr Leanne, 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 and Mr Tarlamis. (*Assembly*): Ms Ryall and Mrs Victoria.

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.

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Mr J. LENDERS

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

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Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. R. HALL

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Mr D. DRUM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
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Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
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Davis, Mr Philip Rivers	Eastern Victoria	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee	Northern Victoria	LP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Elsbury, Mr Andrew Warren	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Guy, Hon. Matthew Jason	Northern Metropolitan	LP	Scheffer, Mr Johan Emiel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Tarlamis, Mr Lee Reginald	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
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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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 8 February 2011

Public holidays: Christmas Day

Raised with: Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

In the event that 25 December (Christmas Day) falls on a Saturday, the *Public Holidays Act 1993* appoints a substitute, but not an additional, public holiday on the following Monday.

Substitution of the Christmas Day public holiday when 25 December falls on a weekend represents a very long held practice in Victoria, with the overall intention of maintaining the same number of public holidays over the calendar year.

It is also important to note that employers and employees should always refer to their particular employment arrangements to determine how these days are treated in their workplace.

Schools: Officer

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

With the sustained population growth of both the City of Casey and the Shire of Cardinia, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has maintained close liaison with both councils to identify the future educational needs in these areas. Demographic profiling of both areas has been initiated to substantiate these needs and the preferred location of new schools.

At the meeting on 17 January 2011, where both Minister Dixon and yourself met with Mr Gary McQuillan, CEO, Shire of Cardinia, Hon. Ken Smith, Member for Bass, Mr Brad Battin, Member for Gembrook and Mr Peter Greenwell, Regional Director, Southern Metropolitan Region, the commitment to deliver the new secondary college and specialist school was confirmed. It was also acknowledged considerable planning is still required to identify and acquire the appropriate site and further refine the timeframe to deliver these schools to the community.

The Department will shortly establish planning committees for both of the new schools. The planning committees will be made up of representatives from the community, the local council, local teachers and other stakeholders, who will provide input into the planning and delivery of the new schools.

Thank you for your support in recent discussions and I look forward to ongoing collaboration with you in the planning process for these schools.

Planning: community consultation

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Tee

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan for his question.

I welcome the opportunity to affirm our already explicit commitment to working with local councils and communities on the planning decisions that affect them. We have made this clear in a number of public statements leading up to the 2010 election.

The way that our city will be shaped into the future and how growth will be accommodated is an on-going process. Transport nodes, activity centres and urban renewal sites will play a central role in this.

Further, the Coalition Government's planning policy released prior to the recent election, clearly outlines the approach to be taken in relation to urban renewal and activity centres.

The State Government is identifying areas of State strategic significance and we are getting on with the job of implementing our policy.

Councils and the community, along with industry and other experts have a key role in shaping how this strategic framework will be implemented. As we have made clear, they will be involved in the detail. Indeed we see local government as partners in shaping how change will occur.

The sites referred to by the Member for Eastern Metropolitan, namely Richmond station, E-gate and Fishermans Bend will be progressed in a manner consistent with this approach.

Autism: western suburbs schools

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Baillieu government's commitment to establish a P-12 autistic school in Melbourne's western suburbs is confirmed and broad consultation will inform the planning for this.

Planning will commence early in 2011 and will include consideration of a range of options for realising our commitment.

Parents, community members, teachers and school leaders will be consulted on these plans to ensure that the services created for autistic children in the area meet their needs and the needs of their community.

Floods: government assistance

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Ms Broad

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I am informed that:

Government agencies are currently assessing the impact of the heavy rain and floods in Victoria during December 2010 and January 2011.

The flood response assistance that was made available to communities affected by the August, September and October floods by the previous government has been renewed by the present government and extended to include the subsequent floods in November and December 2010. This includes funding for the replacement or repair of damaged community infrastructure, for community events in flood affected areas and for clean up and restoration grants of up to \$25,000 (increased from \$15,000) which are administered through the Rural Finance Commission. In addition, low interest loans are now available to eligible small businesses owners, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations so that businesses can continue to operate.

Flood recovery officers have been appointed in the shires of Buloke and Alpine as both areas have now experienced multiple flooding events. The Department of Human Services has also activated the Red Cross outreach services to ensure that the psychosocial needs of affected communities are being monitored.

Local councils can apply to the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) for reimbursement of any emergency protection works and the restoration of essential public infrastructure through the Natural Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements. DTF will arrange to have these claims processed by the appropriate agencies, for example, VicRoads. The cost of eligible claims are shared between the Commonwealth and State Government.

Following the recent floods in January 2011, a new Cabinet Flood Taskforce has been established and is chaired by the Premier. Government has also announced that Local councils managing the collection and clean up of household goods, furniture and appliances damaged by the floods will have access to an additional \$5 million from a Local Government Clean Up Fund, to be jointly administered by the State Government and the Municipal Association of Victoria. A \$1 million Tourism fund has also been established to support businesses in areas affected by the floods that are heavily reliant on Tourism, which is to be administered by the Department of Business and Innovation, and \$1 million has been contributed to the newly established Red Cross Victorian Floods Appeal. The Government has also increased the \$15,000 flood clean up and restoration grants available to Victorian small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit bodies to \$25,000. The clean up and restoration grants have also been made available retrospectively to eligible Victorians affected in the September 2010 floods.

In addition, Government assistance is being provided in relation to personal assistance including:

- emergency grants of up to \$1,067 for people who are unable to return to their homes and require financial assistance to meet basic needs; and
- means-tested personal hardship grants of up to \$26,000 to assist people whose homes have suffered significant damage, loss of contents and for extended temporary accommodation.

As at 2 February 2011, 5644 emergency grants have been paid by DHS.

Eaglehawk, Comet Hill and Bendigo North primary schools: merger

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

On 16 December 2010, the Minister for Education, Martin Dixon, announced that the Coalition Government had put plans in place to ensure that Eaglehawk Primary School remains open.

The Minister indicated that the Baillieu Government is committed to ensuring that Eaglehawk Primary School remains a stand-alone school, with its own principal and school council, and will provide \$2 million for much-needed maintenance to ensure the future of the school.

On Wednesday, 15 December 2010, the Minister met with Mr Duncan Murley, the President of the Eaglehawk Primary School Council.

The Minister has instructed the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to take the necessary steps to ensure that all staffing and other arrangements are in place at Eaglehawk Primary School for a smooth transition to the 2011 school year.

In 2011, the Department will undertake a comprehensive consultation process with the wider community on future support for the school.

The Minister will act to support the Eaglehawk Primary School Council, parents, teachers and the broader community in their direct involvement in the consultation process.

Geelong Hospital: funding

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I am pleased to confirm the Baillieu Government's commitment to the provision of health services to the people of Geelong and the surrounding districts.

This includes an investment of \$80 million to expand services on the existing Geelong Hospital (Barwon Health) site and a total of \$85 million to establish a community hospital as part of the Deakin University campus at Waurn Ponds.

The Department of Health is working with Barwon Health and the community to determine the most appropriate location and configuration of the additional acute inpatient wards at Geelong Hospital. It is expected that this will be determined in early to mid 2011 with detailed design to follow.

Planning for the community hospital has also begun and will be further developed during 2011. The community hospital will meet the needs of families moving to Geelong's southern suburbs, the Surf Coast and the Bellarine Peninsula. It will be accessible by public transport and the Geelong Ring Road and will allow for future expansion of health services within the region.

Full funding for the projects will be staged across several years in line with the delivery programs of these projects.

The Baillieu Government is committed to the delivery of both Barwon Health capital projects.

I can assure the communities of Geelong, the Surf Coast and the Bellarine Peninsula that the delivery of the most suitable range of health services in appropriately designed facilities in and around Geelong is of paramount importance to the Baillieu Government.

Schools: city of Maroondah

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

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.

Capital funding for the Maroondah Regeneration Project is being considered, but commitment to a definite timeframe is not possible at this stage.

The Department will continue to work with the schools involved to ensure the best outcomes possible for students in the area.

The Maroondah Education Coalition, comprising seven secondary schools in Eastern Metropolitan Region, has developed a vision to transform the way secondary education is delivered in their community.

The achievements that the Maroondah Education Coalition have made so far demonstrate their commitment to improving the educational opportunities of their students and their capacity to work together to implement educational innovations.

In Term 1 2011, the principals and school councillors of each of the seven schools involved in the Coalition plan to revisit the original aims of the Maroondah Regeneration Project to ensure their ongoing support of and commitment to the Project.

Ambulance services: response times

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Scheffer

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

The Baillieu Government is committed to ensuring Victorians have access to high quality and timely ambulance services.

We are working closely with Ambulance Victoria and local communities to ensure the more than \$151 million this government committed to expanding services and is invested in the most appropriate locations.

New ambulance stations will be built at Beaufort, Wallan and Grantville and ambulance stations at Castlemaine, Belgrave, Emerald, Yarra Junction and Maryborough will be upgraded. A new helipad will be built at Ballarat Base Hospital.

Establishment of Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance Single Responder Units (MICA SRUs) is also well underway with four of the ten units scheduled to commence in April 2011.

Additional non-emergency patient transport (NEPT) services have already been established in Bendigo (2 crews), Ballarat, Geelong and Wodonga. Additional crews will be operational in Seymour, Geelong and Ballarat by July

this year. This initiative not only improves NEPT services, it increases the capacity of paramedics in those rural locations to respond to emergency call-outs.

The Baillieu Government is committed to reforming reporting and increasing transparency to enable Victorians to assess for themselves ambulance service performance. Additional information will be made available in the coming months.

Daniel Andrews botched the merger that created Ambulance Victoria; and the Code 1 response time target were not met once during Labor's 11 years in office.

The Baillieu Government is committed to fixing Ambulance Victoria and giving Victorian patients and paramedics the support they deserve.

Rail: Wendouree

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Pulford

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

In line with the Government's election commitment, the Department of Transport is now working closely with V/Line to assess the requirements for extending all Ballarat trains to Wendouree from first service to last, seven days per week.

All works will be properly and adequately funded.

Racing: Regional Racing Infrastructure Fund

Raised with: Minister for Racing

Raised by: Hon. M. P. Pakula

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

I refer to the matter raised in relation to the Regional Racing Infrastructure Fund. You have sought my assurances with respect to the future of the Regional Racing Infrastructure.

As you would be aware, the Baillieu Coalition Government has committed to support the ongoing development of the Victorian racing industry through:

- a commitment that post 2012 wagering licence arrangements will be no less favourable for the racing industry for the entire term of the licence;
- the return of unclaimed wagering dividends to the racing industry to boost Victorian breeding industries and improve racetracks; and
- the return of on-course wagering taxes to the racing industry to promote racing and increase on-course attendance.

These positive initiatives have been widely welcomed by Victorian racing stakeholders.

In addition I can confirm our commitment to the continuation of the Regional Racing Infrastructure Fund until its scheduled expiry in 2012.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Planning: Dandenong development

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Somyurek

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

The Coalition Government supports the urban development in Dandenong. Much of the State's funding of some \$300 million has already been spent or committed.

The focus of current and future work of VicUrban in Dandenong is on business attraction and private investment. The combination of public and private sector investment will contribute to continued improvements in the hub of Central Dandenong into the future.

The Government will be examining improvements in delivering urban development projects with the establishment of the Urban Renewal Authority.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 9 February 2011

Water: government election commitments

Raised with: Minister for Water

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 21 December 2010

REPLY:

The Government's Living Victoria policy states that the MAC will report to Government on the planning, regulation, pricing and legislative change and Government management required to achieve the objectives of Living Victoria.

In undertaking this important work for Victoria, the MAC will need to consider a wide range of information and engage with key stakeholders across the community, including the water industry, Local Government, State Government, and environmental and community groups. I have asked the Chairperson of the MAC to keep me closely apprised of progress as the MAC undertakes the development of the Roadmap.

