

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Wednesday, 28 November 2012

(Extract from book 19)

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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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Legislative Council standing committees

Economy and Infrastructure Legislation Committee — Mr Barber, Ms Broad, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, #Mr Leane, #Mr Lenders, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and Mr Somyurek.

Economy and Infrastructure References Committee — Mr Barber, Ms Broad, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Mr Leane, #Mr Lenders, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and Mr Somyurek.

Environment and Planning Legislation Committee — Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, #Mr Leane, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #Mrs Petrovich, Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, #Mr Tarlamis, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

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

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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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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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

Wednesday, 28 November 2012

Environment and climate change: Country Fire Authority — Fiskville training facility

8188. MS HARTLAND — To ask the Minister for Health (for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change): In relation to concerns of chemicals and waste stored at the Country Fire Authority Fiskville Training Facility, will the Environment Protection Authority conduct an audit on waste and contamination at the facility; if so:

- (a) when will the audit take place;
- (b) when will the report be available; and
- (c) will the report be made public.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

On 6 December 2011, the Country Fire Authority's (CFA) CEO, Mick Bourke, announced an independent investigation into the Fiskville site, led by former Deputy Chairman of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Robert Joy.

The independent investigation report, released on 12 July 2012, recommended that CFA conduct further investigations to understand the human health and safety and environmental risks. For the environmental risks, this involves further investigation of soil, groundwater and surface water contamination. CFA has accepted all of the recommendations.

EPA will work with CFA to ensure appropriate oversight of these works.

Health: Bendigo Health — pathology services

8272. MS BROAD — To ask the Minister for Health: Did Bendigo Health prepare a communications plan around retaining the Bendigo Health pathology service in public hands and in house.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Bendigo Health investigated options for the delivery of pathology services through an independent review commenced in November 2010 and completed in March 2011. A tender process subsequently resulted in Bendigo Health contracting with Healthscope for the delivery of pathology services.

Health: Bendigo Health — pathology services

8274. MS BROAD — To ask the Minister for Health: Was the Minister advised by the Chair of the Bendigo Health Board that he intended to speak publicly in support of the privatisation of the pathology service at Bendigo Health.

ANSWER:

Bendigo Health has not 'privatised' its pathology services. The Bendigo Health Board endorsed contracting with Healthscope for the delivery of pathology services in March 2012, following a tender process. I was informed following the Board's decision.

I support the right of the Chair of Health Services to advocate decisions of the Board of Management in our locally governed Health Services.

Health: Bendigo hospital — redevelopment

8520. MS BROAD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the Bendigo Hospital redevelopment project, and noting that the Government has defined the project as high-value and high-risk, that the 2012-13 Victorian Budget estimates expenditure of \$13 443 000 in 2011-12 and \$44 357 000 in 2012-13 on the project, and that \$630 million has been committed to the redevelopment: What is the estimated expenditure of the \$630 million for the project for:

- (a) 2011-12;
- (b) 2012-13;
- (c) 2013-14;
- (d) 2014-15; and
- (e) 2015-16.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

I refer the member to relevant budget papers available publicly.

I also note the 2010-11 budget papers show Labour's proposed hospital in Bendigo having a total value of \$528 million, which is \$102 million less than the Baillieu government's \$630 million New Bendigo Hospital.

Ageing: aged-care facilities — land bank acquisition

8585. MS MIKAKOS — To ask the Minister for Ageing: In relation to land bank acquisitions for future residential aged care facilities:

- (1) Does the Minister plan to acquire any new sites in the 2012-13 financial year.
- (2) Does the Minister plan and by when, on constructing new residential aged care facilities on any of the existing land bank land in:
 - (a) Geelong;
 - (b) Albert Park;
 - (c) Williamstown;
 - (d) Coburg;
 - (e) Preston; and
 - (f) Templestowe.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) It is anticipated that the Department of Health will acquire a site in Bell Park (Geelong) from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in 2012-13.

- (2) The Government does not construct residential aged care facilities on Land Bank sites, rather they are made available to aged care providers to construct facilities. In some cases, progress is dependent on the allocation of bed licences by the Commonwealth Government.

Ageing: senior Victorians — personal alerts

8586. MS MIKAKOS — To ask the Minister for Ageing: In relation to personal alerts available to senior Victorians:

- (1) What was the waiting list for personal alerts in Victoria at 1 July 2011.
- (2) What was the waiting list for personal alerts in Victoria at 1 July 2012.
- (3) Has the eligibility criteria for personal alerts been changed since December 2010 and if so, what changes have been made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The waiting list for personal alerts in Victoria at 1 July 2011 was a list of those waiting at that time.
- (2) The waiting list for personal alerts in Victoria at 1 July 2012 was a list of those waiting at that time.
- (3) The eligibility criteria for personal alerts has not been changed since December 2010.

Children and early childhood development: kindergarten grants — state and federal funding

8684. MS TIERNEY — To ask the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development: In relation to the Minister's quote in a media release dated 20 August 2012 which read as follows, 'The \$36 million in capital grants round I announced in June, will mean many more kindergartens can extend and modernise their buildings', can the Minister please inform me as to how much of this \$36 million figure is Federal Government funding and how much is Victorian State Government money.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The \$36 million grants round announced in June 2012 forms part of \$80.4 million in state and federal funding allocated to the Children's Capital Program.

Children and early childhood development: infrastructure— state and federal funding

8685. MS TIERNEY — To ask the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development: In relation to the Minister's claim that the Victorian Coalition Government has allocated more than \$80 million to early childhood infrastructure as stated in a media release dated 20 August 2012, can the Minister please inform me as to how much of this \$80 million figure is Federal Government funding and how much is Victorian State Government money.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Of the \$80.4 million committed to early childhood infrastructure, the state has contributed \$20.4 million of Victorian Government funding. The balance utilises funds the State Government has prioritised for infrastructure from the National Partnership (NP) Agreement on Early Childhood Education.

Environment and climate change: wildlife — culling

8686. MS BROAD — To ask the Minister for Health (for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change): In relation to native wildlife culling in Victoria:

- (1) What justification is required to allow a permit to be issued to allow such culling.
- (2) What people and/or organisations are approved to receive a permit for such culling.
- (3) What mechanisms are in place to safeguard ‘protected species’.
- (4) Which native animals are listed as wildlife to be culled and what numbers.
- (5) On what basis or criteria are wildlife —
 - (a) chosen to be culled; and
 - (b) numbers to be culled determined.

ANSWER:

- (1) All native animals in Victoria are protected under the *Wildlife Act 1975*. However, it is recognised that wildlife can, in some circumstances, adversely impact property and crops, degrade biodiversity values and cause economic loss and social disruption.

For example wildlife may:

- Damage built environments or assets (e. g. buildings, houses, sports ovals, fences, fouling farm dams or other products)
- Threaten human safety (e. g. swooping birds, hazards to aircraft safety, animal-vehicle collisions)
- Damage crops and produce (e. g. damage to cereal, grain, fruit, vegetables or flowers or eating stock feed)
- Damage the natural environment (e. g. damage revegetation sites, degradation of natural habitats in a manner that poses a threat to biodiversity).

Active management may also be required where animals are suffering from starvation, malnutrition or diseases.

The ATCW system is designed to achieve a balance between the conservation of wildlife and landholders’ ability to protect their assets. Where possible, DSE advocates non-lethal measures to alleviate problems caused by wildlife. Destruction of wildlife is generally a method of last resort when alternative methods such as exclusion have failed or are not available.

Authorisations to control wildlife are legally binding and include strict conditions to ensure animals are removed or destroyed in a humane manner. The applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and only issued where there is demonstrable need to control wildlife numbers or impacts following consideration of:

- the severity of the impact;
- other measures available to control the animal impact;
- past management of the impact and efforts to use non-lethal alternatives;
- the local and broader environmental context; and
- the conservation status of the species.

- (2) Landowners and land managers, including local government, may be granted an ATCW where there is demonstrable need to control wildlife.

- (3) All ATCW permits include strict conditions to ensure that animals are controlled in a humane manner and that the conservation of the species is not adversely impacted.

Authorised Wildlife Officers make visits to properties, and landowners may be required to prepare a management plan to ensure a holistic approach to managing wildlife problems, including adopting

appropriate land management practices. Wildlife Officers operate throughout the state to ensure that ATCW holders abide by conditions issued and can respond to allegations of non-compliance.

Authorised officers inspect a number of ATCW each year. Destruction of protected wildlife without an appropriate authorisation, or breaching the conditions of an ATCW, are serious offences that may result in prosecution.

- (4) ATCW applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

ATCW permits are generally not issued for threatened species listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. However, a permit could be granted in cases where a substantial management problem or risk to public health or safety exists.

- (5) Prior to the issuing of an ATCW permit, sites may be inspected by an authorised Wildlife Officer to assess the veracity of claims and to assess the level of damage, inspect attempts to control the damage by non-lethal means and discuss alternative management options.

If the assessment shows that control of the wildlife is necessary, DSE Wildlife Officers determine the species, control method and maximum number to be controlled and this information is specified in the ATCW.

Environment and climate change: wildlife — culling

8687. MS BROAD — To ask the Minister for Health (for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change): In relation to a committee of ‘experts’ created by the Minister for Environment and Climate Change to advise the Department of Sustainability and Environment on native wildlife culling:

- (1) When was this committee created.
- (2) Who is on the committee.
- (3) What are the terms of reference for the committee.
- (4) Is the committee independent and autonomous, and if not —
 - (a) does the Minister oversee the committee; and
 - (b) can the Minister overrule the committee.
- (5) Are the decisions of the committee legally binding to issuers of permits.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The first meeting of the independent panel of experts was held on 20 March 2012.
- (2) The panel has a range of independent people who have expertise in animal welfare, veterinary science and wildlife management and includes representatives from the University of Melbourne, the Bureau of Animal Welfare, Zoos Victoria and the RSPCA, in addition to DSE Regional Services.
- (3) Terms of Reference for the panel include the following:

Purpose:	The panel is an independent advisory body to the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) that considers wildlife management issues and Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) permit applications that are complex in nature.
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- (4) The panel is independent and autonomous.
- (5) The panel’s recommendations are not legally binding to DSE.

Health: National Centre for Farmer Health — evaluation

8690. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the funding of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH):

- (1) What efforts has the Minister taken to measure the efficacy of rural Victorian public health programs.
- (2) Has the Government measured the efficacy of the NCFH.
- (3) Has any evaluation been undertaken by the Minister's department into the work of the NCFH.
- (4) How will the Government provide ongoing evidence-based information to support and inform future health, wellbeing and safety directions for Victoria's agricultural industries.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The Department of Health provides a range of public health programs across the state including health protection (environmental health, immunisation, food safety, communicable disease control, and incident & emergency response), health promotion programs, and health services (such as rural hospitals, community and multipurpose health services). All of these services and programs are monitored and/or evaluated by the department.
- (2) Yes. In 2010, the Victorian Auditor General released a report on the audit of the NCFH's delivery of the Sustainable Farm Families program. Since the NCFH was established, the Department of Primary Industries has conducted regular monitoring and evaluation.
- (3) No. The Department of Health has contributed to the Department of Primary Industries monitoring and evaluation reporting. I have supported the NCFH at the Standing Council on Health pointing to its strengths and the national reach of its programs. I have also written to the Commonwealth Minister proposing an ongoing cost sharing arrangement to underwrite a sustainable funding base for the NCFH.
- (4) The Government provides information and support to agricultural industries in a variety of ways, including:
 - provision of health data (such as the Victorian Population Health Survey) that provide information about the health and wellbeing of Victorians at a state and local level
 - key reports (such as the Chief Health Officer Report) and policy papers (such as the Rural & Regional Health Plan, Technical Paper which presents and analyses data to enable the development of an informed long term health plan for people living in rural and regional Victoria)
 - WorkSafe Victoria—the state's occupational health and safety agency—conducts a number of agricultural specific safety programs which are informed by sophisticated analysis of injury and claims data
 - Victorian FarmSafe Alliance, funded by the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Health, works with the Victorian Farmers Federation and the Australian Workers Union to improve agricultural health and safety
 - data in relation to injury is also available through the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit at Monash University which is funded by the Department of Health.

Health: National Centre for Farmer Health — funding

8691. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the funding of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH):

- (1) What initiatives is the Government funding to support preventative health for farmers.
- (2) What cost to the Government would a replacement program or initiative be.
- (3) Despite the potential to deliver workshops, information and research findings to farmers in every state of Australia, has the NCFH delivered a financial return to the Victorian Government; if so, is

the Government concerned that the other states of Australia benefit from the ground-breaking research in Victoria.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) Farmers and rural Victorian's preventive health needs are met by a range of programs and services, including community and multipurpose health services and health promotion programs they provide; rural hospitals; and community engagement strategies of local governments. In addition, Victoria's implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health has seen eight municipalities in rural Victoria receiving additional resources to participate in a whole-of-community health promotion approach (known as the Prevention Community Model).
- (2) According to the Victorian Auditor-General the budget for the Sustainable Farm Families program over the period from 2007–08 to 2011–12 was \$5.08 million. The per-participant cost was estimated at \$3400 however the Auditor General noted that due to underspends, this per participant cost could be lower. In comparison the intensive life style intervention program Life! Taking Action on Diabetes per participant cost is estimated at \$988.
- (3) The NCFH has generated evidence in regard to the health and wellbeing of farmers and developed creative workforce development initiatives which have benefited both Victorian farmers and farmers in other jurisdictions.

Health: National Centre for Farmer Health — funding

8693. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the funding of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH):

- (1) Will the Minister meet with Mr Jim Fletcher and Ms Sue Brumby from the NCFH to discuss its funding crisis.
- (2) When will staff members know whether they are secure in their jobs at the NCFH.
- (3) Will the Minister make a public statement about the future of the NCFH to provide certainty to the Hamilton community and centre staff.
- (4) Are discussions about the future of the NCFH with the Commonwealth Government ongoing; if not, what conclusion did those discussions reach.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The Minister for Health met with Mr Jim Fletcher, Mr David Crotty and Ms Sue Brumby on 17 May 2012 to discuss funding options for the NCFH. I have met with Mr Fletcher again on 20 September 2012 to discuss progress and next steps in relation to funding.
- (2) The NCFH will manage the employment arrangements with staff within their existing budget.
- (3) The Minister made a public statement during an interview with ABC Radio on 5 September 2012; and this is summarised on the ABC radio website. The Minister confirmed he had written to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing, The Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP seeking a 1:2 cost share arrangement with \$250 000 of Victorian funds to be matched by the Commonwealth (\$500 000).
- (4) The Minister wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing, The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP on 3 September 2012 seeking a 1:2 cost share arrangement with \$250 000 of Victorian funds to be matched by the Commonwealth. A response has not been received to date.

Health: National Centre for Farmer Health — funding

8694. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the funding of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH):

- (1) Will the Government commit any funding to the NCFH based in Hamilton; if so, how much.
- (2) In discussions with the Commonwealth Minister for Health, The Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP, has the Minister made any offer of funding support from the Victorian Government —
 - (a) if so, what was the nature of the offer; and
 - (b) if not, why does the Victorian Government not support the NCFH.
- (3) What other avenues other than seeking funding from the Commonwealth Government is the Minister exploring to ensure the continuation of the NCFH.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The Minister made a public statement during an interview with ABC Radio on 5 September 2012; and this is summarised on the ABC radio website. The Minister confirmed he had written to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP seeking a 1:2 cost share arrangement with \$250 000 of Victorian funds to be matched by the Commonwealth.
- (2) The Minister wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP on 3 September 2012 seeking a 1:2 cost share arrangement.
 - (a) the Minister offered \$250 000 of Victorian funds to be matched by the Commonwealth
 - (b) not applicable.
- (3) The Minister for Health wrote to his counterparts across Australia, seeking their consideration of a national cost share arrangement. At the 10 August 2012 meeting of the Standing Committee on Health, the Minister for Health submitted a formal proposal for a national funding agreement. While there was agreement that there should be greater collaboration across the country on these issues, no other jurisdiction was able to contribute funding. The Minister is now seeking support exclusively from the commonwealth government given the national focus of the NCFH's work.

Health: National Centre for Farmer Health — funding

8695. MS PULFORD — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the funding of the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH):

- (1) How many farming families outside of Victoria benefit from the NCFH.
- (2) How many farming families and/or communities in Victoria benefit from the NCFH.
- (3) How many health assessments have been conducted in Victoria through the Sustainable Farm Families (SFF) program.
- (4) How many health assessments have been conducted outside of Victoria through the SFF program.
- (5) What percentage of the NCFH's overall budget is spent outside of Victoria.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The following services and resources have been accessed by farming families outside of Victoria:
 - NCFH website — a total of 207 211 unique visitors have accessed the website; 42 per cent of these users are outside of Victoria

- research undertaken by the NCFH and published in peer-reviewed journals is available to health professionals nationally
 - Sustainable Farm Families program has been funded by other states to be delivered in their jurisdiction (including Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland).
- (2) 2254 Victorians have attended the Sustainable Farm Families program in Victoria.
 - (3) 2254 Victorians—all participants of the Sustainable Farm Families program participated in some level of health assessment.
 - (4) NCFH reports that there have been 330 participants in Sustainable Farm Family programs outside Victoria.
 - (5) The NCFH is not able to provide a percentage figure of the total NCFH budget spent outside of Victoria.

Agriculture and food security: Freshwater Creek — rabbit control

8724. MR LENDERS — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security): Has the Minister received a briefing from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) about rabbit control on private property in the Freshwater Creek area.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Yes.

Agriculture and food security: Freshwater Creek — rabbit control

8725. MR LENDERS — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security): What is the number of Land Management Notices that have been issued to landholders in the Freshwater Creek area in the last 12 months.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Primary Industries has served 15 Land Management Notices relating to rabbit control in the Freshwater Creek area on nine properties.

Agriculture and food security: land management fines — Freshwater Creek

8726. MR LENDERS — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security): What is the number of fines that have been issued to landholders in the Freshwater Creek area by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in the last 12 months.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Primary Industries has issued two infringement notices over the last 12 months in the Freshwater Creek project area relating to non-compliance with a rabbit control notice.

Agriculture and food security: land management fines — quota

8727. MR LENDERS — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security): Does the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) have a quota of any sort for the issuing of fines in relation to Land Management Notices.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Primary Industries does not have any quota for the issuing of fines in relation to any control notices.

Agriculture and food security: Department of Primary Industries — Geelong office

8728. MR LENDERS — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security): What is the number of complaints received in the last 12 months regarding the conduct of staff based at the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Geelong Office.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Primary Industries has received complaints from two landholders about the conduct of staff based at the Department of Primary Industries Geelong Office in the last 12 months.

Agriculture and food security: Freshwater Creek — land management fines

8729. MR LENDERS — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security): What is the cumulative total monetary value of fines issued to landholders in the Freshwater Creek area by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in the last 12 months.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

A total of \$1052 over two infringements was issued during the last 12 months.

Health: midwives — graduate positions

8733. MS HARTLAND — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to midwife hospital graduate program places:

- (1) How many and what proportion of Victorian midwifery graduates from 2011 missed out on hospital graduate program placements in 2012.
- (2) How many midwives are enrolled to graduate in Victoria in 2012.
- (3) How many graduate program places will be available in Victorian hospitals for midwives for 2013.
- (4) How does the shortfall in midwifery graduate places compare with the shortfall in medical graduate places.
- (5) How many midwives were employed from abroad due to a shortage in experienced midwives in Victoria.
- (6) Since the October 2011 Auditor-General's report on maternity services capacity, what steps have been taken to improve supply and demand workforce data for midwives and state-wide planning for maternity services.
- (7) Will the Minister address this shortfall in graduate places for midwives.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (DEEWR), the Commonwealth Government agency responsible for reporting University completions, has not yet provided the Department of Health with the 2011 completions data for Victorian Bachelor of Midwifery (direct entry) or Bachelor of Nursing/Midwifery (double degree) courses.
- (2) The department is not in receipt of this information from DEEWR.
- (3) There were 125 positions available for 2013 for graduates of Bachelor of Midwifery and Bachelor of Nursing/Midwifery on the day of the GNMP Match. As with previous years, not all hospitals participate in the match and employment activity continues throughout the period from November to March. Additional places are usually offered throughout this period as a result of graduates declining initial offers and/or additional vacancies being identified by health services.
- (4) The numbers of medical graduate places bears no relationship to the numbers of midwifery graduate places as the training programs, workforce needs and professional responsibilities are completely different. All final year domestic students at Victorian medical schools who applied for a medical intern training place in 2013, along with a substantial proportion of Victoria's international medical students, have been offered an internship.
- (5) This data is not provided to the department by health services.
- (6) In May 2012, the Minister for Health established the Perinatal Services Advisory Committee to support an integrated approach to planning and development of neonatal and maternity services across the state. The Baillieu Government has committed \$220 000 over four years to improve the collection of data on rural obstetrics. This will inform future decision making regarding the design and delivery of rural and regional maternity services.
- (7) The department has funded a minimum of 1305 early graduate nursing and midwifery positions in Victorian health services in 2012.

Rural health services and workforce is an important area of focus for this government and to assist, the Baillieu Government has committed \$5 million over four years to enhance rural midwifery clinical supervision. The funding focuses on three key areas, namely:

1. Attracting new midwifery graduates to work in rural settings
2. Supporting existing rural RNs to undertake midwifery postgraduate studies, and
3. Retention of existing rural midwives and increasing clinical connections.

The suite of activities being funded is based on consultation with the sector about the particular issues and drivers they experience in providing maternity services.

In 2011–12, the funding supported an extra 22 early graduate places in rural /regional Victoria and two collaborative early graduate programs for Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery (double degrees) and Bachelor of Midwifery (direct entry). Funding for Preceptorship training for existing midwives to support the graduates has also been provided.

For 2012–13, further funding for additional early graduate programs for Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery and Bachelor of Midwifery graduates will be provided, as well as funding for more collaborative early graduate programs. In addition, the funding has supported the development of a resource to assist health services to employ new midwifery graduates who have completed a combined Bachelor of Midwifery/Nursing degree.