

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

11, 12 and 13 December 2012

(Extract from book 20)

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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, 11 December 2012

Royal Yacht Club of Victoria: world disabled sailing championship

Raised with: Minister for Tourism and Major Events

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 6 June 2012

REPLY:

I refer to the matter raised by Mr Bernie Finn, Member for Western Metropolitan, on 6 June 2012, regarding the opportunity for the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria to host the International Association for Disabled Sailing world championships in 2015.

I have recently met with the events organising committee and informed them that the event needs to meet the criteria for an allocation from the Major Events Fund.

The criteria for consideration includes the number of attendees from interstate and overseas; the amount of interstate and international broadcast coverage; branding, tourism and employment opportunities for Victoria; and future event acquisition opportunities as a result of hosting the event.

I note that Yachting Victoria, as part of the State Government funding it receives for the staging of the International Sailing Federation Sailing World Cup, will actively promote the event in the lead-up to 2015.

Also, Hobsons Bay City Council has also indicated that it is supportive of developing an appropriate event support package, including sponsorship and in kind support to assist with the staging of the event.

Maryborough Aerodrome: ministerial visit

Raised with: Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry

Raised by: Mr O'Brien

Raised on: 13 September 2012

REPLY:

I refer to the Question on Notice from Mr David O'Brien, Member for Western Victoria, on 13 September 2012, regarding his invitation to visit the Maryborough Aerodrome and to discuss the Central Goldfields Shire Council's master plan for the facility, and any state government assistance that may be available.

Victoria's network of public-use airports is a valuable and irreplaceable asset, one that makes an important financial and social contribution to regional communities through tourism, air freight, and the accessibility and availability of emergency services.

This Government has established the Regional Aviation Fund (RAF) a 4-year \$20 million fund that allows country aerodromes to apply for grants in order to cover the cost of infrastructure upgrades to ensure the maintenance of these important assets. This Government is supportive of working with regional councils and industry to address skills, infrastructure and funding-related issues in order to attract investment into regional aerodromes, and therefore regional economies.

Representatives from the Department have met with the Central Goldfields Shire Council who own and operate the aerodrome to discuss possible funding opportunities through the RAF. The Department has indicated that the Government would welcome the opportunity to further engage with Council regarding the possibility of financial assistance to complete the master plan.

I understand that Council has already made headway on the implementation of the master plan, and I would certainly be interested in visiting the aerodrome in order to view these upgrades.

Regional Development Australia Fund: application criteria

Raised with: Minister for Regional and Rural Development

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 11 October 2012

REPLY:

On 23 October 2012, the Federal Minister for Regional Australia, The Hon. Simon Crean, MP, announced Round Three and Round Four of the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF).

Round Three will see \$50 million allocated for projects to support small towns with grants of \$50 000 to \$500 000 available to eligible applicants.

Round Four will see \$175 million allocated to support regional infrastructure projects with grants of \$500 000 to \$15 million available to eligible applicants that will deliver priority regional infrastructure projects with funding partnerships across state and local governments and the private sector.

Frankston Hospital: upgrade

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Tarlamis

Raised on: 24 October 2012

REPLY:

I am pleased to confirm that the Baillieu Government has funded \$40 million in the May 2012 budget to redevelop and expand the Frankston Hospital Emergency Department. The Baillieu Government has also funded another \$36 million in the May 2011 budget to provide 64 additional acute beds at Frankston Hospital.

Detailed design and contract documentation is currently underway for this capital development and preparatory site works will commence in early 2013. Construction of the main building works, including the redeveloped Emergency Department and the 64 additional beds, will commence in mid 2013.

This stands in stark contrast to Labor's failure over 11 years to upgrade the Emergency Department.

Victorian Electoral Commission: commissioner

Raised with: Attorney-General

Raised by: Mr Somyurek

Raised on: 25 October 2012

REPLY:

The Victorian Electoral Commissioner is an independent officer, as provided for in s.94F of the *Constitution Act 1975*. The Commissioner is appointed by Governor-in-Council, in accordance with the *Electoral Act 2002* (the Act), for a period of 10 years.

The former Commissioner, Mr Steve Tully, resigned unexpectedly in April this year due to family considerations. Under the Act, the government has no role in appointing an Acting Commissioner. This is provided for in the Act, where the Deputy Commissioner automatically assumes the role of Acting Commissioner upon the role being vacant.

The Act provides that the Deputy, as Acting Electoral Commissioner, has all of the powers, functions and responsibilities of the Commissioner. The timing of the recruitment process has been one that the Department of Justice has determined, not the government.

The department has engaged a recruitment agency and the position has been advertised. The department will manage the process to ensure the appointment of the best candidate for the role, and a new Commissioner will be appointed in due course.

Inner South Community Health Service: ministerial visit

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 25 October 2012

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians, as evidenced by a number of initiatives, including:

- the development and implementation of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011–2015 and the recently launched Addressing Violence against Women and their Children Action Plan
- the new Victorian Prevention and Health Promotion Achievement Program
- significant investment made through the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health, including the new Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

I have visited Inner South Community Health Service on a number of occasions and commend the service on its excellent work. I look forward to meeting with the agency again in the future.

Wallan-Kilmore bypass: route

Raised with: Minister for Major Projects

Raised by: Hon. M. P. Pakula

Raised on: 27 November 2012

REPLY:

I can advise the Honourable Member that I have received feedback from members of the local community on this issue, and have also discussed this matter with representatives of the Kilmore Racing Club.

I understand that the Minister for Roads, the Hon Terry Mulder MP, and the Member for Seymour, Ms Cindy McLeish, have also met with club representatives.

Mr John Cameron, Chief Executive Officer of the Kilmore Racing Club, is a member of the Community Consultation Group which has been established to assist Vicroads with planning for the bypass.

I can assure the Honourable Member that appropriate consultation is occurring with all members of the local community, including the Kilmore Racing Club, with respect to planning for the proposed bypass.

Tourism: Woodlands Park

Raised with: Minister for Tourism and Major Events

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 28 November 2012

REPLY:

I refer to the matter raised by Mr Bernie Finn, Member for Western Metropolitan on 28 November 2012, regarding the kangaroos which are located in Woodlands Park, near Melbourne Airport.

Victoria has a unique range of flora and fauna, which form an important part of the visitor experience. In this context, visitors may engage with native wildlife in a range of locations including Victorian Zoos and wildlife sanctuaries, and in their natural habitat.

With regard to access to the kangaroos at Woodlands Park from Melbourne Airport, the relevant bodies are Parks Victoria and the airport itself.

In response to you raising this matter, I will write to both the airport and to Parks Victoria conveying your adjournment matter.

South Yarra Public Tenants Association: Russian interpreting service

Raised with: Minister for Community Services

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 28 November 2012

REPLY:

Thank you for your question regarding South Yarra Public Tenants Association Russian interpreter service. The matter you have raised falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Housing. I have referred this question to the Minister for Housing for further response.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 12 December 2012

Craigieburn–Hanson roads, Craigieburn: traffic lights

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 14 November 2012

REPLY:

VicRoads is working with the Growth Areas Authority and the Department of Transport to investigate longer term plans to duplicate Craigieburn Road between Hanson Road and Waterview Boulevard. VicRoads will consider possible improvements to the Craigieburn Road–Hanson Road intersection as part of the duplication proposal.

VicRoads will continue to monitor the operation and safety of this intersection, to identify any possible short-term improvements.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 13 December 2012

Dairy industry: future

Raised with: Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade

Raised by: Hon. M. P. Pakula

Raised on: 10 October 2012

REPLY:

Victoria is home to Australia's dairy industry. It produces approximately two thirds of Australia's milk. Dairy exports make a significant contribution to the Victorian economy and represent the largest trade by value through the Port of Melbourne.

However, the dairy industry is not without its challenges. The high Australian dollar, volatile commodity prices and the carbon tax are impacting on the returns of dairy companies and farmers.

Whilst Fonterra has announced the closure of their 100-year-old dairy processing plant, the company simultaneously announced a \$20 million reinvestment in their other two dairy processing plants in south west Victoria. These are larger and more modern plants. The Department of Business and Innovation will continue to work with Fonterra regarding opportunities to retain the manufacturing activities and associated jobs within Victoria, and is working with Fonterra to coordinate government agencies and service providers to assist with information and support for affected employees as jobs are progressively reduced from the plant.

Recently, significant new exports have been secured by Murray Goulburn and Tatura Milk Industries in the recent Victorian Government trade missions to India, China and the Middle East.

New entrants into the Victorian dairy industries include Aussie Farmers Direct in Camperdown, producing fresh packaged milk for sale through their growing distribution network and the recently launched 'Gippy Milk', a fresh milk brand by Longwarry Food Park along with yoghurt producers National Foods in Morwell and Bead Foods in Dandenong.

On top of this there has been significant investment interest in UHT and extended shelf life milk for export into Asia. The Victorian Government also continues to be in discussions with investors on a range of potential new dairy industry projects, including significant international investment which is yet to be confirmed.

The Victorian Government is working closely with the dairy industry to attract new investment, improve firm level productivity, generate jobs and grow exports.

Employment: regional and rural Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 23 October 2012

REPLY:

The Department of Business and Innovation is actively working with industry and key stakeholders in the Barwon South West region to attract and facilitate new investment and create jobs.

To this end, in July I announced the allocation of \$4 million towards attracting new investment to the Geelong region which will help create jobs and develop new export market opportunities.

Our Government's *Investing in Manufacturing Technology* program, which is part of a \$58 million package of support for the manufacturing sector, is also supporting growth, productivity and international competitiveness of manufacturers by stimulating investment in new technologies. Air Radiators and Think Fencing are two Geelong-based businesses to recently receive support under this program.

The Geelong Victorian Government Business Office (VGBO) actively promotes a range of programs and services to support business growth, including the *Small Business Mentoring Service* and the *Grow Your Business* and *First Step Exporter* programs. Through the Geelong VGBO, firms have been well represented on the recent Super Trade Missions to China and India, aimed at developing new export markets, and it will continue to promote participation by local firms in trade missions over the coming year.

The Government has also provided significant support to the Geelong Manufacturing Council for an *Industry Innovation Program*, to develop better linkages between industry and research to help grow the manufacturing sector in Geelong.

Press felt manufacturer Huyck Wangner is another example of a Geelong business that has received support to expand their manufacturing and increase exports.

In relation to your use of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for the Barwon-Western region, I note that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website explicitly states, and I quote, 'ABS Labour Force Survey estimates at the regional level ... are subject to high levels of sampling error, and as such should be used with caution'.

I also note that the City of Greater Geelong's Key Economic Indicators Report for October 2012 shows that the average weekly number of regional jobs advertised in the *Geelong Advertiser* increased by 22.7 per cent in September from August. This report also states that business confidence in Geelong improved in September, indicating that Geelong's economy continues to grow, and the State Government is proud to be contributing to this growth and development.

Food and fibre production: target

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 13 November 2012

REPLY:

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 13 November 2012 regarding the Government's commitment to double Victoria's food and fibre production by 2030.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting the continued development of Victoria's agricultural industries and, through the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), has been assisting agricultural producers to increase productivity. The best way government can assist industry is by removing unnecessary red tape and by investing in Research, Development and Extension (RD&E).

Victoria has a lead role in the National RD&E Framework, and has increased its science capability in key areas to ensure we can deliver against that responsibility, in partnership with industry.

There will be a more coordinated and collaborative approach to rural RD&E under this framework, achieving greater efficiencies in the RD&E that is conducted. DPI's research capability will be focused on achieving the best productivity outcomes for Victoria's primary industries. DPI, with industry support and in collaboration with other providers, will engage with industry, right along the value chain, to achieve faster productivity growth and a more profitable agricultural sector.

This collaboration under the national framework has built upon existing relationships between DPI and industry. These relationships are vital in delivering other joint Government/industry initiatives, such as the building of state of the art dairy research and development facilities at Ellinbank and the development of the Dairy Futures Cooperative Research Centre.

The Victorian Government has set a target of doubling the production of food and fibre from this state over the next 20 years and announced Growing Food and Fibre in the May State Budget. This includes an additional allocation of \$61.4 million over four years and importantly, \$15.7 million per annum on an ongoing basis for work by DPI on dairy, red meat, grains, horticultural RD&E and biosecurity.

Growing Food and Fibre aims to boost productivity growth and profitability of Victoria's key food and fibre sectors for example by:

- introducing new dairy feeding systems to improve feed conversion efficiency while increasing milk functionality and value;
- increasing the supply of red meat by improving ewe fertility and weaner survival; and
- by establishing DPI Hamilton as a Southern Red Meat Innovation Centre focusing on lamb as part of the National RD&E Framework.

I have requested that the department sharpen its focus on targeted policy, programs and projects to grow investment in Victoria. Growing Food and Fibre is designed to build a more vibrant primary industries sector, which will in turn generate higher productivity growth rates, wealth and jobs for the State.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Roads: Kilmore-Wallan bypass

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 14 November 2012

REPLY:

The Victorian Coalition Government is committed to the construction of a Kilmore-Wallan Bypass that connects the Hume Freeway to the Northern Highway by 2017 and is honouring this commitment.

VicRoads is undertaking detailed planning investigations into five options: Sunday Creek, Dry Creek, O'Gradys Road, Quinns Road and a Western Option. The key objective of the study is to deliver a bypass that successfully reduces the amount of heavy trucks and traffic within central Kilmore and Wallan.

The detailed planning investigations are now nearing completion and, apart from some follow up surveys, should be complete by the end of 2012.

There has been extensive public consultation involving the formation of a Community Consultation Committee, which has had eleven meetings to date, including a site visit. There have also been two public information displays and a shopfront to get community input to help determine a suitable location for a western option.

A third public display will be held soon to inform the community about the investigation findings and study progress.

Now that the detailed planning investigations are nearing completion, VicRoads is seeking advice from the Minister for Planning on the planning approval process that will be required to reserve the land to build a bypass.

A review of the findings of the detailed planning investigations will also be undertaken to determine which of the five options will be considered in the planning approval process.

The planning approval process will take some time. VicRoads anticipates that a final decision on a bypass option will be made by late 2013 or early 2014. During the planning approval process, community members will be given the opportunity to provide their views on the options being considered.

Manufacturing: government policy

Raised with: Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade

Raised by: Mr Somyurek

Raised on: 28 November 2012

REPLY:

Since launching the Manufacturing Strategy in late 2011, the Government has made significant progress in implementing its strategy. As opposed to the former government that did nothing to assist manufacturing in Victoria, this Government will continue to work with businesses to support a competitive manufacturing industry in Victoria.