

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**9 and 10 October 2012**

**(Extract from book 16)**

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**Privileges Committee** — Ms Darveniza, Mr D. Davis, Mr P. Davis, Mr Hall, Ms Lovell, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Scheffer.

**Procedure Committee** — The President, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Viney

## 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.

**Environment and Planning References 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.

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

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

*# Participating member*

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**Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Leane, Mr Ramsay and Mr Scheffer. (*Assembly*): Mr Battin and Mr McCurdy.

**Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee** — (*Council*): Mrs Peulich. (*Assembly*): Mr Burgess, Mr Foley, Mr Noonan and Mr Shaw.

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

**Electoral Matters Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis. (*Assembly*): Ms Ryall and Mrs Victoria.

**Environment and Natural Resources Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Koch. (*Assembly*): Mr Bull, Ms Duncan, Mr Pandazopoulos and Ms Wreford.

**Family and Community Development Committee** — (*Council*): Mrs Coote, Ms Crozier and Mr O'Brien. (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McGuire and Mr Wakeling.

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**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.

**Road Safety Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Elsbury. (*Assembly*): Mr Languiller, Mr Perera, Mr Tilley and Mr Thompson.

**Rural and Regional Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Drum. (*Assembly*): Mr Howard, Mr Katos, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller.

**Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee** — (*Council*): Mr O'Donohue. (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks, Ms Campbell, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella, Dr Sykes and Mr Watt.

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*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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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, 9 October 2012**

**Rail: Brighton level crossing**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 25 October 2011

**REPLY:**

The coalition is delivering the commitments it made to the Victorian people.

Prior to the 2010 state election, the coalition committed to remove dangerous level crossings at Springvale Road, Springvale and Mitcham and Rooks Road, Mitcham in its first term of government.

In terms of the Australian level crossing assessment model (ALCAM), the level crossings at Springvale Road and Mitcham Road are among the highest priorities for treatment. However, the ALCAM is a guideline and the assessment outcome scores do not solely represent or determine priority for grade separation. Traffic management and the local precinct/amenity are also important considerations and there are many methods of improving safety other than grade separation.

The 2012–13 Victorian budget allocated \$350 million to remove the level crossings at Springvale Road, Springvale and Mitcham and Rooks Road, Mitcham. Further grade separations will also be delivered in Sunshine as part of the regional rail link project.

The coalition government has also sought Infrastructure Australia support for commonwealth funding to remove more level crossings across Melbourne.

**Liberal Party: fundraising events**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Hon. M. P. Pakula

**Raised on:** 24 May 2012

**REPLY:**

The coalition government has published both a Fundraising Code and a Code of Conduct for Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries.

In spite of being in office for 11 years, the Labor Party did neither of these things, and Victorians await the release by the Opposition of exactly what standards it will hold its shadow ministers and members of Parliament to, in terms of fundraising and official conduct.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Schools: South Melbourne**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 14 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

I wish to thank the principal of the Port Melbourne Primary School, Peter Martin, and the Port Melbourne Primary School board for their valuable suggestions regarding options for additional primary schools in the South Melbourne vicinity.

I also wish to recognise the efforts of Ms Andrea Coote and Ms Georgie Crozier. Both MPs were instrumental in seeking the views of local residents on the provision of government schools in the area and in advocating for a new school in South Melbourne.

The government believes parents should have the choice of sending their children to an excellent government school and that's why we are pushing ahead with a new school in the area.

On the 10 September 2012, the government announced that a new primary school will be built at 129–161 Ferrars Street in South Melbourne. This school will be built to accommodate increasing demand for additional government primary school provision in the surrounding area.

The location for this school was recommended in a feasibility study undertaken by my Department. I have accepted this recommendation noting the benefits that include easy access to public transport and close proximity to recreational and community facilities such as the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre.

Most importantly, parents will be able to send their children to a school that is well positioned to accommodate the growing population of South Melbourne, Southbank and Fishermans Bend.

The department has commenced discussions with the current land owner, the University of Melbourne, regarding the purchase of the site. While this land still requires a more detailed site suitability assessment and site contamination testing before the sale can be finalised, I am confident of a positive outcome.

**Housing: government policy**

**Raised with:** Minister for Housing

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 15 August 2012

**REPLY:**

The coalition government has inherited a public housing system in crisis.

There is a critical need for reform in public housing as outlined in the recent Auditor-General's report *Access to Public Housing* released in April this year.

According to the report, the government's capacity to be able to continue to provide public housing in the future has been put 'at risk' due to the poor management of vital public housing assets by the former Labor government.

The coalition is working to put housing on a sustainable footing so that it can continue to provide public housing for Victorians in need.

The government has received over 1200 submissions to its discussion papers, *Pathways to a Fair and Sustainable Social Housing System* and the KPMG paper, *Social Housing: A Discussion paper on the Options to Improve the Supply of Quality Housing*.

There is much valuable feedback, information and advice for the government to review and consider over the next few months.

Options will be developed as a result of this work and the government will announce the new social housing framework in 2013.

Labor's hypocrisy on tenure in public housing knows no bounds — in 2000 it was Labor policy to review tenure every five years.

Labor increased rents twice in 2004 and 2007 without any consultation whatsoever.

Labor should hang their heads in shame. Not only did they mismanage public housing in Victoria but they are now engaging in reckless scaremongering about rent and tenure.

The most telling indictment of Labor is that its mismanagement of public housing has failed those Victorians who are most in need.

In common with other portfolios, in housing we are faced with the challenge of fixing the mess left by Labor.

#### **Magistrates Court of Victoria: staff complaints**

**Raised with:** Attorney-General

**Raised by:** Hon. M. P. Pakula

**Raised on:** 16 August 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I am informed that the concerns and matters raised, some of which date back to 2008, are well known to the department including at a senior management level, and that they have been and are continuing to be fully investigated and properly responded to.

#### **Ambulance Victoria: employee dispute**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr Jennings

**Raised on:** 16 August 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I am advised that Ambulance Victoria has responded to all correspondence from the Public Sector Standards Commissioner in relation to the allegations made by Mr Jubb and Mr Short towards Ambulance Victoria's handling of their individual cases. I am further advised that Ambulance Victoria has undertaken considerable work to review all of their relevant policies and procedures, and they are currently in the process of implementing updates requested by the commissioner.

I am advised that Ambulance Victoria continue to manage these cases with sensitivity and they remain committed to ensuring the principles of natural justice are adhered to in their processes.

**Government: vehicle procurement**

**Raised with:** Assistant Treasurer

**Raised by:** Mr Somyurek

**Raised on:** 16 August 2012

**REPLY:**

The percentage of Australian manufactured vehicles in operation in the Victorian government passenger vehicle fleet at 30 June 2012 is 97 per cent.

This includes all Victorian state government departments, Victoria Police and all agencies funding the purchase of vehicles through the finance lease facility managed by the Department of Treasury and Finance. These entities are bound by the requirements of the Standard Motor Vehicle Policy which requires that 'Only passenger vehicles that are substantially manufactured in Australia are permitted for lease or purchase'. This policy applies to light commercial vehicles, except when no Australian manufactured vehicle required for the task is available.

Adherence to the Standard Motor Vehicle Policy is a requirement for all government departments and inner budget agencies and is used as a guide for all other agencies.

**Local government: voter enrolment**

**Raised with:** Minister for Local Government

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 28 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I thank the member for Southern Metropolitan for her question regarding voter enrolment and participation at local government elections.

I acknowledge the important issue the member has raised and I share her interest in ensuring the highest possible participation rates in our democratic processes.

Local government electoral rolls in Victoria are composed of a number of sources.

By comparison, state and federal rolls are compiled directly from individual electoral enrolments and do not consider property ownership, as local councils do.

Voters' rolls for all councils — including the Port Phillip City Council — comprise voters on the state register of electors and non-resident ratepayers who are automatically enrolled without application.

They may also comprise other owner and occupier ratepayers as well as corporation representatives who can apply to be enrolled.

In nearly all councils, the great majority of voters on the roll are state electors. As the city of Melbourne has such a high proportion of non-residential rateable properties, directors or company secretaries may also be eligible to enrol.

Importantly there are some categories of voters for whom it is not compulsory to vote in council elections. This includes non-resident voters and people 70 years old and over. These exemptions can have an impact on voter turnout.

Failure to vote notices are sent to people who enrolled on the voters' roll but did not vote — but not to people who failed to enrol.

Taking action for failure to enrol is the responsibility of the Victorian or Australian Electoral Commissions.

**Environment and Planning References Committee: environmental design and public health in Victoria**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Tierney**

**Raised on: 28 August 2012**

**REPLY:**

The Baillieu government recognises the importance of many of the issues considered by the Inquiry.

- The Legislative Council standing orders which set out the committee's functions and powers do not include a requirement for the government to formally respond to this inquiry.
- However, through the work that is taking place in the Department of Health and in other areas of government, such as the development of the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy, many matters raised by the inquiry are being addressed.
- In the course of the inquiry the Baillieu government released the Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012–2022 (the framework) which provides the overall guiding road map for health reform in Victoria. The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011–2015 (the plan), released in September 2011, complements the framework, providing the blueprint for Victoria's approach to prevention. These policies recognise the importance of promoting healthy environments to help support better population health outcomes.
- The department continues to work closely with local government and other partners to promote the elements of environmental design which can improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorians, including the provision of tools and resources to support all councils in their development of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans (MPHWPs) for 2013 to 2017. In doing so, the department will draw on the report of the Inquiry where appropriate, along with other sources of information.
- Many of the principles in the Inquiry report are also informing the delivery of the Prevention Community Model in selected local government areas in Victoria.

The government thanks the committee for its work.

**Foxes and wild dogs: control**

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

**Raised by: Mrs Petrovich**

**Raised on: 28 August 2012**

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 28 August 2012 regarding the coalition government's fox and wild dog control program.

You asked me to continue to push for the introduction of a national agreement, including best practice programs and bounty arrangements, for fox and wild dog control.

Victoria is a national leader in the development of policy to manage the impacts of established pest animals, and currently works with industry to continually improve the delivery of best practice management.

I have made an offer of assistance to the Commonwealth Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, People and Communities (SEWPaC), for the Department of Primary Industries to work with SEWPaC to develop a national policy statement regarding wild dog management and protection of threatened species and communities. Discussions with commonwealth departmental staff indicate they would be willing to participate in a national workshop to develop such a statement.

Victoria will work with industry, communities and other government agencies to continually improve best practice management for invasive species.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Swinburne University of Technology: Lilydale campus**

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

**Raised by: Mr Leane**

**Raised on: 28 August 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Swinburne University of Technology has advised they will no longer deliver higher education or vocational education and training courses at the Lilydale campus from 1 July 2013. A dedicated team known as Swinburne Connect has been established to support current students. Students at Lilydale will be contacted individually to discuss the arrangements for their studies in 2013. The team will be working to ensure that both TAFE and higher education students at Lilydale have continuity in their studies.

While I understand that Swinburne is reviewing possible future uses of the Lilydale campus, it has assured the government that it remains dedicated to the delivery of tertiary education in Melbourne's eastern suburbs and will continue to serve the region through campuses at Croydon, Wantirna and Hawthorn.

The government is committed to working with TAFEs, and TAFE divisions of universities such as Swinburne, to make sure their full potential is realised. This is a great chance for TAFE institutions to consolidate their prime place in Victoria's training system, capitalise on the TAFE brand and make positive changes in the form of greater collaboration between providers, sharing of services and delivery, innovative delivery modes, greater productivity in employment conditions and closer alignment with higher education programs.

To this end, the government has established an independent TAFE Reform Panel to ensure the network of TAFE institutes in Victoria remains strong and viable. This panel will work with TAFEs to develop a roadmap to advise government of future directions for Victoria's TAFE institutes.

Swinburne has a long standing commitment to the Supported Learning Network and while the closure of the Lilydale campus does affect this program, I am informed that students currently enrolled in certificate I in Transition Education will be able to complete their course at the end of 2012.

Delivery of the certificate I in Work Education at the Lilydale campus will cease in June 2013; however, second year students will be able to continue their studies at the Wantirna campus in 2013.

I recognise the difficulty that may arise, particularly in the case of special needs students, with the relocation of courses from the Lilydale campus however Swinburne remains committed to working with affected individuals to find a satisfactory solution.

Swinburne hosted information sessions for affected students at Hawthorn, Wantirna and Lilydale on 29 and 30 August. These were well attended and alternative providers (Box Hill Institute, Chisholm Institute and Holmesglen) presented to students and their families.

Swinburne will now facilitate group visits to these other providers, ensuring students are familiar with the learning opportunities on offer and incorporating transport education that forms a key part of the programs.

Swinburne is confident that an appropriate solution, either at a different Swinburne campus or with a new provider, will be found for each individual currently enrolled.

### **Kokoda memorial wall: development**

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

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 28 August 2012

#### **REPLY:**

Parks Victoria has established a working group to oversee the delivery of the Kokoda Memorial Wall project. The working group includes representation from the 39th, 2/14th, 2/16th and 2/27th Battalion Associations.

The working group has been actively engaging and consulting with each battalion association's representative and their battalion members. I am informed that there is consensus on the design of the Memorial Wall within the battalions.

The Memorial Wall contract has been let and is currently in the production phase. The project is on track for the planned opening as part of the annual Legacy Day Commemoration Ceremony for Students in April 2013.

Parks Victoria will continue to consult with the battalion's representatives in relation to the details of the Kokoda Memorial Wall and is committed to providing the battalions with regular monthly reports on project progress for the duration of the project.

### **Valley Carers: residential facility**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mr Finn

**Raised on:** 28 August 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I assure Mr Finn the Victorian government is working to deliver on its election commitment to develop greater innovation in disability accommodation and improved outcomes for people with a disability and complex needs.

The Victorian government recognises the stress on families and carers who are planning for future support and accommodation needs for their family member with a disability. We've listened to Victorians with a disability, their families and carers, and we are funding services that that they want most.

The Victorian government's contribution of \$50.2 million over four years will develop a total of 118 new and innovative supported accommodation options across the state. This includes operating funds of \$37.4 million and capital funds of \$12.8 million. The Victorian government has secured a further \$17 million from the Commonwealth's Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund which will also contribute to capital costs.

I can also assure you that since Mr Finn raised this matter, my department has been liaising with the Valley Carers to arrange mutually convenient time discuss their plans.

Further, I encourage parents to contact Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783 should they require individual assistance and planning support.

**YMCA: Bridge Project**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 28 August 2012

**REPLY:**

The Department of Business and Innovation funds the YMCA Bridge Program and concerns about funding should be raised with the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, Hon. Richard Dalla-Riva MLC.

**Fruit fly: control**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 29 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised for my attention during the Adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 29 August 2012, concerning the control of Queensland fruit fly (QFF) across Greater Victoria and consultation with industry, particularly the VFF Horticulture Group.

The proposition put forward in the adjournment debate contribution is misinformed.

The Baillieu coalition government has significantly increased funding for the control of Queensland fruit fly outbreaks over the first 20 months in office.

The coalition values the remarkable contribution of our horticultural industries and growers in producing fresh fruit, growing the economy and creating jobs.

The Government is committed to working with industry and maintaining export markets for Victorian fresh produce.

That is why in my first 20 months as Agriculture and Food Security Minister I have delivered an additional \$10 million from the state budget to combat fruit fly outbreaks, the equivalent of four years QFF outbreak funding under the former Labor Government.

This is on top of the Government's annual \$2.8 million commitment to QFF surveillance and control, which I increased by \$185,000 last year.

The Government invested up to \$250,000 to establish road block infrastructure near Euston in New South Wales to complement the effort to keep flies from entering the Sunraysia fruit growing region.

The Department of Primary Industries is currently undertaking consultations with a wide range of horticultural industry stakeholders on future management of Queensland fruit fly, including representatives of the Victorian Farmers Federation from across Victoria. The Department will report back to me on the outcome of consultations.

My office is working to finalise a time to meet with the VFF Horticulture Group to discuss future QFF control policy.



**Higher education: TAFE funding**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Tarlamis

**Raised on:** 29 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The member may wish to refer his constituent to the website of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development at [www.skills.vic.gov.au/Pages/get-training](http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/Pages/get-training) where it is possible to search for training providers offering government subsidised training in her chosen course or qualification.

The same website also provides information on eligibility for a government-subsidised place under the Victorian Training Guarantee, including information on eligibility for fee concessions.

While some providers are still determining which courses they will offer in 2013, currently both Victoria University and NMIT (Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE) are intending to offer a Certificate IV in Liberal Arts in 2013.

Both providers offer information on their courses on their websites and more detailed information can be obtained from the relevant contact officers at each institute.

Furthermore the Centre for Adult Education (CAE), one of our high-quality community education providers, will be offering this course in 2013.

If the member's constituent wishes to consider pursuing a Diploma in Liberal Studies the Department's website also lists vocational education and training (VET) providers offering this qualification.

The Commonwealth Government provides VET FEE-HELP, a loan program to help eligible students enrolled in higher-level VET courses at approved VET providers to pay their tuition fees.

If the member's constituent is considering pursuing a Diploma in Liberal Studies course at a university, HECS-HELP, a similar Commonwealth program, provides support to students pursuing university diploma or degree courses. More information on both schemes is available from the Study Assist website at: [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au).

I would ask the member to convey my best wishes to his constituent for success in her future studies.

**Horses: responsible ownership**

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

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 29 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised for my attention during the Adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 29 August 2012, relating to the promotion of horse welfare and responsible ownership in Victoria.

I welcome your support for the revised Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses and promotion of responsible horse ownership. In addition to this code of practice, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has recently reviewed the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses Competing at Bush Race Meetings which is currently tabled in Parliament.

These Codes will strengthen horse welfare standards and provide greater guidance on the standard of care expected of owners and where horses are used in bush racing. Once gazetted, there will be a communications program to advise horse owners and organisations of the new Codes and their standards.

The promotion of horse welfare and responsible ownership are key messages used in communication material by DPI to horse owners and organisations. Ensuring legislation and educational material relating to horses is kept updated is also an important objective of DPI and you will find considerable educational material on horse welfare and management available on the DPI website ([www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/animals-and-livestock/horses](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/agriculture/animals-and-livestock/horses)).

I can assure you of this Government's continued commitment to protect the welfare of horses in Victoria.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Fruit fly: control**

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

**Raised by:** Ms Darveniza

**Raised on:** 29 August 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised for my attention during the Adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 29 August 2012, regarding the proposal to deregulate Queensland fruit fly (QFF) across Greater Victoria.

The Baillieu coalition government has significantly increased funding for the control of Queensland fruit fly outbreaks over the first 20 months in office.

The coalition values the remarkable contribution of our horticultural industries and growers in producing fresh fruit, growing the economy and creating jobs.

The government is committed to working with industry and maintaining export markets for Victorian fresh produce.

That is why in my first 20 months as Agriculture and Food Security Minister I have delivered an additional \$10 million from the state budget to combat fruit fly outbreaks, the equivalent of four years QFF outbreak funding under the former Labor government.

This is on top of the State's annual \$2.8 million commitment to QFF surveillance and control, which I increased by \$185,000 last year.

The government invested up to \$250,000 to establish road block infrastructure near Euston in New South Wales to complement the effort to keep flies from entering the Sunraysia fruit growing region.

There have been unprecedented numbers of QFF outbreaks over the past three years. There are currently in excess of 230 outbreaks across Victoria and New South Wales.

Fruit growers whose properties are within defined outbreak areas but do not themselves have fruit fly infesting their fruit are nonetheless currently required to undertake expensive chemical treatments or lengthy cold storage and to obtain costly plant health certificates from the Department of Primary Industries just to move produce off their property. Even where domestic markets do not require treatment or if they are moving fruit to markets in QFF declared areas, farmers are still required to undertake these costly processes.

The DPI is currently undertaking consultations with a wide range of horticultural industry stakeholders on future management of Queensland fruit fly in Victoria.

A proposal is that in the Sunraysia Pest Free Area where there are a significant number of export oriented producers, and where DPI believe it is viable to achieve eradication of fruit fly, that the Baillieu government would work in partnership with industry towards the goal of QFF eradication.

In the wider Victorian fruit production area where it is not considered feasible to achieve QFF eradication, it is proposed that regulatory restrictions on movement of fruit would be relaxed, reducing the cost burden on horticulturalists. DPI would continue to provide plant health certificates to those producers who require them to meet the requirements of their markets.

DPI and the government will continue to consult with fruit growers on implementing the most prudent QFF control strategy to support Victoria's valued, high quality horticultural industries.

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

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Ms Hartland**

**Raised on: 29 August 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

Improvements to Newport railway station, such as a ramp and additional shelter have been provided as part of the commitments made at the May community meeting.

Waiting times can only be reduced as part of a timetable change. I can confirm that reductions in waiting times at Newport will be made as part of the next timetable change to be introduced later this year.

In the period between the implementation of the May 2011 timetable and May 2012, 97.3 per cent of scheduled Altona Loop trains were delivered. Between June 2012 and August 2012, 97.5 per cent of trains were delivered. Over the same period, on-time performance rose from 90.6 per cent in the May 2011 to May 2012 time period to 93.4 per cent in the June 2012 to August 2012 time period.

An Altona Loop performance data report has been provided to the Altona Loop Group by Metro and will continue to be provided on a quarterly basis.

### **Social housing advocacy and support program: funding**

**Raised with: Minister for Housing**

**Raised by: Mr Eideh**

**Raised on: 29 August 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

The Coalition's record on investment in Homelessness funding is strong with more than \$90M in additional funding being invested since coming to government. This includes funding of \$76.7M through the Victorian Homelessness Action Plan.

The Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) is one of a suite of programs that the Department of Human Services funds to assist vulnerable Victorians. Others include the Support for High Risk Tenancies program, Indigenous Tenants at Risk program and Housing Services Hot Spot projects, Work and Learning Centres and the Public Tenant Employment Program. SHASP will continue to provide its most important role of supporting people to maintain their tenancies and those in new tenancies through integrated case management.

The Department has been working with SHASP providers to minimise the impact on front line services and develop revised case management model for SHASP.

Not all of the SHASP funding has been directly related to assisting high risk clients. Some funding has been spent on managing community facilities. I am advised that these costs total approximately \$800,000-\$900,000 annually. Most of these activities will now be undertaken by the Department within existing resources.

In addition, some SHASP providers were sub-contracting with other agencies. This increases administration costs that could be spent on front line services.

The public housing eviction rate as a percentage of total public housing tenancy terminations has remained relatively stable over the last nine years. It is simply incorrect to claim that SHASP has led to a halving of the eviction rate since its inception.

I have asked the Department to include SHASP in the review of all homelessness programs being undertaken as part of the Victorian Homelessness Action Plan 2011–2015. We need to minimise the administrative cost of delivering programs to focus on front line services.

The Action Plan provides an important opportunity to achieve whole-of-government reform to address homelessness and improve economic and social participation for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The Government is committed to better collaboration and coordination between services to move to a more efficient and effective system that achieves better outcomes for vulnerable Victorians and does not focus on throughput.

### **Tormore–Boronia roads, Boronia: traffic lights**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads**

**Raised by: Mr Leane**

**Raised on: 30 August 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised:

In the 2011–12 state budget, the Victorian coalition government announced funding for the upgrade of the intersection of Boronia Road and Tormore Road in Boronia.

The \$1.3 million investment is the fulfilment of an election commitment and is in response to a call from local residents for safety improvements to this section of road.

Right turning lanes, from Boronia Road into Tormore Road and Boronia Road into Narcissus Avenue will be fully signalised. The right turning traffic lanes will also be lengthened, allowing more cars to wait to turn right, without disrupting the through-flow of traffic along Boronia Road.

Due to the high volume of traffic on Boronia Road, this investment will ensure better safety of pedestrians and local residents, while improving the travel times of peak hour travellers.

Boronia residents have requested safety improvements to this intersection for some time. As there are several primary schools close to this intersection, ensuring the safety of our most vulnerable road users is of paramount importance.

I am also pleased to advise that VicRoads recently awarded a contract for the installation of traffic signals. VicRoads expects these works to commence in late September 2012 and be completed by February 2013.

**Bendigo: regional exhibition centre**

**Raised with:** Minister for Regional and Rural Development

**Raised by:** Mr Ramsay

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I am pleased to provide an update on the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society's project for the stage 2 development of a regional exhibition centre at the Prince of Wales Showgrounds, Bendigo.

The project funding of \$2 million was announced by me on 18 October 2011 and is funded through the government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund.

The project objective is to provide enabling infrastructure to grow the various events and businesses at the Prince of Wales Showgrounds Bendigo and hence contribute to the Bendigo and broader regional economy.

Since my announcement, the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society has established a project control group with representatives of the various stakeholders including the Australian Sheep Breeders Association and the Bendigo Beef Show to oversee the construction and delivery of the project to meet the various stakeholder requirements.

In addition, it is recognised that the City of Greater Bendigo is providing both financial and in-kind support to the project as required in assisting with the various regulatory requirements for the construction of a 6,000 sqm building and the site as a whole.

This is the second major building at the showgrounds that allows the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society and the Bendigo Sheep Show to expand their activities for the agricultural sector.

I have been advised that the project is progressing according to schedule and I look forward to opening the new building in early 2013.

**Vocational education and training: rapid response team**

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

**Raised by:** Ms Darveniza

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

In the May Budget the government committed to establish a Market Monitoring Unit and a rapid response team to monitor prices and quality in the vocational education and training (VET) system. This commitment included up to \$1 million per annum for its quality functions. The Market Monitoring Unit is an independent unit that has been established and is operating within the Regional Support Group of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The rapid response function will be commissioned by the Market Monitoring Unit and provide investigations of individual providers where there is evidence of quality and reporting concerns. Findings of the rapid response investigations will allow for a range of remedies including contractual action by the Department and/or regulatory action from the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

On 13 September 2012 Victorian government funded training providers were notified of the commencement of the MMU function including activities to ensure integrity across the system and to better understand trends in training delivery. It is anticipated that the rapid response capability will be active from the first week of October.

On 30 June 2012 the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) was responsible for regulating 1157 Victorian registered training organisations. On 1 July 2012 this number dropped to 507. This change reflects the number of providers moving into the regulatory sphere of either the Australian Skills Quality Agency (ASQA) or the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency.

Approximately 83 per cent of government subsidised training is delivered by 308 registered training organisations regulated by the Commonwealth regulator, the ASQA. The other 17 per cent of government subsidised training is delivered by 246 registered training organisations regulated by the VRQA.

The VRQA has a strong track record of responding quickly to any allegations of breaches of quality standards. It must be noted that recent media coverage alleged serious deception of regulators through the creation of false training records. This is an activity that would not be identified through routine auditing.

The VRQA is funded through a combination of provider fees and government funding. In 2010–11 the VRQA had revenue for VET activity of \$7.168M and in 2011–12 this was reduced to \$4.383M commensurate with the reduction in its provider base.

The VRQA has had an overall reduction in vocational education training registration and audit activity and has reduced its staff from 16 to 11 accordingly. The Authority has also employed its own in house lawyer to assist with the management of complex regulatory matters and has trained a number of staff across the VRQA as authorised officers who are able to carry out inspections of registered training organisations. The VRQA maintains contracts with several service providers for the delivery of independent audits and reviews.

The VRQA will continue to be provided with the resources necessary to regulate registered training organisations under its jurisdiction.

### **Fire services: funding**

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

**Raised by: Ms Hartland**

**Raised on: 6 September 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

Whilst the 2012–13 budgets for the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) do involve reductions, it is important to understand that this year's budgets for CFA and MFB are still the second largest in history, and were only exceeded by last year's budget which in the CFA's case included funding associated with implementation of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommendations.

The CFA and MFB have identified reasonable efficiencies that will not affect fire fighting capability or frontline services. CFA and MFB are exempt from the Sustainable Government Initiative for staff reductions, in recognition that they deliver frontline services.

The coalition government is implementing the Royal Commission recommendations to ensure that Victoria is better prepared to respond to bushfires. Indeed the Bushfire Royal Commission Implementation Monitor, Neil Comrie's final report confirmed this on page 67 of his report by stating, "there is clear evidence that Victoria is now substantially better prepared on a regular basis to respond to bushfire risk than at the time of Black Saturday".

In its first term, the government has invested in 250 new and upgraded CFA stations across Victoria. \$65 million was invested in the 2011–12 budget to fast track the delivery of 60 new or upgraded CFA stations and roll out 101 new firefighting vehicles. A further \$22.9 million was included in the 2012–13 budget to continue delivering on our CFA station commitment.

In 2012–13 alone, record funding of \$8.6 million for 166 Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program grants has been provided to CFA for operational equipment, vehicles and appliances, and amenities.

The Government also recently announced the new \$109 million MFB training facility in Craigieburn that will give firefighters one of the best emergency services training facilities in Australia.

Regarding CFA TAFE courses in Ballarat, CFA has advised that an element of its training delivery model includes distance education for competency modules. Distance education has been provided by external providers for over ten years and, prior to Ballarat University, Tasmania TAFE provided the service. The Ballarat University has advised CFA it will cease providing distance courses and CFA has identified an alternative provider. The closure of this program does not mean that firefighters will now have to travel interstate.

The Government is aware of calls to establish legislation in Victoria similar to the Commonwealth presumptive legislation for firefighters who contract particular cancers. This is an important and complex issue and the government is giving this matter due consideration.

The Victorian government recognises the significant contribution of all firefighters to the well-being and safety of the people of Victoria, and in particular recognises the dedication and contribution of operational and non-operational volunteers.

Thank you for raising these concerns with me.

### **Bendigo: court precinct upgrade**

**Raised with:** Attorney-General

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

#### **REPLY:**

The investment in the redevelopment of the Justice Precinct in Bendigo regenerates the former police station in a manner that respects and heightens the community value of the current court precinct, improves court access and security, and brings together a range of Justice services that are currently located across three sites.

The redevelopment allows the Magistrates' Court and the Department of Justice to respond to the increasing regional growth and demands of the Bendigo community in the Loddon Mallee Region.

The Department of Justice is consulting comprehensively with court users, key stakeholders and the community. The department has also appointed architects and engineers who have a proven track record of stakeholder engagement and quality outcomes in terms of public buildings such as courts. Discussions have occurred, and will continue, between the City of Greater Bendigo and the Department of Justice relating to the importance of the heritage significance of the building and surrounds.

Subsequent to this matter being raised, I visited Bendigo and inspected the existing court buildings together with registry staff and senior Department of Justice officers. I also met with representatives of the Bendigo Law Association and discussed the project with them.

**Fire services: funding**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Eideh

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) continually reviews its model for training delivery to ensure it best supports the CFA's service delivery requirements. An element of its training delivery model includes distance education, which has been provided by external institutions for over ten years. Prior to Ballarat University, the current provider, training for firefighters was provided by Tasmania TAFE.

As Ballarat University advised the CFA that it will cease providing distance courses for firefighters, the CFA has identified an alternative provider. Therefore, there should be no negative effect on the training and preparedness of CFA personnel.

Whilst the 2012–2013 budget for Victoria's fire services does involve reductions, it is important to understand that this year's budget for the CFA is still the second largest in history, and was only exceeded by last year's budget, which included funding associated with implementation of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommendations.

The fire services have identified reasonable efficiencies that will not affect fire fighting capability or frontline services. The CFA is exempt from the Sustainable Government Initiative for staff reductions, in recognition that it delivers frontline services.

The coalition government is implementing the Royal Commission recommendations to ensure that Victoria is better prepared to respond to bushfires. Indeed the Bushfire Royal Commission Implementation Monitor, Neil Comrie's Final Report confirmed this on page 67 of his report by stating, 'there is clear evidence that Victoria is now substantially better prepared on a regular basis to respond to bushfire risk than at the time of Black Saturday'.

In its first term, the Government has invested in 250 new and upgraded CFA stations across Victoria. \$65 million was invested in the 2011–12 Budget to fast track the delivery of 60 new or upgraded CFA stations and roll out 101 new firefighting vehicles. A further \$22.9 million was included in the 2012–13 Budget to continue delivering on our CFA station commitment.

In 2012–13 alone, record funding of \$8.6 million for 166 Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program grants has been provided to CFA for operational equipment, vehicles and appliances, and amenities.

The government appreciates the sentiments you have expressed on behalf of the City of Greater Bendigo and will continue to support our communities in regional Victoria.

The Victorian government recognises the significant contribution of all CFA firefighters to the wellbeing and safety of the people of Victoria.

Thank you for raising your concerns with me.



**Apprentices: mutual consent arrangements**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Jennings

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (the Act), an employer or apprentice may suspend a training contract by mutual consent. This decision does not need to be approved by the Victorian Skills Commission (VSC), nor will it need to be approved by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The VSC has the power to order the cancellation or suspension of a training contract if it is of the opinion that special circumstances make a cancellation or suspension desirable. This power will transfer to the VRQA.

With regard to Apprenticeship Field officers (AFOs) their role under the act is regulatory. They have a responsibility to ensure that apprentices and employers meet their obligations under the training contract. While AFOs have been actively involved in assisting Gippsland apprentices who have had their training contracts suspended or cancelled, it is not their role to find them alternative employment.

In terms of clarifying the role of Regional Market Facilitation Managers (RMFMs), I'm pleased to confirm that these officers are a vital component of the new Industry Participation Model that I announced in March 2012. While RMFMs have no formal role under legislation in relation to apprentices, they will continue to facilitate strategic projects such as the Gippsland Apprenticeship Program.

The Victorian government will continue to maintain existing mutual consent requirements, consistent with the stakeholder feedback received during consultations on Building Trade Pathways: Strengthening Trades Training in Victoria.

**Rail: Berwick station car park**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

On 19 September 2012, the Minister for Planning announced the first tranche of funding for key infrastructure projects in Melbourne's growth areas.

\$1.1 million of the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution (GAIC) funds has been allocated to increase the park-and-ride facility at Berwick railway station in the City of Casey. An additional 150 car-parking spaces will be constructed at the station.

**Higher education: TAFE funding**

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

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

On 25 August 2012, the Deputy Secretary, Higher Education and Skills Group, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, confirmed in writing, to Chief Executive Officers of TAFE Institutes and the Universities with a TAFE Division that the escalation rate under the Departmental Funding Model, as at 1 October 2012, is 2.5 per cent.

My department will provide the 2.5 per cent escalation supplementation to TAFE institutes and universities with a TAFE division for the 2.5 per cent salary increase to TAFE teachers that will apply from 1 October 2012, in accordance with the Victorian TAFE Teaching Staff Multi-Business Agreement 2009.

The escalation supplementation will be available until 31 December 2012.

**Vocational education and training: providers**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Elasmarr

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Impact Football Solutions is not and has not been a Registered Training Organisation. As such, it is outside of the direct responsibility of the regulators, the Victoria Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) or the Australian Skills Quality Authority and therefore has not been eligible to contract to deliver government subsidised training.

Impact Football Solutions were working with the Registered Training Organisation, Vocational Training Group Pty Ltd.

The Vocational Training Group Pty Ltd had its registration cancelled by the VRQA in February this year. The Vocational Training Group Pty Ltd is appealing this decision through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

**Skills training: TAFE funding**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Somyurek

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian government is committed to ensuring that assistance is directed to manufacturers in practical ways that will maximise business and jobs growth. The size of the training effort reflects the size and importance of the manufacturing sector in Victoria. As such, I am pleased to advise that a broad range of manufacturing-related training is easily accessible through all TAFE Institutes, as well as 96 private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and 16 Learn Local providers.

Refocusing Vocational Training in Victoria outlines the government's continued investment in skill development and complements the government's manufacturing statement, A More Competitive Manufacturing Industry, in supporting skills development. The Government has increased funding for the core manufacturing courses, certificate III in Engineering — Mechanical Trade and the certificate III in Engineering — Fabrication Trade. When these courses are delivered as an apprenticeship, the subsidy rate is even higher.

To address barriers to training, manufacturers are also able to consult with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Regional Market Facilitation Managers, who partner with Department of Business and Innovation's Business Development Managers, to gather intelligence on niche and specialist occupations. Current intelligence regarding industry skill needs indicates that higher-level skills are a priority. For this reason, other certificate III and certificate IV courses in general manufacturing and automotive manufacturing have undergone only minor adjustments in funding.

The intelligence gathered from industry will form the evidence base for targeted projects to develop niche and specialist manufacturing skills. These targeted projects will be funded through the Industry Transition and Specialist Training Initiative, a flexible \$6 million pool of funding to be deployed where innovative solutions and partnerships are required to meet specialist industry needs.

These initiatives are in addition to the government's investment in online tools, targeted projects and tailored support services that will ensure Victorian manufacturers will have access to a highly skilled workforce into the future.

### **Platypus: yabby traps**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 11 September 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council regarding the potential impact of yabby traps on native wildlife and for proposing that I meet with the Australian Platypus Conservancy (APC) to discuss this matter.

The Department of Primary Industries is currently reviewing regulations relating to the recreational catch of yabbies. As part of this review, Fisheries Victoria is conducting a scientific study to compare the yabby catch efficiency and the propensity for various yabby traps to inadvertently take by-catch, including platypus. This review is anticipated to be completed by end October 2012 and should regulations need to be changed, they would be first introduced by a Fisheries Notice under the Fisheries Act 1995.

As part of this review, Fisheries Victoria are consulting directly with the Australian Platypus Conservancy.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Schools: Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 11 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

I wish to recognise the efforts of Ms Andrea Coote and Ms Georgie Crozier in providing valuable input regarding the provision of government primary schools in the South Melbourne area. Both MPs were instrumental in seeking the views of local residents and in advocating for a new school in South Melbourne.

On the 10 September 2012, the Government announced that a new primary school will be built at 129–161 Ferrars Street in South Melbourne. This school will be built to accommodate increasing demand for additional government primary school provision in the surrounding area.

The location for this school was recommended in a feasibility study undertaken by my Department. I have accepted this recommendation noting the benefits which include easy access to public transport and close proximity to recreational and community facilities such as the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre.

The Department has commenced discussions with the current land owner, the University of Melbourne, regarding the purchase of the site. This land still requires a more detailed site suitability assessment and site contamination testing before the sale can be finalised. Subject to this work being completed, I will be in a position to provide more details about timing.

**Family violence: project funding**

**Raised with:** Attorney-General

**Raised by:** Hon. M. P. Pakula

**Raised on:** 11 September 2012

**REPLY:**

The Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths was established as a review to be undertaken in the Coroner's Prevention Unit (CPU) in order to examine the systemic causes of family violence deaths in Victoria.

The government supports this important work of the Coroners Court and continues to work with the Court on arrangements to ensure that it can continue.

The government is committed to tackling family violence and a package of \$16 million of new funding and legislative measures was announced on 3 September 2012 that will further strengthen prevention efforts, as well as boost the support provided to victims.

This new funding is in addition to the \$85 million already provided in the 2012–13 state budget for initiatives to address family violence and sexual assault.

**North East Support and Action for Youth: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Ms Darveniza

**Raised on:** 13 September 2012

**REPLY:**

The member for Northern Victoria raised an issue with me in relation to the Victorian government's funding for two programs run by the North East Support and Action for Youth (NESAY), the intensive case management and the homelessness program for youth.

I inform the member for Northern Victoria that this particular matter does not fall under my portfolio responsibilities and should be brought to the attention of the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Wendy Lovell.

**Environment: native vegetation management**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Barber

**Raised on:** 13 September 2012

**REPLY:**

The Net Gain Accounting — the First Approximation Report published by the Department of Sustainability and Environment in 2008 provides a 'first approximation' of progress towards achieving the objective of net gain based on estimates of changes in the quality and extent of native vegetation in Victoria for a representative year.

The Victorian government has committed to undertake a Second Approximation Report in 2013. This report will update our understanding of the status of native vegetation quality and extent in Victoria.

The Native Vegetation Management Framework has been in place for 10 years. The Victorian government now considers it timely to review the permitted clearing regulations. The aim of the review is to ensure the regulations are contributing to achieving Victoria's biodiversity objectives efficiently and effectively.

A consultation paper setting out issues identified with the current native vegetation regulations and proposed reforms to address these issues was publicly released on 14 September 2012.

Stakeholders and the community are invited to comment on the consultation paper in written submissions by 19 October 2012.

Consultation meetings will also be held with stakeholder groups.



**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 10 October 2012**

**Victorian Manufacturing Council: appointments**

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

**Raised by: Mr Somyurek**

**Raised on: 30 August 2012**

**REPLY:**

During the process of putting together the Victorian manufacturing strategy, 'A more competitive manufacturing industry' (the manufacturing strategy), we looked at the issue of appointing the appropriate people across a variety of sectors to the new Victorian Manufacturing Council (VMC).

The manufacturing sector is a diverse sector, and the Victorian Government has taken on board concerns across the industry.

We have placed advertisements for members of the VMC and that process is now at the probity stage. Once the probity stage is completed the appointments will be made. The VMC is an important part of ensuring that the Victorian Government continues to have industry engagement in the implementation of the manufacturing strategy.

This Government commissioned the most extensive study into the state of the Victorian manufacturing sector through the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission inquiry. We went through the whole process of engaging with industry and we released our manufacturing strategy last year. That was coupled with the budget announcement of \$58 million over four years.

The Baillieu Government has already started to make announcements about the Investing in Manufacturing Technology grants. We are now about to embark upon the remainder of the programs, and certainly the Victorian Manufacturing Council is an important part of that.

I am looking forward to getting the council on board.

**Buses: Nyora and Loch**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr Scheffer**

**Raised on: 13 September 2012**

**REPLY:**

Public Transport Victoria monitors all services on the bus and coach network on a regular basis. Service extensions, new services and service upgrades are identified through a planning process and are put forward on a prioritised basis for consideration in the normal funding cycles of Government.

The request to expand bus services to Nyora and Loch proposed by the South and West Gippsland Transport Group will be reviewed in this context as and when funding is made available.

