

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**17, 18 and 19 September 2013**

**(Extract from book 12)**

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## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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## Legislative Council committees

**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, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, #Mr Leane, Mr Lenders, Mr Melhem, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford and Mr Ramsay.

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

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

**Environment and Planning References Committee** — Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, #Mr Leane, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #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, Mrs Millar, Mr O'Brien, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

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

*# Participating member*

## Joint committees

**Accountability and Oversight Committee** — (*Council*): Mr P. Davis, Mr O'Brien. (*Assembly*): Ms Kanis, Mr McIntosh and Ms Neville.

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**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee** — (*Council*): Mr O'Brien and Mr Ondarchie. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Ms Hennessey, Mr Morris, Mr Pakula and Mr Scott.

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**Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Ms Barker, Ms Campbell, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella, Dr Sykes and Mr Watt.

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*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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**Deputy Leader of the Government:**

The Hon. W. A. LOVELL

**Leader of the Opposition:**

Mr J. LENDERS

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**Leader of The Nationals:**

The Hon. P. R. HALL

**Deputy Leader of The Nationals:**

Mr D. DRUM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Hon. Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Lenders, Mr John	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Lovell, Hon. Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP
Broad, Ms Candy Celeste	Northern Victoria	ALP	Melhem, Mr Cesar <sup>2</sup>	Western Metropolitan	LP
Coote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Millar, Mrs Amanda Louise <sup>4</sup>	Northern Victoria	LP
Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	O'Brien, Mr David Roland Joseph	Western Victoria	Nats
Darveniza, Ms Kaye Mary	Northern Victoria	ALP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
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Davis, Mr Philip Rivers	Eastern Victoria	LP	Pakula, Hon. Martin Philip <sup>1</sup>	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee <sup>3</sup>	Northern Victoria	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Elsbury, Mr Andrew Warren	Western Metropolitan	LP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
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Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tarlamis, Mr Lee Reginald	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 26 March 2013

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 8 May 2013

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 1 July 2013

<sup>4</sup> Appointed 21 August 2013



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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, 17 September 2013**

**Hospitals: graduate positions**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr Jennings

**Raised on:** 28 November 2012

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government is concerned that intern and other training places are underfunded. Last year 707 interns were supported (691 with Victorian state government funding).

The Victorian government has increased the amount in the recent budget announcement with the investment of \$41.5 million over four years to support an additional 496 intern and second-year training positions for doctors.

We remain committed to working with the commonwealth; particularly should the commonwealth accept its share of responsibility, especially for interns training in the general practice and private sectors and in private hospitals.

**Aged care: residential facility closures**

**Raised with:** Minister for Ageing

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 12 June 2013

**REPLY:**

I am advised by the Department of Health that a report called 'Public sector residential aged care — List of facilities' has been published periodically which provides details regarding public sector residential aged care facilities together with the number of operational places. This report is updated on an ad hoc basis following formal notification by services of changes to the number of operational places. I am further advised that the report has been recently updated, as per notifications received, and is now available on the website.

**Aged care: residential facility closures**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Ms Pulford

**Raised on:** 26 June 2013

**REPLY:**

The residential aged-care sector is regulated and funded by the commonwealth government. The same accreditation and quality of care standards apply to the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

All services must have appropriately qualified staff with the right mix of skills to meet residents' needs. Services must identify those residents with specialised nursing care needs and ensure these needs are met by appropriately qualified nursing staff.

**Altona rail loop****Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Ms Hartland****Raised on: 21 August 2013****REPLY:**

The Network Development Plan (NDP) prepared by PTV outlines a pipeline of service improvements planned for the Werribee line over the next 30 years. These have been developed based on detailed analysis of patronage growth and operational modelling to assess the most appropriate sequencing of infrastructure upgrades to meet that growth.

The NDP has identified a number of projects and service improvements on the Werribee line in all four stages of the plan. The single track is not the only constraint on trains through the Altona loop. PTV is currently focusing on planning and delivering the earlier stages of the NDP, which will all also benefit Altona.

Specifically, the plan identifies the following changes for Altona loop trains:

- Upon completion of stage 1, the diversion of Geelong trains via the new RRL tracks will enable off-peak periods from Altona to operate through to Flinders Street instead of terminating at Newport;
- In stage 2, the implementation of a new signalling system and the delivery of the Melbourne Metro tunnel will enable improvements in peak period frequencies through Altona;
- By stage 4, once other constraints have been addressed, the plan identifies the need to partially duplicate the Altona line and separate tracks at Altona junction. The elimination of all the constraints between stages 1 and 4 will result in the ability to operate a 10-minute frequency through Altona at all times.

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 18 September 2013**

**Ambulance Victoria: Wallan station**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Broad**

**Raised on: 20 March 2013**

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government has committed to a \$151 million program to improve ambulance services through the employment of 310 paramedics and 30 patient transport officers.

The program includes funding of \$16 million approved in the 2011–12 state budget to deliver new branches and upgrades to existing branches at a number of locations, including Beaufort, Wallan, Grantville, Yarra Junction, Maryborough and Castlemaine.

The new Wallan ambulance service commenced operation in February 2013 and is temporarily operating from the nearest available interim location at Kilmore.

Construction of a new Wallan ambulance station has been delayed as a result of difficulty in procuring a suitable site in the service area. The department is continuing to pursue potential options.

The Victorian government is committed to the construction of a permanent branch for Wallan.

Labor refused over 11 years to fund the Wallan ambulance station, and indeed to this day, has not committed to support this vital service to the growing suburb of Wallan.

**Water: fluoridation**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Pulford**

**Raised on: 30 May 2013**

**REPLY:**

I thank the member for Western Victoria for her question about dental health and the issue of water fluoridation.

The *Action plan for oral health promotion 2013–2017* is supported by \$14.9 million of funding by the Victorian government of which \$3.6 million is allocated to extend water fluoridation.

I too am pleased to note that 90 per cent of Victorians currently have access to a fluoridated drinking water supply. The Victorian government considers community water fluoridation is the most effective population-wide intervention to prevent tooth decay. From 2012 additional funding of \$3.6 million has been allocated to build water fluoridation plants in regional Victoria. This amount includes \$1.2 million allocated to Western Water for the Gisborne water treatment plant upgrade. This will ensure maintenance of fluoridated drinking water for those communities connected to the Gisborne drinking water supply system. The remaining \$2.4 million will cover infrastructure costs for another two plants.

I acknowledge Ms Pulford's interest in community water fluoridation and advocacy for several towns in her electorate without fluoridation. This advocacy is very important. I am also aware that, since 2004, a number of towns in the Western Victoria electorate now receive a fluoridated water supply — these include Ballarat, Colac, Geelong, Hamilton, Horsham, Kyneton, Melton, Queenscliff and Warrnambool. I note with interest that Portland has a naturally fluoridated water supply and Bacchus Marsh was the first community to receive a fluoridated water supply in 1962.

At this stage I am unable to give a definite timeframe as to when all remaining communities in Victoria will have access to a fluoridated water supply. I do reiterate this government's support for water fluoridation however additional funding to that already allocated is required in order to realise a maximum Victorian coverage of 95 per cent.

### **Healesville and District Hospital: services**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr Tee**

**Raised on: 30 May 2013**

#### **REPLY:**

I thank the honourable member for the Eastern Metropolitan Region for his questions regarding public health services available to the community of Healesville.

I am pleased to assure the honourable member that the residents of Healesville and the community of the shire of Yarra Ranges are well served by the Victorian health-care system and have access to health-care services through a number of providers including: Eastern Health, Knox Community Health, EACH, Inspiro, the Shire of Yarra Ranges, Yarra Valley Community Health, the Outer Eastern Primary Care Partnership and Ambulance Victoria.

This government supports the implementation of targeted, evidence-based health promotion activities which will ensure public funding is allocated responsibly and encourages effective programs that achieve positive outcomes.

Significant planning has been undertaken for the provision of public health services in the shire of Yarra Ranges which proposes over time the increase of ambulatory care services and in particular, services which focus on chronic disease, mental health and ageing-related comorbidities to best meet the needs of the Yarra Valley community as its population ages.

### **Panch Health Service: dialysis unit**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Mikakos**

**Raised on: 30 May 2013**

#### **REPLY:**

- Austin Health operates four satellite dialysis units in the northern suburbs, including PANCH. To improve services to its patients, Austin Health is further developing a dedicated home dialysis training service from the PANCH facility. This enhanced service will be available to patients from Preston and will offer greater support for patients undertaking dialysis in their homes.
- Affected patients have been advised of the changes in writing, by Austin Health's CEO, and have been matched to other satellite units and treatment times, including prioritisation on waiting lists where alternative times are preferred.

- Home-based dialysis offers a number of benefits over facility dialysis including greater health independence, better health outcomes, enhanced quality of life and social and economic advantages, and is supported where clinically appropriate.

### **Seniors: program funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Ageing

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 27 June 2013

#### **REPLY:**

I have been advised by the Department of Health that service delivery funding for seniors programs and activities, including U3A, has not been reduced in the 2013–14 budget.

The 2012–13 Expected Outcome for the Seniors Programs and Participation Output (2013–14 BP3 page 134) includes monies receipted into trust accounts and expected carry forward from the previous year. By accounting convention trust fund revenue is not included in budget targets from year to year.



## WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

**Thursday, 19 September 2013**

**Local government rates**

**Raised with:** Attorney-General

**Raised by:** Mr Melhem

**Raised on:** 22 August 2013

**REPLY:**

I was very pleased to launch the report, *Council Debt Collection: Alternatives to suing ratepayers in hardship* (the report), in December 2012. The issue of council litigation for small debts came to attention due to a publication that was produced by my department, *Courting Debt: The legal needs of people facing civil consumer debt*. As Attorney-General, I have been interested in the recommendations in the report and how they might contribute to reducing court costs and delays.

Issues regarding the local government and the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Local Government and the Treasurer.

The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommended that the old insurance-based fire services levy be replaced with a direct property levy to ensure that all Victorian property owners pay a fair contribution to our fire services. The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission found that the insurance-based levy system was highly flawed, unfair and needed reform.

The levy on insurance premiums has been abolished, which is expected to lower the cost of insurance. Unlike the former insurance-based levy, the property-based levy does not incur stamp duty or GST. The Coalition Government has also introduced a new \$50 concession for the FSPL for property owners who receive a rates concession. No concession was available under the former insurance-based levy. Councils recover outstanding amounts of the FSPL in the same manner as municipal rates.

One of the key recommendations of the report was the introduction of a Local Government Hardship Code of Practice (the code of practice). Legislative change was not proposed, rather it was suggested that a code of practice be adopted voluntarily by councils with compliance overseen by the Victorian Ombudsman, who is empowered to investigate complaints about council rates decisions.

My understanding is that the Federation of Community Legal Centres and Municipal Association of Victoria have been working together to consider implementation issues around this key recommendation of the report.

**Essendon Fields**

**Raised with:** Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business

**Raised by:** Mr Elsbury

**Raised on:** 4 September 2013

**REPLY:**

I thank the honourable member for the Western Metropolitan Region for raising this matter in the adjournment debate of 4 September 2013.

The potential for further development of the Essendon Airport precinct to which the honourable member's matter refers is outlined in the Essendon Airport Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2013, which was released on Wednesday, 4 September 2013.

The release of the Preliminary Draft Master Plan marks the start of the consultation process that the airport lessee and operator, Essendon Airport Pty Ltd, will have with the community and local and state governments over the future development potential and operations for the coming 20 years.

Essendon Airport Pty Ltd advises that the airport precinct's net-direct economic contribution to Victoria is already substantial, at \$484.6 million a year. The Essendon Airport Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2013 suggests that the airport precinct provides employment for 4200, or 12 per cent of employment in the city of Moonee Valley area. As many as 174 businesses already operate from the site, including large retail developments such as Direct Factory Outlet and the Homemaker Hub, supermarkets, and business services such as Australia Post and Armaguard.

The Essendon Airport Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2013 identifies 78 hectares of land on its 305 hectare site with scope for potential development. Some ideas canvassed in the plan include a hospital or medical centre, a 150-bed business hotel with conference facilities and more motor vehicle parking and general retail developments.

The proposed developments in the plan are subject to further consultation and planning processes. The Victorian Government will make a comprehensive response to the Preliminary Draft Master Plan 2013.

The Victorian government recognises the strategic importance to the community of Essendon Airport's aviation activities, which provide a base for emergency services aircraft such as the Victoria Police Airwing, the Air Ambulance, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and aerial fire-fighting services.

I welcome the member for the Western Metropolitan Region's interest in the economic development of the precinct and additional jobs that flow as a result. The Victorian government leads the way with a 'AAA' credit rating and can boast its capital as the World's Most Liveable City for the third year in a row.

I am happy to find a mutually convenient time to tour the site with the honourable member for the Western Metropolitan Region.