

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

19, 20 and 21 March 2013

(Extract from book 4)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

The ministry (from 13 March 2013)

Premier, Minister for Regional Cities and Minister for Racing	The Hon. D. V. Napthine, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, and Minister for Regional and Rural Development	The Hon. P. J. Ryan, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. M. A. O'Brien, MP
Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Employment and Trade . .	The Hon. Louise Asher, MP
Attorney-General, Minister for Finance and Minister for Industrial Relations.	The Hon. R. W. Clark, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ageing.	The Hon. D. M. Davis, MLC
Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister for Veterans' Affairs	The Hon. H. F. Delahunty, MP
Minister for Education	The Hon. M. F. Dixon, MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. M. J. Guy, MLC
Minister for Higher Education and Skills, and Minister responsible for the Teaching Profession	The Hon. P. R. Hall, MLC
Minister for Ports, Minister for Major Projects and Minister for Manufacturing	The Hon. D. J. Hodgett, MP
Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, and Minister for Energy and Resources.	The Hon. N. Kotsiras, MP
Minister for Housing, and Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development	The Hon. W. A. Lovell, MLC
Minister for Corrections, Minister for Gaming Regulation, Minister for Crime Prevention and Minister responsible for IBAC	The Hon. A. J. McIntosh, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Roads	The Hon. T. W. Mulder, MP
Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.	The Hon. E. J. Powell, MP
Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Technology and Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry	The Hon. G. K. Rich-Phillips, MLC
Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Youth Affairs.	The Hon. R. Smith, MP
Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women's Affairs and Minister for Consumer Affairs	The Hon. H. Victoria, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, and Minister for Water.	The Hon. P. L. Walsh, MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Minister for Bushfire Response	The Hon. K. A. Wells, MP
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Community Services, and Minister for Disability Services and Reform	The Hon. M. L. N. Wooldridge, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Mr N. Wakeling, MP

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 Ondarchie, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and Mr Somyurek.

Economy and Infrastructure References Committee — Mr Barber, 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, 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, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue, Mrs Petrovich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

Participating member

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue. (*Assembly*): Ms Kanis, Ms Richardson and Mr Wakeling.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Lovell and Ms Pennicuik. (*Assembly*): Mr Clark, Ms Hennessy, Mr McIntosh, Mr Merlino, Dr Napthine and Mr Walsh.

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 Carroll, Mr Foley 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, Mrs Peulich, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis. (*Assembly*): Ms Ryall.

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.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*) Mr Drum, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, and Mr P. Davis. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Ms Beattie, Ms Campbell, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Graley, Mr Wakeling and Mr Weller.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Council*): Mr Koch and Mr Viney. (*Assembly*): Ms Hennessy, Mr Newton-Brown and Mr Weller.

Law Reform Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Petrovich. (*Assembly*): Mr Carbines, Ms Garrett, Mr Newton-Brown and Mr Northe.

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 O'Brien, Mr Ondarchie 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 Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks, Ms Campbell, Mr Gidley, Mr Nardella, Dr Sykes and Mr Watt.

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Mr M. VINEY

Acting Presidents: Ms Crozier, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Mr O'Brien, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, Mr Ramsay, Mr Tarlamis

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. D. M. DAVIS

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. W. A. LOVELL

Leader of the Opposition:

Mr J. LENDERS

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

Mr G. JENNINGS

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	Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Lenders, Mr John	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
Broad, Ms Candy Celeste	Northern Victoria	ALP	Lovell, Hon. Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP
Coote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	O'Brien, Mr David Roland Joseph	Western Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Darveniza, Ms Kaye Mary	Northern Victoria	ALP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Davis, Hon. David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pakula, Hon. Martin Philip	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Davis, Mr Philip Rivers	Eastern Victoria	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee	Northern Victoria	LP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Elsbury, Mr Andrew Warren	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Guy, Hon. Matthew Jason	Northern Metropolitan	LP	Scheffer, Mr Johan Emiel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Tarlamis, Mr Lee Reginald	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP

CONTENTS

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2013

<i>Very Special Kids: ministerial visit</i>	927
<i>Sea View House, Portland: future</i>	927
<i>Wallace Street, Morwell: drainage</i>	928
<i>Northern suburbs: former school sites</i>	928
<i>Sandringham College: Beaumaris campus</i>	929
<i>Health: western suburbs</i>	929
<i>Ambulance Victoria: Sunshine station</i>	930
<i>Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre: disability services</i>	930
<i>Rail: St Albans level crossing</i>	930
<i>Glen Devon Primary School site: future</i>	931
<i>Dairy industry: government support</i>	931
<i>Rainbow Riders: funding</i>	932
<i>Trams: route 96</i>	933
<i>Community organisations: personal emergency planning</i>	933
<i>Country Fire Authority: Lakes Entrance station</i>	934
<i>Kangaroos: harvesting</i>	935
<i>City of Port Phillip: budget submission</i>	935
<i>State Revenue Office: first home owner grant</i>	936
<i>Rail: Flinders Street station toilets</i>	937

WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2013

<i>Manufacturing: Laverton North</i>	939
<i>Portland Bay School: support services</i>	940
<i>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: regional offices</i>	940

THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2013

<i>Bushfires: fuel reduction</i>	943
<i>Environment: equine landcare management</i>	943
<i>Barwon Water: groundwater licence reporting</i>	944

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 19 March 2013

Very Special Kids: ministerial visit

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 5 May 2011

REPLY:

The former Premier, the Hon. Ted Baillieu, MLA, and I visited Very Special Kids (VSK) on Thursday, 12 May 2011, where we toured VSK House and met children with life-threatening conditions, parents and staff.

The Premier announced the Victorian government's commitment of \$34.4 million to strengthen palliative care over four years. This includes \$500 000 funding to VSK House to support respite and end-of-life care for children with life-threatening conditions and their families.

Sea View House, Portland: future

Raised with: Minister for Ageing

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 29 March 2012

REPLY:

Portland District Health (PDH) is governed by an independent board of management and the decisions made regarding the operations of Sea View House as a supported residential service (SRS) are the responsibility of the PDH board.

The board's decision to close the SRS was based on an independent review which considered a range of issues and options. However in response to the community the board worked with a community group to progress the SRS being independently operated.

This has resulted in Seaview House Residential Care Inc. commencing as the proprietor of the SRS on 25 January 2013.

At all times PDH were committed to ensuring the needs of residents were paramount.

Wallace Street, Morwell: drainage

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Mr Viney

Raised on: 14 November 2012

REPLY:

The member for Eastern Victoria has requested that the site assessment for Wallace Street, Morwell, be provided to him once completed.

This assessment has commenced, and VicRoads will continue to provide updates to the member for Morwell, Mr Russell Northe, MLA, on progress. Mr Northe has previously met with VicRoads to discuss this and related issues and is able to provide further information on progress to the residents of Wallace Street.

I have written to Mr Northe asking that he inform the residents of Wallace Street on progress.

I thank you for your continued interest in this matter.

Northern suburbs: former school sites

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Mikakos

Raised on: 11 December 2012

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

All schools identified as surplus to educational requirements are included in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's disposal program. When disposing of sites, the department is required to work in accordance with government requirements.

The former Lakeside Secondary College site and the former Ruthven Primary School site are currently being rezoned to enable them to proceed to public sale. It is expected that this process will be completed shortly.

The former Haig Street Primary School site, Banksia La Trobe Secondary College site, and Bellfield Primary School site have been included in the department's disposal program. I am advised that representatives from the department have had meetings with Places Victoria and the Banyule City Council regarding the current condition and future use of these sites.

It is my understanding that options are being considered, to determine the best possible outcome for the local community with regard to these sites.

I am advised the department has appointed contractors to maintain the grounds, undertake grass cutting, and establish firebreaks at the former school sites. The department will continue to monitor all sites until a decision is made on their future.

Sandringham College: Beaumaris campus**Raised with: Minister for Education****Raised by: Mr Lenders****Raised on: 12 December 2012****REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Last year the Sandringham College School Council moved a motion requesting the Minister for Education close the Beaumaris campus of the College and for it to be reopened as a new school.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has since undertaken a demographic study and commenced a feasibility study into the provision of a new school in Beaumaris.

Any business case for a new school in Beaumaris will be considered once the facts are established, particularly given the significant costs associated with establishing a new secondary school.

I respect and am mindful of community sentiment associated with the Beaumaris campus, and will take the views of local families into consideration when making a determination.

The Victorian government is committed to the rejuvenation of Sandringham College and is delivering \$6 million in capital funding to improve educational facilities at that school.

Health: western suburbs**Raised with: Minister for Health****Raised by: Mr Finn****Raised on: 13 December 2012****REPLY:**

With regard to past neglect of health services in the western suburbs by Labor governments, the Baillieu government has proactively undertaken service and capital planning initiatives with the aim of progressively improving provision of health services for people in the western suburbs.

In recognition of the demographic trends contributing to strong demand growth, particularly for the catchment area served by Sunshine Hospital, capital funding of \$15.1 million was allocated by the Baillieu government to Western Health in the 2012–13 state budget. Together with \$3.5 million funding through the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital services, this project will deliver up to 13 additional critical-care beds and two additional labour delivery rooms at the Sunshine Hospital.

The second matter raised was the additional cost impost of the carbon price and its impact on health service delivery. On 19 June last year I advised the house, based on modelling commissioned by the Department of Health, that it was estimated that the impact of the carbon price at Western Health would equate to approximately 106 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

More recent analysis of actual energy and billing data indicates that the cost of carbon for Western Health over 2012–13 will now be in the order of \$638 000, which equates to some 128 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

The Baillieu government will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged from the carbon price compared to other states or to industries that are receiving support.

Ambulance Victoria: Sunshine station

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Hon. M. P. Pakula

Raised on: 13 December 2012

REPLY:

I am advised that Ambulance Victoria has temporarily resolved issues at the Sunshine ambulance station through a combination of remedial works and implementation of new procedures in cooperation with the Sunshine paramedic staff.

I note that the station, built in the 1970s, received virtually no maintenance over the period of the previous government, being allowed to deteriorate over 11 long years.

Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre: disability services

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 5 February 2013

REPLY:

I refer to the adjournment debate matter raised by Mrs Andrea Coote MLC, member for Southern Metropolitan, in relation to the Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre.

I am pleased that the Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre is making such a positive impact on the wellbeing of the Glen Eira community. It is impressive that in its first nine months of operation the centre has attracted 10 000 members. Results such as these underline the importance of the state government and local councils working together for the good of Victorians.

I have written to the CEO to indicate my interest in hearing more about the success of this project in the future. As the state government funding for this project was provided by Sport and Recreation Victoria I have also suggested the Minister for Sport and Recreation be included in any future correspondence regarding the centre.

Rail: St Albans level crossing

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 5 February 2013

REPLY:

The Victorian government has confirmed the removal of the Main Road level crossing in St Albans as a priority, with works to commence in the first term of government.

I will seek to clarify with the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport what level of financial contribution the federal Government is prepared to make, in order to assist the Victorian government's commitment to this project.

Glen Devon Primary School site: future

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Elsbury

Raised on: 5 February 2013

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will shortly commence the demolition of buildings on the former Glen Devon Primary School site, reducing risks to the local community.

The department is reviewing a business case from the Wyndham City Council concerning the proposed future use of the site. The proposal will be considered and advice provided on that option.

Any decision on the future use of former school sites are considered in line with normal state budget processes.

Dairy industry: government support

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 7 February 2013

REPLY:

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 7 February 2013 regarding government support for the dairy industry.

The Victorian government is fully aware of the challenges now being faced by dairy farmers and communities in south-west Victoria. On 30 January 2013, I met with representatives of the newly-formed 'Farmer Power' group to hear their concerns about the current operating environment and discuss appropriate options for assistance.

I met with major banks on 8 February 2013, to discuss the current situation and encouraged them to work closely and constructively with affected farmers. The Farm Debt Mediation Scheme, which is delivered by the Small Business Commissioner in Victoria, could be helpful in assisting dairy farmers. DPI, along with the commonwealth Department for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, also provides support to the farming community through the Rural Financial Counselling Service, which is a free service to assist farmers in difficult times.

On 12 February 2013, I spoke at the Geoffrey Gardiner Foundation's Dairy Leaders Luncheon and attended a meeting of key dairy leaders including the major dairy processors. At these events, I urged the industry to work together to identify the key issues that the Victorian government can influence and emphasised the importance of a partnership between all players to address some of the concerns raised by dairy farmers.

On 18 February 2013, I wrote to the commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Joe Ludwig, recommending a unified approach to meeting a deputation of farmers from Farmer Power, United Dairy Farmers of Victoria and the Victorian Farmers Federation, to identify where our governments can support the industry.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Rainbow Riders: funding

Raised with: Minister for Community Services

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 7 February 2013

REPLY:

In regards to the question from Ms Tierney, member for Western Victoria, concerning government financial support for Rainbow Riders, I provided a full response in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday 20 February 2013.

A copy of this transcript is attached.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Minister for Community Services) — I thank the members for Geelong and Bendigo West for their adjournment matters on these important issues. To respond to the member for Geelong in relation to Rainbow Riders, it is an issue I am very familiar with, having heard from Rainbow Riders in relation to their situation. The organisation is an equine-assisted growth and learning centre that provides activities for disadvantaged young people in Geelong and surrounding communities. In the past and up to the present my department has purchased services for children and young people on an individual basis from Rainbow Riders so those young people could access the programs and services that the organisation offers.

Rainbow Riders management has suspended operations as a result of financial difficulties. We believe those are in relation to the death of a major benefactor. The Victorian government is very committed to improving the wellbeing of children and families. As a part of that we support high-quality services that help individuals and families to build better lives and achieve their potential. In terms of the provision of these services, community organisations have to be registered and comply with the Department of Human Services standards to receive ongoing recurrent funding.

Rainbow Riders is not a registered organisation and does not have a service agreement with my department. I know last year a representative from Rainbow Riders met with a senior departmental staff member to explore the processes involved in becoming a registered service provider in order to access recurrent funding. My understanding is that this was not progressed by Rainbow Riders after the meeting last year.

The request at the moment from the organisation is for one-off funding. One of the challenges is — and I have a number of community organisations that from time to time get into financial difficulties and turn to government for funding to try to manage that gap — that we do not have one-off grant funding available. There is no pot of money for these sorts of situations. What we consistently say to organisations is that they need to be able to manage their own financial situations appropriately. They can seek opportunities to become registered and receive recurrent funding, or — as is the case with many of our disability services and children, youth and family services — they can provide the services that families seek out and choose. In those cases the organisations receive the funding directly from the families, which is funding the government provides to those families to make the choices they want to make about accessing the services.

I recognise the work Rainbow Riders has done. I sincerely encourage the organisation to continue the work it has been doing to identify sources of local funding to get it over this hump. We will certainly seek to work with Rainbow Riders if there is further information that can be provided about longer term opportunities or other ways we might be able to assist the organisation through this difficult time, but consistent with what I need to say to all community organisations, we do not have those short-term, one-off funding grants available in a pot waiting for community organisations that get into a difficult situation.

Trams: route 96**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mrs Coote****Raised on: 19 February 2013****REPLY:**

The Victorian government will deliver a comprehensive package of tram upgrades, new infrastructure and low-floor, high-capacity trams for Melbourne as part of its \$800 million Tram Upgrade Program.

The government has ordered 50 new trams from Bombardier Transportation Australia.

The first of the new trams, being built by Bombardier at its Dandenong factory, will be delivered into service in late 2013. The new trams will then undergo a six-month testing phase before being progressively rolled out onto the network, starting with route 96.

Route 96 is one of Melbourne's busiest tram routes operating along a 14-kilometre corridor from Blyth Street in East Brunswick in the north, through the CBD to Acland Street, St Kilda, in the south. It has been selected as the first route to run the new low-floor trams.

As part of this program, PTV in partnership with Yarra Trams and VicRoads is currently developing plans for infrastructure upgrades along route 96 to improve access, safety, reliability and efficiency for tram customers using the route. These investigations will examine options for:

- providing level access stops along the entire route
- upgraded termini at Blyth Street, East Brunswick and Acland Street, St Kilda
- improved priority for low-floor trams at traffic lights
- improved customer information.

PTV in conjunction with Yarra Trams, VicRoads and major stakeholders are in the process of developing a community consultation process. Local communities along route 96 will be asked for input in developing services to meet passenger travel needs for 21st century operations and ensuring where possible modal connections for passengers to make better use of public transport.

Community organisations: personal emergency planning**Raised with: Minister for Health****Raised by: Ms Hartland****Raised on: 19 February 2013****REPLY:**

The Vulnerable People in Emergencies Program (the program) is in its third year of implementation and involves a multi-agency approach to improving the safety of vulnerable people living in the community. The program applies in and is a requirement for the 64 rural, regional and urban fringe municipal councils that are wholly or partly within CFA districts.

The program requires funded agencies to encourage and where necessary support clients (who meet the definition of a vulnerable person) to undertake personal emergency planning, screen clients for inclusion on local Vulnerable Persons Registers (Registers), obtain informed consent and enter and maintain client information on the registers.

The program applies to those agencies who provide personal care, support and/or case management services either in home or community settings, to clients living in the community. This includes health or community care services such as home and community care. These agencies are best placed to encourage and support their clients to undertake personal emergency planning.

Through the Vulnerable People in Bushfire Risk Areas Policy 2011–12, funded agencies were requested to develop and maintain a list of vulnerable clients who were unable to implement effective bushfire survival plans. Further, agencies were requested to provide this list to Victoria Police in response to a bushfire. This required agencies to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to produce their vulnerable client list to Victoria Police when requested.

Since November 2012 the revised program includes the development of an online database for registers. The process of compiling client lists has been streamlined so that funded agencies now enter their clients on to a register that is maintained by designated local councils and is directly accessible to police. As of 2 April 2013 agencies will no longer be required to be on call to provide police lists of vulnerable clients on a 24-hours-seven-days-a-week basis.

The new online registers eliminate the burden on funded agencies to make information readily accessible to police during emergencies.

While there is some initial work to transfer existing lists of vulnerable clients onto the online registers, the newly developed database system is designed to reduce the ongoing workload of funded agencies.

The 2012–13 Victorian state budget included \$10.4 million to provide for the program over the next four years.

The Department of Health has provided \$1.6 million to designated councils for screening people (whether they receive services or not) referred to them by either the Red Cross or other service providers, to determine whether these referred people need to be added to a local register.

The Vulnerable People in Emergencies Program 2012 has a staged implementation plan. Agencies funded by the Department of Health have been requested to:

- review existing information on identified vulnerable people and enter this data on the online database by 25 January 2013.
- identify additional clients relating to broader hazards and enter this data on the online database by 30 June 2013.

Country Fire Authority: Lakes Entrance station

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 19 February 2013

REPLY:

I refer to the adjournment debate raised in the Legislative Council regarding vehicle resources of the Lakes Entrance Fire Brigade.

In conjunction with other support arrangements in place, the pumper has the capacity to deal with all structural fires in Lakes Entrance. It has a pumping capacity of 3000 litres per minute, which is the same as trucks at Bairnsdale and Orbost, and even current trucks off the production line.

Country Fire Authority has advised that the vehicle is in good operational condition and continues to be part of the East Gippsland structural fire response profile.

I am advised that it will be replaced when due, in accordance with CFA's replacement policy, with a pumper of 3000 litres per minute capacity.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Kangaroos: harvesting

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

Raised by: Mr O'Brien

Raised on: 19 February 2013

REPLY:

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 19 February 2013, regarding the establishment of a commercial kangaroo industry in Victoria.

Commercial use of kangaroos in Victoria is not permitted under the Wildlife Act 1975. A number of other Australian state and territory governments allow harvesting of kangaroos under management plans that set sustainable quotas. While commercial harvesting is not permitted in this state, the Victorian government recognises that over abundant kangaroos can damage agricultural production and in some cases, compromise biodiversity values.

In these circumstances, the Department of Sustainability and Environment may issue an Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) to permit the destruction of a limited number of kangaroos, under strict conditions that ensure any control is done humanely and sustainably. Numbers authorised for destruction are based on assessments on a permit-by-permit basis. The Department of Sustainability and Environment only permits limited personal use of the meat and skins of kangaroos taken under ATCWs. These products may not be sold or used commercially. Consequently most kangaroos culled under ATCWs are treated as a waste product.

In September 2012, the State Council of the Municipal Association of Victoria passed a motion supporting commercial processing of kangaroos culled under ATCWs. The motion was submitted by Southern Grampians shire, where kangaroos are found in abundant numbers, cause damage to private fences and pastures and pose a road safety hazard.

It is within this context that the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Primary Industries have been considering avenues to facilitate the better use of culled animals. The government is only considering options that will ensure that the Victorian kangaroo population can be sustainably maintained, and that the destruction of kangaroos is undertaken humanely and in accordance with hygiene requirements.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

City of Port Phillip: budget submission

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 21 February 2013

REPLY:

The City of Port Phillip has written to me regarding their budget submission and their input is greatly appreciated and will be given appropriate consideration in the forthcoming state budget deliberations.

I have also passed the submission onto the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Jeanette Powell, MP.

State Revenue Office: first home owner grant**Raised with: Treasurer****Raised by: Hon. M. P. Pakula****Raised on: 21 February 2013****REPLY:**

The Hon. Martin Pakula, MLC, has raised the matter of a particular recipient of the First Home Owner Grant (FHOG), who has been asked by the SRO to repay the grant on the basis that the residency requirement has not been met. The question has been asked as to how widespread or common it is for the SRO to require repayment where it believes the grant conditions have not been complied with.

The purpose of the FHOG is to encourage homeownership by assisting genuine first home buyers to purchase a home to live in; the intention is not to subsidise the purchase of an investment property.

To that end there is a residency requirement: to be eligible for the FHOG applicants must occupy the home as their principal place of residence (or PPR) for a continuous period of six months, commencing in the 12-month period immediately after completion of the transaction.

Since grant payments are typically made in anticipation of compliance with the residency requirement, the SRO must undertake a range of compliance activities to ensure the eligibility criteria have been met. The SRO advises that the majority of FHOG compliance activity relates to the residency requirement.

In determining whether this requirement has been met, the SRO has regard to various legal principles that guide it in determining whether an applicant has occupied the premises as his or her PPR. These relate to the factual circumstances of occupancy, the intention of the applicant during the period of occupancy, the temporary or permanent character of occupancy, and the reasons for the applicant's departure.

To ascertain whether there has been non-compliance, the SRO gathers information via the public, data-matching, and other sources (for example around the use of utilities).

I am advised by the SRO that during the last financial year (2011–12) there were 643 cases where FHOG applicants were required to repay the grants due to non-compliance with the FHOG conditions. By way of comparison, around 31 000 applications were granted over that same period.

In relation to the particular case raised by Mr Pakula, since the individual does not wish to be identified I am unable to comment specifically on her case. Nevertheless I am confident that the SRO has followed its normal process and that the usual factors were considered in determining eligibility under the residency requirement.

I also note that the applicant may lodge an objection with the Commissioner of State Revenue regarding the decision to require repayment. The processes are set out clearly on the SRO website, and the objection should be lodged within 60 days of the date of the decision (although an extension to this time frame is available in some circumstances).

Rail: Flinders Street station toilets

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Scheffer

Raised on: 21 February 2013

REPLY:

Pressure cleaning of the public toilets at Flinders Street is performed daily. Station cleaners are on duty from first to last train, seven days a week. The station master at Flinders Street inspects the condition and cleanliness of the station precinct and facilities frequently.

Cleaning duties are undertaken by Transclean, with a cleaning check completed by staff a minimum of once daily. Metro staff select one of four ratings of cleanliness for the toilets, similar to the way Public Transport Victoria monitors Metro's performance in station cleaning. This produces a cleaning 'percentage' which allows Metro to monitor performance over time. The staff check sheet also enables staff to provide comments on their condition.

After several months of declining results, February has shown a significant improvement.

Monthly cleanliness results for Transclean are based on the performance for the entire contract, not just Flinders Street.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 20 March 2013

Manufacturing: Laverton North

Raised with: Minister for Manufacturing, Export and Trade

Raised by: Mr Elsbury

Raised on: 13 December 2012

REPLY:

Manufacturing is a major contributor to the Victorian economy, attracting investment and creating jobs. It employs almost 300 000 people and contributes \$27 billion, or 9.1 per cent of the state's Gross State Product, to the Victorian economy.

In the Western Metropolitan Region, manufacturing accounts for approximately 11 per cent of Victoria's manufacturing output. The region is the fastest growing in Victoria with advantages of access to major ports and road infrastructure, and its diverse and skilled workforce.

There are a number of significant companies in the Laverton North industrial zone and nearby, and it was a pleasure to be joined by you when I visited two of these recently, Vistaprint and Probiotec. Both of these companies have commenced upgrades of their facilities and are working closely with the Victorian government. In the case of Vistaprint and its advanced printing production facility, it is generating 62 new jobs and undertaking capital investment of approximately \$8 million. Probiotec has an advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing operation in Laverton North and has announced its investment of \$1 million in new facilities, generating 50 new jobs.

The Victorian government is committed to building a competitive and prosperous manufacturing industry by assisting businesses to increase their competitiveness and productivity, promoting local manufacturing opportunities and generating local jobs.

The 2012–13 state budget allocated \$58 million for the delivery of focused, cohesive initiatives particularly aimed at small and medium-sized businesses to help improve productivity and provide better market intelligence for manufacturers.

The delivery of these initiatives is underpinned by the Victorian government's new localised approach to business engagement, with strengthened and new Victorian Government Business Offices (VGBOs) across the state.

The Western Metropolitan VGBO in Tottenham is tasked with the role of engaging with companies based in the Western Metropolitan Region such as Vistaprint and Probiotec to assist them in making investments and improving their productivity.

The VGBO Business Engagement Model fosters direct dialogue between business and government so that government can better understand the issues faced by Victorian firms and can develop responsive policy approaches to address their concerns. The VGBOs are linking businesses with various services and programs, and connecting them with relevant networks and export opportunities. Their aim is to help businesses achieve sustainable growth leading to increased employment, investment and export revenue for Victoria.

The Victorian government will continue to focus support for the Western Metropolitan Region as it is a significant regional centre for investment.

I thank Mr Elsbury for raising this matter with me.

Portland Bay School: support services

Raised with: Minister for Higher Education and Skills

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 19 February 2013

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Extensive support has been provided by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's South Western Victoria Regional Office and Student Support Service officers to students, parents and staff members of Portland Bay School.

With one exception, all students are attending school. The student not attending the school has been provided with an appropriate educational program. Student Support Services officers are working with the student and their family to facilitate a successful return to school.

The situation which resulted in some parents missing work on one occasion to look after their children has been addressed and is no longer an issue.

The department and Student Support Service officers will continue to provide support to the school community until all issues are resolved.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: regional offices

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 20 February 2013

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian government has established a new model of working with government schools that is underpinned by professional trust and increased school autonomy so that school leaders have increased capacity to make decisions about their schools based on local circumstances and need.

The role of regions has changed from managing schools to supporting schools to self-manage. This change in role has led to significant resources being devolved from regions to schools, such as the transfer of Student Support Services Officers to schools and the return of control for regional networks to school principals. Regional staff continue to provide support to service providers and assist in developing partnerships and networks to deliver seamless services to families, only intervening in service delivery in the case of poor quality or provider failure.

An additional 34 positions have been created across Victoria in the new structure to work directly with local communities, local government, state government departments and other local agencies to address the needs of all community members, but most particularly those at risk and vulnerable learners. Senior Advisers will be located in every metropolitan and regional centre of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and will work with their local community. The allocation of Senior Advisers in this way ensures effective coverage across Victoria and minimised travel for each adviser.

Regional staff have played, and will continue to play, a critical role in supporting learning and child development in Victoria. They have a deep knowledge of their communities and providers and this is central to the successful delivery of the department's services at a local level.

Consultation with staff and stakeholders was central in the development of the new regional design. Consultation with principals continues to take place to clearly communicate the support available to them and school staff in the new structure. To date, consultations have indicated that principals are responding positively to the new design and the return of responsibility for many functions back into schools.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 21 March 2013

Bushfires: fuel reduction

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 5 February 2013

REPLY:

The Victorian government is committed to reducing the risk of bushfire to people, property and communities.

Fuel management, including planned burning, is part of an integrated plan to reduce the risk of bushfire. The government recognises the need to increase the amount and effectiveness of fuel management on public land, and is committed to implementing the recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission.

To support the delivery of both the fuel management program and effective bushfire response operations on public land, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) invests in research through organisations such as the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and the University of Melbourne. DSE currently has more than \$10 million invested in bushfire management related research.

Subject to relevant approvals, the government will continue to investigate conventional and unconventional measures to reduce fuel loads on public land.

Environment: equine landcare management

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 19 February 2013

REPLY:

There are two equine Landcare groups currently operating within Northern Victoria. These are the:

- Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group (established in 2011)
- Mitchell and Surrounds Equine Landcare Group (established in 2012).

I also note there is a South Gippsland Equine Landcare Group established earlier this year.

The Yarra Valley Group currently has 50 members, and its by-line indicates 'healthy land, happy horses' with the aim to improve land management practices, both on members' land, and on land they access.

I am aware this group has also played an important mentoring role, providing information and experience to assist the formation of the other two equine Landcare groups.

The Mitchell and Surrounds Equine Landcare Group aims to 'improve the knowledge of sustainable horse keeping best practice', and the South Gippsland Equine Landcare Group is currently organising a Managing Horses and Planning Your Horse Property workshop to be held in early April.

All three groups continue to demonstrate that equine owners in peri-urban areas can be successfully engaged in sustainable land management.

The key to the success of these equine Landcare groups has been the groups' ability to understand horse health and behaviour, and to link this to good land management practices.

These groups have also placed a strong emphasis on its education programs and the provision of targeted information for equine owners.

They organise workshops, field days and training to engage horse owners and to increase their awareness about, and adoption of, improved land management practices.

Support from the Victorian government through the Victorian Landcare Program includes:

- group establishment and maintenance grants;
- project grants-for education programs to improve land management practices of equine owners, and for on-ground projects; and
- facilitators employed through the \$12 million Victorian Local Landcare Facilitators Initiative, which provides on-going support to Landcare groups in their respective areas (including assistance with funding applications and landholder engagement).

The government will continue to provide support to the Victorian Landcare community to enable them to achieve on-ground outcomes for our land, now and into the future.

It will achieve this through practical sustainable land management initiatives such as the formation of equine Landcare groups.

Barwon Water: groundwater licence reporting

Raised with: Minister for Water

Raised by: Mr Barber

Raised on: 20 February 2013

REPLY:

Licence conditions requiring Barwon Water (BW) to add supplementary flows to Boundary Creek:

Conditions on BW's Barwon Downs groundwater licence require BW to supplement flows in Boundary Creek:

- (i) between December and May by two megalitres per day if groundwater levels are below the trigger specified in the licence; or
- (ii) between June and November if flows in the creek fall below one megalitre per day.

In 2010–11, condition (i) applied and was done apart from a period of 16 days when the pipeline providing supplementary flows was shut down for essential maintenance.

In 2010–11, condition (ii) applied on just 14 days and supplementary flows were provided on all but three occasions. Real-time stream flows on these dates were originally measured above one megalitre per day. They were retrospectively adjusted down following calibration of the measuring equipment.

Effect of recent dry conditions on Boundary Creek and provision of supplementary flows:

As required by condition (i), BW has been releasing supplementary flows to Boundary Creek of 2 megalitres per day since November 2012 to the present.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Thursday, 21 March 2013

COUNCIL

945

As the trigger over summer for BW to release water into Boundary Creek is the level of groundwater in the underlying aquifer, the effect of recent dry conditions on flows in Boundary Creek has no bearing on the release of water.

BW has not extracted groundwater from the Barwon Downs borefield since August 2010.