

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**28, 29 and 30 May 2013**

**(Extract from book 7)**

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## **The Governor**

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

## **The ministry** (from 22 April 2013)

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Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Crime Prevention . . . . .	The Hon. E. J. O'Donohue, MLC
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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 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 Petrovich, #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 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, Mrs Petrovich, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

**Legal and Social Issues References Committee** — Ms Crozier, Mr Elasmr, #Mr Elsbury, Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mrs Petrovich, 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, 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 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 and Mr Ondarchie. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Ms Hennessey, Mr Morris, Mr Pakula 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

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**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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**Deputy President:** Mr M. VINEY

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**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

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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	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 <sup>1</sup>	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
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Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
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Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP			

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

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 8 May 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, 28 May 2013**

**Department of Primary Industries: staffing levels**

**Raised with:** Minister for Energy and Resources

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 16 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter raised by you in the Legislative Council during the adjournment debate on 16 August 2012.

Many of the matters raised in the report from the Minerals Council of Australia are already under active consideration by the government.

The Victorian government supports a vibrant earth resources sector whereas the Victorian opposition supported the introduction of a carbon tax which aims to shut down the Victorian brown coal mines. The Federal Labor government which has developed this new tax with the support of, among others, the Greens, has created a situation which poses a significant and real threat to the Victorian earth resources sector.

As the new Minister for Energy and Resources I have asked that the department sharpens its focus on targeted policy, programs and projects to grow investment in the earth resources sector in Victoria and I will be collaborating closely with my colleague the Minister for State Development in this area. These activities are designed to build a vibrant mining sector, which will in turn generate wealth and jobs for the state.

**Planning: coastal management**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr Finn

**Raised on:** 23 October 2012

**REPLY:**

Last year I announced changes to the State Planning Policy Framework of all Victorian planning schemes to provide further clarity in addressing possible sea level rise and inundation risk in the planning system while further work in priority locations is undertaken by councils and DSE over the next four–five years. The changes included:

- revising the State Planning Policy Framework to recognise incremental change and increase floor levels by an additional 0.2 metres over current one-in-100-year flood levels for new urban infill development;
- maintaining the existing long term commitment to plan for not less than 0.8 metre possible sea level rise by 2100 in new greenfield developments outside existing town boundaries.

The changes provide consistency in addressing inundation risk in the planning system. They provide for a commonsense approach to development in existing areas such as Williamstown, Altona and Point Cook. Councils, the development industry and all Victorians now have more clarity about the matters Catchment Management Authorities and Melbourne Water consider in providing advice about inundation risk for development in both existing coastal settlements and new greenfield development.

The government is committed to developing further information to inform decision makers about possible future inundation risk within coastal areas. This work is being led by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

### **Water: authority dividends**

**Raised with:** Minister for Consumer Affairs

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 14 November 2012

#### **REPLY:**

In 2008–09, Victoria's metropolitan water authorities were required to borrow to pay dividends. All four businesses, including Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water, City West Water and South East Water, accessed funds from the Treasury Corporation of Victoria.

These borrowings were made after the former Labor government lifted the dividend rate to 85 per cent at the height of the decade-long drought. I also note that this was a decision by you as state Treasurer.

The Victorian government has an independent and consultative process in place to forecast the water consumption demands of Victorians, and the services and prices they can expect over the 2013–2018 period.

As you know, every Melbourne household will pay an extra \$400 every year for over 25 years as a result of the former Labor government's budgeted and unnecessary desalination plant project.

This is a significant cost pressure on households and one which the coalition government is seeking to address with an increase in annual concessions for water and sewerage from \$113 million to \$157 million in the 2013–14 state budget.

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) is the independent economic regulator for the Victorian water industry. The ESC is currently undertaking a review of water prices in line with the *Essential Services Commission Act 2001* (the act) and the Water Industry Regulatory Order (WIRO) with a view to making new Determinations under the act for the next five years. I understand that the new Determinations will take effect from 1 July 2013.

The water plans and pricing proposals were developed by the water corporations and submitted to the ESC following a period of public consultation which closed earlier this year. The ESC has recently released its draft decisions for both regional and rural and the metropolitan corporations. It is currently consulting with the public before making its final Determinations later this month.

In line with the requirements of the act and the WIRO, the ESC reviews water plans to ensure that, among other things, the proposed prices allow recovery of a sustainable revenue stream to support the efficient delivery of water services to Victorians. More broadly, in discharging its responsibilities, the ESC is required to take into account the interests of Victorians, including low income and vulnerable consumers.

It is important that the review be undertaken independently by the ESC in its capacity as the relevant regulatory authority, and as the process for making a determination is clearly set out in the act and the WIRO, it would be inappropriate for me to intervene in this process.

Thank you for raising this important matter.

**Planning: Williamstown development**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 27 November 2012

**REPLY:**

Ms Hartland makes reference to the former Port Phillip Woollen Mills site and the recent amendment to the State Planning Policy Framework to protect and enhance the significant Yarra and Maribyrnong River corridors.

Although this site is outside the river corridor area (the Yarra River mouth is at Newport), a variety of other planning controls apply to the Port Phillip Woollen Mills site which were introduced following recommendations from the Former Port Phillip Woollen Mills Advisory Committee. The advisory committee considered all the matters Ms Hartland raised, and the planning controls respond to the specific characteristics of this site, including the proximity of the Gellibrand Tank Farm, the shipyard and the Port of Melbourne.

**Wind farms: Woodend**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 28 November 2012

**REPLY:**

1. Amendment VC82 delivered the coalition government's election commitments on wind farms and prohibits wind farm development in the Macedon Ranges.
2. Fire risks from wind farms are required to be addressed elsewhere by the design response requirements also introduced by VC82.
3. There is no proposal to reverse the policy changes introduced by VC82 and the government remains committed to its policy in relation to the appropriate location of wind farms in Victoria.

**Planning: Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr Ondarchie

**Raised on:** 28 November 2012

**REPLY:**

The timely provision of infrastructure in Melbourne's growth areas is an important issue and one that the department is committed to addressing in consultation with other state government departments and agencies.

In the Northern Metropolitan Region, the department, through the Growth Areas Authority (GAA) and in close collaboration with state government departments and agencies and local councils, has undertaken the preparation of Growth Corridor Plans and Precinct Structure Plans. Growth Corridor Plans are high level integrated plans that will guide the delivery of housing, jobs, transport, town centres, open space and key infrastructure across Melbourne's newest metropolitan suburbs. Precinct Structure Plans are master plans for whole communities and provide details of road networks, shopping centres, schools, parks, housing, employment and transport connections, and resolve the complex issues of biodiversity, cultural heritage, council charges and infrastructure provision. Funding for these

plans is obtained through Development Contribution Plans and Growth Area Infrastructure Contributions, which this government has improved in terms of simplification and ease of use.

The GAA approach to the preparation of Precinct Structure Plans is to fully engage with a wide range of state government departments and agencies. For example, the GAA is currently undertaking an in-depth consultation process with many state government departments and agencies as well as Wyndham City Council and the local community in preparing the draft Master Plan for the new suburb in East Werribee.

The department's Regional Services Teams coordinate the government's eight Regional Management Forums which bring together and support state government departments and agencies and local government to work more closely with each other to identify and address critical issues and opportunities at a regional level.

The department is also overseeing preparation of the new Metropolitan Planning Strategy. The strategy will consider where new housing and business activities should be concentrated as well as transport connections, health services, schools, sportsgrounds and parks. The strategy is being developed through extensive engagement with the community and stakeholders, including state government departments and agencies, and will be informed by expert rigorous research and evaluation.

### **Wind farms: Macarthur**

**Raised with: Minister for Planning**

**Raised by: Mr Ramsay**

**Raised on: 13 December 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

1. The Department of Planning and Community Development has received copies of complaints from residences near the Macarthur Wind Farm including Ms Gardner, at distances from between 1.7 and 5 kilometres from the nearest turbines.
2. The South Australian wind farm example referred to related to tones from a gearbox which required a penalty for special audible characteristics. Tones need to be assessed under the Victorian guidelines and in accordance with the planning permit.
3. The noise complaint process is outlined in the permit at conditions 33 to 34. It is appropriate that initial complaints are directed to Macarthur Wind Farm/AGL Energy.
4. A post construction noise compliance assessment report is due to be provided to me and made available to the public at the end of May 2013, as required by the planning permit conditions.
5. If noise is shown to breach the permitted limits, corrective measures are outlined in the permit.

### **Building industry: dispute resolution**

**Raised with: Minister for Planning**

**Raised by: Mr Barber**

**Raised on: 7 February 2013**

#### **REPLY:**

Government acknowledges there is scope to improve Victoria's domestic building consumer protection to prevent disputes from arising and when they do arise, to minimise their length, cost and chance of reoccurrence.

Reforms to improve the oversight of building industry regulation announced in December last year are one step in a range of reforms being considered by government to improve the building system.

Government is also considering submissions received on a public consultation paper released last year outlining options for reform which will inform development of a new domestic consumer protection framework.

The reforms being considered by government aim to reduce the occurrence of delays, cost and hardship in resolving building disputes as being experienced by Mr and Mrs Rahman and their family.

Mr and Mrs Rahman's complaint regarding the conduct of their builder is currently being considered by the Building Commission and Building Practitioners Board. Consumer Affairs Victoria is continuing to assist the Rahman's and their builder to resolve their dispute relating to completion of the building works.

The Building Practitioners Board (BPB) appointed the Building Commission to commence an investigation into the conduct of the Rahman's builder in January 2013 following the Rahman's written complaint on 10 December 2012. This is the first step in commencing a disciplinary inquiry. If the builder is found guilty of unprofessional conduct the Building Practitioners Board may impose a disciplinary penalty on the builder.

Consumer Affairs Victoria is continuing to assist the Rahman's and their builder to resolve their dispute as an earlier agreement reached in conciliation in August 2012 did not endure as both parties raised further issues for resolution.

If the dispute is unable to be resolved through conciliation Mrs Rahman has legal options available to her to seek redress including through application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The Building Practitioners Board Provided this advice to the Rahman's in late December in order that the Rahman's could make an informed decision regarding how they wished to resolve their dispute with their builder.

### **Housing: relocation request**

**Raised with:** Minister for Housing

**Raised by:** Mr Tee

**Raised on:** 20 February 2013

#### **REPLY:**

Due to the sensitive nature of this matter I have responded to Mr Foley, Member for Albert Park, directly.

### **Bushfires: road closures**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads

**Raised by:** Mr P. Davis

**Raised on:** 21 February 2013

#### **REPLY:**

Following the Black Saturday bushfires, Victoria Police, VicRoads, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Country Fire Authority, jointly met to refine and enhance the process for the implementation and control of Traffic Management Points. This process is detailed in the 'Guidelines for the Operation of Traffic Management Points during Wildfires — Issued 2009'. In the recent bushfires, known as the Aberfeldy and Harrietville complexes, the agencies implemented the actions required under these guidelines.

The process within the guidelines contains five levels of access restrictions that can be applied, during a fire event. It applies a hierarchy of access that attempts to not unreasonably restrict the movement of those that have legitimate grounds to enter a fire area, whilst ensuring that the safety of both pedestrian and vehicular road traffic related to both the emergency services and the public is the paramount priority.

When considering downgrading the access status of a Traffic Management Point, an assessment is made of the status of the fire, the risks to the safety of emergency services personnel and contractors and the general public and the benefits of facilitating access to certain categories of people for certain purposes.

Other issues that must be considered include the condition of the road and road related infrastructure, the presence of fire impacted trees, areas of unburnt ground within the containment line where there may still be active fire, and any smoke and visibility problems.

In the recent fire events we have seen fire agencies, Victoria Police and road authorities act in a professional and diligent manner in the manning and implementation of these Traffic Management Points under difficult circumstances. The work done to ensure that the Great Alpine Road was reopened as quickly as possible, is an example of this. Authorised individuals, representatives of essential services and those able to demonstrate a business or personal asset in the area, were provided access to the road earlier than the general public, in accordance with the processes detailed in the guidelines, allowing them to get on with their required tasks and to allow communities to return to normality as soon as practical.

### **Land tax: assessments**

**Raised with:** Treasurer

**Raised by:** Mr Elasmar

**Raised on:** 5 March 2013

#### **REPLY:**

Land tax assessments are based on valuations performed every second year, so the taxable value of each property will generally increase by two years worth of property market growth in every second land tax assessment.

After using valuations from 2010 for the last two years, valuations effective from 1 January 2012 are being applied for the first time in 2013. These are the same valuations as used for local council rating purposes from 1 July 2012.

A land tax bill only rises as the value of land increases. It is important to remember that there is a graduated tax scale to ensure that those with a lower land value pay a lower rate.

If a taxpayer does not believe the land valuation used to calculate their land tax bill is appropriate, they are entitled to lodge an objection with the State Revenue Office (SRO) within two months of receiving their land tax assessment notice. If the valuation is found to be inappropriate, the SRO will amend the assessment accordingly so that no overcharging occurs.

Victoria has the strongest finances in Australia, but this is only because the government has taken the action needed to reign in the unsustainable growth in expenses inherited from the former Labor government. This has been achieved despite Canberra's cuts to Victoria's share of GST revenue.

The coalition government will always look to keep pressure off taxpayers wherever possible, but we will not do so by following the path of unsustainable spending and structural deficit favoured by our predecessors.

### **Coal seam gas: consultation process**

**Raised with:** Minister for Energy and Resources

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 19 March 2013

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 19 March 2013.

I am advised the contract you refer to was for the provision of specialist technical services for the Coal Seam Gas and Coal Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategy. The relevant expertise was not available within the department to provide these services.

**Essendon: traffic management plan**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads

**Raised by:** Mr Finn

**Raised on:** 19 March 2013

**REPLY:**

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

There is traffic congestion at times in Buckley Street due to the level crossing and signalised intersection. This location has to accommodate trains, pedestrians, and nearby bus operations.

VicRoads is responsible for the management of Buckley Street. The Moonee Valley City Council is the road authority responsible for Leslie Road.

VicRoads will work with the Moonee Valley City Council regarding the issues raised, to identify any appropriate treatments to ensure the safety of road users with particular attention to the safety needs of school children.

**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: custody dispute**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Mr Leane

**Raised on:** 19 March 2013

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has processes for addressing parent complaints and concerns at the school and regional level. The department places a great deal of importance on appropriately managing any complaints parents may have about their children's education.

I am advised the issues have been appropriately managed in accordance with department policy and processes. The complainant has received comprehensive communication with respect to the outcome of the complaint.

Department policy with respect to family law disputes provides that principals and staff should:

- avoid becoming involved;
- act in accordance with the best interests of the student and the school community;
- react sensitively and understand that a satisfactory resolution may not be possible;
- not adopt sides;
- not attempt to determine the dispute.

The department is satisfied that there are no general or systemic failings that would require further consideration.

**Environment: residential mandatory disclosure scheme**

**Raised with:** Minister for Energy and Resources

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 21 March 2013

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate on 21 March 2013.

The National Partnership Agreement on Energy Efficiency (NPA-EE), and its attached National Strategy on Energy Efficiency (NSEE), were signed at COAG by all Australian jurisdictions in 2009. The residential building mandatory disclosure proposal is one measure proposed under the NSEE.

In February 2011, COAG agreed to establish a new system of Ministerial Councils. This led to the establishment of the Select Council on Climate Change (SCCC). The SCCC was given responsibility for oversight of the NPA-EE.

At its first meeting on 4 May 2012, the SCCC agreed to develop advice for COAG on how to fast track a rationalisation of programs that are not complementary to a carbon price or are ineffective, inefficient or impose duplicative reporting requirements. This review process encompassed the measures contained under the NPA-EE. The draft review of the NSEE is expected to be considered by COAG in the near future.

The Victorian government will await the COAG decision before making any further decisions regarding the residential building mandatory disclosure proposal.

**Department of Environment and Primary Industries: jobs**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 16 April 2013

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 16 April 2013 regarding the merger of the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

The creation of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries will have a number of significant benefits for Victoria including a better and more efficient management approach for public and private land and water.

The merger of the two departments will provide communities with one-stop shops for land and water management issues and enable more practical management of land and water on both public and private land. The new department will provide a more streamlined and responsive service to our key stakeholders in rural and regional Victoria.

The creation of the new department is not about cost savings or staff reductions; it is about improved service delivery and achieving better outcomes for private and public land and water management and for food and fibre producers.

Thank you for raising this matter during the adjournment debate.

**Consumer affairs: nightclub security**

**Raised with:** Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 16 April 2013

**REPLY:**

The matter you raised falls under the portfolio responsibility of Liquor and Gaming Regulation. As the Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation, I am responding to this adjournment debate question.

I understand that a number of licensed premises have introduced computerised identification scanning technology.

As the Minister responsible for regulation of the liquor industry, I am committed to promoting a responsible, healthy and safe drinking culture in Victoria. To this end, the coalition government is committed to delivering a range of measures to address alcohol related violence.

On 25 January 2013, the coalition government released *Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013-2017*, Victoria's first whole-of-government strategy to reduce the impact of alcohol and drug abuse on the Victorian community.

The strategy sets out a 15-point plan that provides a comprehensive response to a range of issues associated with alcohol, pharmaceutical drugs and illegal drugs.

Specifically, in relation to alcohol, the strategy seeks to reduce excessive drinking and alcohol-related hospitalisations, as well as promoting a healthy and safe drinking culture.

The coalition government has also delivered on our commitment to strengthen the power of police to deal with minors in possession of alcohol through the *Liquor Control Reform Amendment Act 2013*, which came into effect on 13 February 2013.

This Act provides police members, protective service officers and gambling and liquor inspectors with the power to tip out liquor that has been seized from a person they reasonably believe is under the age of 18 years.

The coalition government is committed to delivering a range of measures to address public concern about street offences committed by patrons of licensed premises.

These measures include support for the work of *Step Back. Think* with funding of \$200 000 per year for four years. *Step Back. Think* is a non-profit organisation that aims to tackle alcohol-fuelled violence.

As the responsible minister, I will continue to monitor with interest the emergence of identification scanning technology in Victorian venues.

**Public transport: western suburbs**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 16 April 2013

**REPLY:**

The Victorian coalition government is committed to investing in public transport and roads projects for the future.

The state budget will be presented on 7 May 2013 and it will be subject to the usual legislative and public scrutiny.

**Higher education: Auslan courses**

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

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 7 May 2013

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

An announcement has been made about the future of Auslan training in Victoria.

The successful tenderer is a consortium led by Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) in partnership with the Victorian Deaf Society (Vicdeaf) and La Trobe University. The consortium will deliver the \$5.2 million contract over three and a half years, from July 2013 to December 2016.

Under this contract the government has capped the tuition cost of Auslan courses and broadened student eligibility for government subsidised Auslan training. The new arrangements will be more attractive to people who hold other qualifications and need to study Auslan in order to support the deaf and hard of hearing community.

The delivery of Auslan training will target community and industry needs, with potential students being:

- parents and families of the deaf and hard of hearing;
- those who work with the deaf such as school support officers;
- professionals such as teachers, nurses and lawyers who want to train to work with deaf people;
- those interested in pursuing a career as an Auslan interpreter and translator; and
- the deaf and hard of hearing themselves who want to enter higher education and need higher order skills to communicate through an interpreter.

The contract has a strong focus on developing learning pathways for students so that they are ready to undertake advanced courses which are recognised by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, the national standards and accreditation body.

The new provider of Auslan courses will ensure that training opportunities are available for students in regional Victoria as well as metropolitan Melbourne. A key contract target is achieving a minimum 700 Auslan enrolments to December 2016. A further target is that a minimum of 30 per cent of these 700 enrolments are from regional and rural areas of Victoria. These contractual benchmarks are in place to reverse the decline in Auslan training over recent years.

The government's investment will ensure that all students, regardless of whether they are from Melbourne or regional Victoria, will benefit from face to face delivery, online delivery, student learning placement with deaf community organisations and programs, full-time, part-time and intensive training options. In addition to training being made available in the major regional centres of Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and one of Gippsland's major centres, opportunities to support Auslan students in locations such as Echuca, Swan Hill and Mildura will be explored.

The Auslan courses will be underpinned by a community engagement strategy and a teaching and research strategy which will ensure that Victoria has a skilled and qualified workforce that offers a best practice approach to the teaching and learning of Auslan.

Enrolments are now open at NMIT for training in the certificate II in Auslan and the Diploma of Auslan which will commence in July 2013. All Auslan courses including certificate III and IV in Auslan will be available from January 2014.

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 29 May 2013**

**Melbourne Water: desalination plant charges**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 15 November 2012

**REPLY:**

Melbourne Water has paid \$319.477 million to the state for the right to acquire the remaining life of those assets which would have transferred to the state at the end of the project deed.

Melbourne Water will progressively recover this from customers through water prices over the remaining life of the asset, commencing in the 2009 Water Plan period. The financial arrangements for the project and contract management of the desalination plant were established by the former government. No changes have been made to those arrangements.



## WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

**Thursday, 30 May 2013**

**Swinburne University of Technology: Lilydale campus**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Leane

**Raised on:** 7 May 2013

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The government is committed to supporting greater autonomy for TAFE institutes, as articulated in the policy document *Next Steps for Refocusing Vocational Training in Victoria*, released in March 2013.

In line with this greater autonomy Box Hill Institute has prepared a market analysis and feasibility study regarding the commercial viability of operations at the Lilydale campus.

Consistent with the new *Commercial Guidelines for TAFE Institutes*, published in accordance with part 5.2 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the feasibility study was prepared for Box Hill Institute's own internal use by the board of the institute and has not been provided to the government.

The institute's chief executive officer, Mr John Maddock, has written to me regarding the outcome of these analyses. I will be responding to Mr Maddock in line with the policy directions outlined in *Next Steps for Refocusing Vocational Training in Victoria*.

Ongoing discussions regarding Lilydale campus are proceeding with Swinburne University of Technology, local authorities and training providers to ensure all options are thoroughly explored so that training may continue to be provided in both areas.