

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**1 and 3 April 2014**

**(Extract from book 5)**

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## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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(from 17 March 2014)

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**Privileges Committee** — Ms Darveniza, Mr D. Davis, Mr Drum, Ms Lovell, Ms Pennicuik, Mrs Peulich and Mr Scheffer.

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

## Legislative Council standing committees

**Economy and Infrastructure Legislation Committee** — Mr Barber, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, #Mr Leane, Mr Lenders, Mr Melhem, Mr D. D O'Brien, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and #Mr Scheffer.

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

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

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

*# Participating member*

## Joint committees

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**Dispute Resolution Committee** — (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Drum, Mr Lenders, Ms Lovell and Ms Pennicuik. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Mr Clark, Ms Hennessy, Mr Merlino, Mr O'Brien and Mr Walsh.

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**Electoral Matters Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mrs Peulich, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis. (*Assembly*): Mr Delahunty.

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

**Rural and Regional Committee** — (*Council*): Mr D. R. J. O'Brien. (*Assembly*): Mr Howard, Mr Katos, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller.

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## 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 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:**

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The Hon. P. R. HALL (to 17 March 2013)

**Deputy Leader of The Nationals:**

Mr D. R. J. O'BRIEN (from 17 March 2013)

Mr D. K. DRUM (to 17 March 2013)

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Coote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Millar, Mrs Amanda Louise <sup>4</sup>	Northern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>8</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats
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Davis, Mr Philip Rivers <sup>5</sup>	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
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Leanders, Mr John	Southern 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

<sup>5</sup> Resigned 3 February 2014

<sup>6</sup> Appointed 5 February 2014

<sup>7</sup> Resigned 17 March 2014

<sup>8</sup> Appointed 26 March 2014



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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.  
Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.  
Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.  
The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.*

**Tuesday, 1 April 2014**

**Environment and climate change: Parks Victoria**

**9515. MR BARBER** — To ask the Minister for Health (for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change):

- (1) In relation to the voluntary departure package program for Parks Victoria in October 2012, how many people accepted voluntary departure program packages, and of those:
  - (a) How many were full time positions, what were the job titles and which office or region did they work from.
  - (b) How many were part time positions, what were the job titles and which office or region did they work from.
  - (c) How many full time equivalent positions were reduced.
- (2) Since 1 July 2012:
  - (a) How many fixed-term positions at Parks Victoria were discontinued and not replaced, what were the job titles and which office or region did they work from.
  - (b) How many casual positions at Parks Victoria were discontinued and not replaced, what were the job titles and which office or region did they work from.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) A total of 66 staff accepted a voluntary departure package (VDP). Of those:
  - (a) 53 were full-time positions.
  - (b) 13 were part-time positions.
  - (c) The actual full-time equivalent for those positions was 61.3 FTEs.
- (2) From 1 July 2012 to 12 July 2013:
  - (a) 18 fixed-term positions at Parks Victoria have been discontinued and not replaced.
  - (b) 4 casual positions at Parks Victoria have been discontinued and not replaced.

\* Please note this data excludes seasonal casuals and fixed-term roles for example project firefighters, summer rangers and seasonal park attendants.

**Water: Office of Living Victoria**

**9930. MR LENDERS** — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Water): Why does the Office of Living Victoria Green Paper claim that 443GL of wastewater would be available for recycling when only approximately 374GL of water is supplied to consumers.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The new whole-of-water-cycle-management approach outlined in Melbourne's Water Future recognises that more water falls on Melbourne than we use from our dams, even in dry years.

The volume of available wastewater and stormwater to substitute for drinking water is more than twice as much as the total volume of drinking water currently used in greater Melbourne.

**Agriculture and food security: threatened species framework**

**10 048. MR BARBER** — To ask the Minister for Higher Education and Skills (for the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security): In relation to the East Gippsland forest management area of Victoria:

- (1) How may pre-logging surveys have been carried out in each of 2011, 2012 and 2013, and —
  - (a) what coupes were surveyed;
  - (b) how many hectares in total were surveyed;
  - (c) how many hours of surveying were conducted; and
  - (d) what companies or individuals have been contracted to undertake the surveys.
- (2) Have changes been made to logging plans because of plants and animals discovered in the surveys; if so —
  - (a) what changes were made; and
  - (b) what survey results prompted the change.
- (3) Have the survey procedures remained as they were when the surveys began; if not, what changes have been made.
- (4) Are there particular methods engaged to survey for frogs; if so —
  - (a) what are those methods;
  - (b) in which coupes have those methods been engaged;
  - (c) in what months were the frog-specific surveys undertaken; and
  - (d) what frogs have been located.
- (5) Does the Minister anticipate that pre-logging surveys will be carried out by expert consultants in 2014.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries has a range of targeted strategies for investment in threatened species conservation and recovery. The focus of this investment is to deliver on-ground actions that will support the recovery of threatened species and research to provide the information needed for effective and robust management.

VicForests recognises its role in the protection of biodiversity in state forest, and has developed a framework for threatened species management that uses a risk-based hierarchy approach. This includes a requirement that all areas planned for timber harvesting are surveyed for threatened species and other biodiversity values, using a combination of desktop assessment and field reconnaissance, well before any harvesting operations occur.

This management framework, including pre-harvest survey procedures, is available on the VicForests' website, along with a peer reviewed scientific paper.

(See [www.vicforests.com.au/www/content/default.aspx?cid=867&fid=807](http://www.vicforests.com.au/www/content/default.aspx?cid=867&fid=807) and [www.vicforests.com.au/files/mutmhfnbta/CJ-Powell-&-DN-Sedunary---Development-of-a-threatened-fauna-management-framework-across-Victoria's-state-forests.pdf](http://www.vicforests.com.au/files/mutmhfnbta/CJ-Powell-&-DN-Sedunary---Development-of-a-threatened-fauna-management-framework-across-Victoria's-state-forests.pdf)).

Pre-harvest surveys target threatened fauna species in a range of taxonomic groups known to occur in areas where harvesting operations are proposed. VicForests use advice from species experts as well as peer-reviewed literature to choose appropriate survey methods to detect target species. Pre-harvest survey operating procedures are continually updated and refined in response to knowledge gained from surveys and new information that comes to light, ensuring an overall adaptive approach to threatened fauna management.

Surveys are carried out by appropriately qualified external ecological consultants reporting to VicForests' conservation biologist. When a threatened species is detected, adaptive management plans are created to address the protective requirements for the specific animal detected. These plans outline areas that are to be retained as habitat for the animal or the habitat feature detected (such as a nest or a roost site). These plans, developed in consultation with DEPI, adhere to prescriptions outlined in the regulatory framework, such as Forest Management Plans or Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 Action Statements.

In the East Gippsland forest management area, VicForests has conducted 38, 100 and 39 pre-harvest surveys in 2010–11, 2011–12 and 2012–13 respectively. Appropriately qualified VicForests staff or consultants do and will continue to undertake all surveys in line with VicForests' Pre-harvest Survey Procedures. It is anticipated that some surveys will be undertaken during 2014.

A suite of threatened amphibian species occurs across areas where harvesting operations are permitted. Although there have been active searches for these species across both riparian and forest areas during pre-harvest surveys, none has been detected by VicForests' staff or consultants engaged by VicForests. However, third-party detections of the Giant Burrowing Frog have resulted in adaptive management plans being developed and implemented by VicForests for these detections. Frogs, due to their cryptic nature, are notoriously difficult to survey as their emergence often coincides with very specific weather conditions and during breeding periods (which may be for only one month of the year). VicForests' 'Pre-Harvest Fauna Survey Procedure' outlines specific survey methods for a number of frog species.

(See [www.vicforests.com.au/files/swqhggtlnr/Pre-Harvest-Fauna-Survey-Procedures-v1.4---Website.pdf](http://www.vicforests.com.au/files/swqhggtlnr/Pre-Harvest-Fauna-Survey-Procedures-v1.4---Website.pdf)).

As a result of VicForests' threatened species management framework, large areas of state forest potentially available for harvest have been excluded. The outcomes of VicForests' threatened species surveys and monitoring are indirectly helping to sustain the industry in the long term by incorporating the management of biodiversity with that of timber harvesting.

### **Public transport: Southland railway station**

**10 050. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Public Transport): How much funding has the government allocated, to date, for the construction of a new train station at Southland.

#### **ANSWER:**

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

In the 2011–12 state budget, \$700 000 was allocated for the planning of Southland railway station.

The 2013–14 state budget commits to significant funding for the construction of a new train station at Southland, subject to finalisation of commercial negotiations with the owners of Southland Shopping Centre.

The amount was listed as 'tbc' (to be confirmed). Publication of the amount could have an impact on the effectiveness of the outcome negotiations and so specific funding was not announced.

As previously advised, an announcement will be made on the outcomes in due course.

**Public transport: Dingley bypass**

**10 051. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to construction of the Dingley bypass:

- (1) What is the progress of the Kingston leg of the bypass.
- (2) What funds have been allocated to this project
- (3) When will construction of the Kingston leg of the bypass start.

**ANSWER:**

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

The Dingley Bypass project is currently in the Request for Tender stage, with construction expected to commence in mid-to-late 2014.

The state government has provided \$135.7 million in the 2012–2013 state budget for the construction of the new 6.4km dual carriageway road between Warrigal Road, Moorabbin, and Westall Road, Springvale South. This was in addition to the \$20 million allocated in 2011–12 for planning and pre-construction activities, totalling \$155.7 million for the project.

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**Thursday, 3 April 2014**

**Health: Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria**

- 9912. MS HARTLAND** — To ask the Minister for Health: In relation to the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria's online computer matching service for the graduate nurse/midwifery program:
- (1) How many final year bachelor of midwifery or bachelor of nursing/midwifery students applied for the graduate nurse/midwifery program for 2014.
  - (2) How many positions were available in the graduate nurse/midwifery program for bachelor of midwifery or bachelor of nursing/midwifery graduates in 2014.
  - (3) How many final year bachelor of nursing or diploma of nursing students applied for the graduate nurse/midwifery program for 2014.
  - (4) How many positions were available in the graduate nurse/midwifery program for bachelor of nursing or diploma of nursing students.
  - (5) Which providers of graduate programs do not participate in the postgraduate medical council's computer match.
  - (6) What is the estimated number of graduate internships provided by institutions who do not participate in the postgraduate medical council's computer match.
  - (7) Given projected shortfalls in nurses and midwives, why doesn't the government provide funding for graduate program internships to all eligible nurse and midwife graduates who apply for such a position.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) 197 Victorian bachelor of midwifery or bachelor of nursing/midwifery students applied for graduate positions in the postgraduate medical council (PMCV) Victorian graduate nurse/midwife program (GNMP) match on 15 October 2013, for positions that commence in 2014. An additional 33 applications were from interstate or New Zealand.
- (2) There were 141 positions available for bachelor of midwifery or bachelor of nursing/midwifery graduates in GNMP match for 2014 positions. It should be noted that not all hospitals participate in the GNMP match and additional employment activity continues throughout the year as a result of further collaborative approaches and as health services identify any additional vacancies.
- (3) There were 2197 Victorian bachelor of nursing students that applied for graduate positions in the GNMP for positions that commence in 2014. An additional 492 applications were from interstate or New Zealand.  
  
The diploma of nursing is an entry to practice qualification for enrolled nurses. Enrolled nurses are not included in the graduate nurse/midwifery programs and they do not participate in the GNMP match.
- (4) There were 1861 positions available for bachelor of nursing graduates in the GNMP match for 2014 positions. It should be noted that not all hospitals participate in the GNMP match and additional employment activity continues throughout the year as health services identify any additional vacancies.
- (5) All public health services participate in the GNMP match as well as a number of private and not for profit health services. The department does not hold data on the private and not for profit health services and aged

care facilities that do not participate in the match. The department understands that these providers employ their graduates using their own individual processes across a number of sites.

- (6) It is not possible to estimate the number of graduate programs provided by institutions who do not participate in the GNMP match. The department does not hold data on the private and not-for-profit health services and aged care facilities that do not participate in the match.
- (7) The government has implemented a range of strategies to respond to the demand for nursing and midwifery graduate places in 2014, with the provision of \$26 million to support the funding of over 1525 graduate places in the public sector. This is inclusive of 150 additional positions as part of the 2013–2014 government budget commitment.

Public health services historically employ 65 to 70 per cent of Victorian graduates and in 2012 public health services employed over 1600 nursing and midwifery graduates.

I am pleased to advise that the number of nursing and midwifery graduates employed by public health services has increased between 2008 and 2012 by 189, including a significant increase since 2010.

The 2013–14 budget committed an extra \$12 million over four years to support an additional 600 nurse graduate positions.

**Health: Frankston Hospital**

**9941. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Health: How many patients had a length of stay of more than eight hours in the Frankston Hospital emergency department for admission in the months of —

- (a) July 2012;
- (b) August 2012;
- (c) September 2012;
- (d) October 2012;
- (e) November 2012;
- (f) December 2012;
- (g) January 2013;
- (h) February 2013;
- (i) March 2013;
- (j) April 2013;
- (k) May 2013; and
- (l) June 2013.

**ANSWER:**

The number of patients having a length of stay of more than 8 hours is not routinely reported, as the national emergency access target—the proportion of emergency patients with a length of stay of less than four hours is instead reported, to align with national reporting requirements.

I direct the member to the Department of Health website where the information is provided in an accessible form (<http://performance.health.vic.gov.au>).

**Health: Frankston Hospital**

**9942. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Health: How many patients had a length of stay of more than 24 hours in the Frankston Hospital emergency department for admission in the months of —

- (a) July 2012;
- (b) August 2012;

- (c) September 2012;
- (d) October 2012;
- (e) November 2012;
- (f) December 2012;
- (g) January 2013;
- (h) February 2013;
- (i) March 2013;
- (j) April 2013;
- (k) May 2013; and
- (l) June 2013.

**ANSWER:**

I note the member's request for information which is provided in an accessible form on the Department of Health website at <http://performance.health.vic.gov.au>.

Currently hospital data is released quarterly in Victoria and the information is available on the website. Further, I note the release in early January 2014 of the most recent data — the September 2013 quarter which shows a fall in the number of 24 hour stays in emergency departments statewide, from 1154 in the September 2012 quarter to 363 in the September 2013 quarter.

I also note for the member's information the highest number of 24 hour stays in any September quarter over the last decade was in the September 2004 quarter where 2874 patients stayed for more than 24 hours.

**Health: Frankston Hospital**

**9943. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Health: How many Frankston Hospital emergency department mental health patients waited longer than eight hours for admission in the months of —

- (a) July 2012;
- (b) August 2012;
- (c) September 2012;
- (d) October 2012;
- (e) November 2012;
- (f) December 2012;
- (g) January 2013;
- (h) February 2013;
- (i) March 2013;
- (j) April 2013;
- (k) May 2013; and
- (l) June 2013.

**ANSWER:**

I refer the member to the Minister for Mental Health who is responsible for mental health patient admissions.

**Community services: household energy concessions**

**10 046. MS HARTLAND** — To ask the Minister for Housing (for the Minister for Community Services): In relation to the annual electricity concession and the winter gas concession, and given that from 1 July 2012 the government introduced a \$171.60 threshold before gas and electricity concessions could be claimed to take into account the commonwealth's carbon price compensation:

- (1) If the commonwealth government discontinues the carbon price scheme and thus the compensation, will the Victorian government also remove the threshold for energy concessions.
- (2) If the threshold is removed, will it be removed from the date the carbon price compensation to households ends.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

(1 and 2)

The Australian Parliament is in the process of considering the Clean Energy Legislation (Carbon Tax Repeal) Bill 2013. If there are legislative amendments that impact on the compensation to low-income Australian households under the carbon price scheme the Victorian government will review the relevant concessions.

**Mental health: headspace**

**10 055. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Health (for the Minister for Mental Health): In relation to Dandenong’s headspace centre:

- (1) How much money did the state government invest in the centre.
- (2) How much money did the federal government invest in the centre.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) The state government has not invested money in the Dandenong headspace centre.
- (2) Headspace is a commonwealth government funded national initiative. Requests for information regarding commonwealth government funding programs should be directed to the commonwealth government.

**Mental health: hospital beds**

**10 056. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Health (for the Minister for Mental Health): How many additional mental health beds have been opened at Monash Medical Centre at —

- (a) Dandenong Hospital in 2011, 2012 and 2013;
- (b) Casey Hospital in 2011, 2012 and 2013; and
- (c) Clayton Hospital in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) Forty-three additional mental health beds opened at Dandenong Hospital in 2013.
- (b) No additional mental health beds opened at Casey Hospital during that time period.
- (c) No additional mental health beds opened at Clayton Hospital during that time period. However, the government invested in a \$1 million redevelopment of the mental health mother-baby unit (six beds) at this campus and is investing in eight new child and adolescent beds as a part of the Monash Children’s Hospital currently in planning.

**Liquor and gaming regulation: liquor licences**

**10 060. MR TARLAMIS** — To ask the Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation: How many liquor licences have been issued for party buses since 1 January 2011, and how many licences were current as at 4 February 2014.



**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

The relevant authorisation under the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 is a BYO permit for the purpose of a bus:

- (1) Nine; one of these permits has since been surrendered.
- (2) Thirteen.

**Community services: child protection**

**10 066. MS MIKAKOS** — To ask the Minister for Housing (for the Minister for Community Services): In relation to the line item in the 2012–13 state budget ‘Child Protection — Specialist Intervention Team’ of \$7.9 million over four years:

- (1) How much of the funding was expended in the 2012–13 financial year.
- (2) How much of the funding will be expended in the 2013–14 financial year.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) The allocated budget outcome of \$1.9 million was fully expended in 2012–13.
- (2) The allocated budget outcome of \$1.9 million is anticipated to be fully expended in 2013–14.

**Community services: national disability insurance scheme**

**10 087. MS MIKAKOS** — To ask the Minister for Housing (for the Minister for Community Services): In relation to the line item in the 2013–14 state budget ‘National Disability Insurance Scheme—launch site’ of \$17 million over four years:

- (1) How much of the funding will be expended in 2013–14.
- (2) How many eligible people with disabilities will be supported in the Barwon Area in 2013–14.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) The Victorian government committed an additional \$17 million over three years for the Barwon trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Of the \$17 million for the trial, \$400 000 was allocated in 2013–2014, \$3.3 million in 2014–2015 and \$13.3 million in 2015–2016 (Table 1.7, page 25 of budget paper 3).
- (2) As at 31 December 2013, 1721 participants had been assessed as eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.