

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**18 and 19 February 2014**

**(Extract from book 2)**

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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 Hall, Ms Lovell, Ms Pennicuik, Mrs Peulich 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, Mr Ramsay and #Mr Scheffer.

**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 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 O'Brien, #Mrs Peulich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

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

*# Participating member*

## Joint committees

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

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

**Economic Development, Infrastructure and Outer Suburban/Interface Services Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Eideh, Mrs Peulich and Mr Ronalds. (*Assembly*): Mr Burgess, Mr McGuire and Mr Shaw.

**Education and Training Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Elasmr, Mrs Kronberg and Mrs Millar. (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks and Mr Crisp.

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

**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 and Mr O'Brien. (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr Madden and Ms Ryall.

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

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

**Law Reform, Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Scheffer. (*Assembly*): Mr Carroll, Mr McCurdy and Mr Southwick.

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee** — (*Council*): Mr O'Brien and Mr Ondarchie. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Ms Garrett, 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*): Ms Barker, 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 Melhem, Mr O'Brien, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, Mr Ramsay,  
Mr Tarlamis

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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

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Hon. Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Lenders, Mr John	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Lovell, Hon. Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP
Broad, Ms Candy Celeste	Northern Victoria	ALP	Melhem, Mr Cesar <sup>3</sup>	Western Metropolitan	LP
Cote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Millar, Mrs Amanda Louise <sup>5</sup>	Northern Victoria	LP
Dalla-Riva, Hon. Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	O'Brien, Mr David Roland Joseph	Western Victoria	Nats
Darveniza, Ms Kaye Mary	Northern Victoria	ALP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Davis, Hon. David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Davis, Mr Philip Rivers <sup>1</sup>	Eastern Victoria	LP	Pakula, Hon. Martin Philip <sup>2</sup>	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee <sup>4</sup>	Northern Victoria	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Elsbury, Mr Andrew Warren	Western Metropolitan	LP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Guy, Hon. Matthew Jason	Northern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Ronalds, Mr Andrew Mark <sup>6</sup>	Eastern Victoria	LP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Scheffer, Mr Johan Emiel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tarlamis, Mr Lee Reginald	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
			Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 3 February 2014

<sup>2</sup> Resigned 26 March 2013

<sup>3</sup> Appointed 8 May 2013

<sup>4</sup> Resigned 1 July 2013

<sup>5</sup> Appointed 21 August 2013

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



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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, 18 February 2014**

**National Centre for Farmer Health**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Pulford**

**Raised on: 18 September 2013**

**REPLY:**

I have and will continue to advocate for federal government funding support for the National Centre for Farmer Health.

I have:

- written letters to the previous commonwealth Minister for Health, the Hon Tanya Plibersek, MP seeking her contribution to and support of the National Centre;
- written to my counterparts in all jurisdictions seeking their commitment to contribute to a national cost-share arrangement;
- raised the need for cost-shared arrangements at the Standing Committee on Health; and
- met and communicated with Mr Jim Fletcher, chair and members of the board of the National Centre for Farmer Health on a number of occasions.

I remain committed to continue to advocate for a sustainable funding base for the National Centre for Farmer Health.

I note Victoria offered a shared funding agreement with the previous commonwealth government that was rejected by the Hon. Tanya Plibersek.

**National Centre for Farmer Health**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Tierney**

**Raised on: 19 September 2013**

**REPLY:**

I have and will continue to advocate for federal government funding support for the National Centre for Farmer Health.

I have:

- written letters to the previous commonwealth Minister for Health, the Hon Tanya Plibersek, MP seeking her contribution to and support of the National Centre;
- written to my counterparts in all jurisdictions seeking their commitment to contribute to a national cost-share arrangement;

- raised the need for cost-shared arrangements at the Standing Committee on Health; and
- met and communicated with Mr Jim Fletcher, chair and members of the board of the National Centre for Farmer Health on a number of occasions.

I remain committed to continue to advocate for a sustainable funding base for the National Centre for Farmer Health.

I note Victoria offered a shared funding agreement with the previous commonwealth government that was rejected by the Hon. Tanya Plibersek.

### **Terrara Preschool future**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads**

**Raised by: Mr Tee**

**Raised on: 16 October 2013**

#### **REPLY:**

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

VicRoads is developing a structure plan to provide a clear vision for the future use of the land within the Healesville freeway reservation that demonstrates an appropriate balance of all stakeholders' interests.

In keeping with community expectations, I announced on 6 November 2013, that protection of the Terrara Preschool play area would be reflected in all land use concepts for the Healesville freeway reservation.

### **Dementia services**

**Raised with: Minister for Ageing**

**Raised by: Ms Crozier**

**Raised on: 17 October 2013**

#### **REPLY:**

Thank you for drawing attention to this issue. As you indicate, there are people with dementia who live alone, without a family or friend carer.

The Victorian government funds \$10.5 million for the cognitive dementia and memory service (CDAMS) clinics around the state for people with possible memory loss. Once a person has been in touch with a CDAMS clinic, and received a diagnosis of dementia, they can be referred to other services to support them to live well and healthily at home for as long as possible.

Referrals may be to Alzheimer's Australia Vic (AAV). The Victorian government funds AAV \$3.3 million, to support people with dementia and their carers, and to educate workforces, health professionals and volunteers that support people with dementia.

Or referrals may be to the joint commonwealth-Victorian governments funded home and community care program (HACC) that can support individuals with dementia to live well at home.

As part of our support for people with dementia to move freely within their local communities, the Victorian government is supporting the development of dementia friendly environments and precincts, for example in local councils, and local business and shopping strips. The dementia friendly space in the Melbourne town hall, the hub of the recent Seniors Festival, is one such example. Signage and lighting assisted people with cognitive impairment to move within the town hall, and get where they wanted to go. The recent AAV resource that you highlight, 'Is it

dementia?' will be a useful tool in supporting a dementia friendly and aware community, and various business and service organisations.

### **Abortion legislation**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Ms Pulford

**Raised on:** 29 October 2013

**REPLY:**

I direct you to the Premier's statement of 3 December 2013 which can be located at

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7F\\_1\\_hbf5wM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7F_1_hbf5wM)

### **Fishermans Bend urban renewal project**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 12 November 2013

**REPLY:**

Consultation on the draft vision for Fishermans Bend urban renewal area closed on 22 November 2013. Places Victoria received over 600 online surveys and formal submissions in response to the draft vision. In addition, over 550 people attended consultation events hosted by Places Victoria and the City of Port Phillip in relation to the draft vision.

The issue of the proposed new pedestrian, cycle and light rail bridge over the Yarra and its impacts on the Yarra's Edge development was raised by many of the Yarra's Edge residents, as well as people with interests in the marina. They are, understandably, seeking clarity on the design of the proposed bridge, and whether there are alternatives for its alignment.

A number of alignments were investigated in the development of the preferred route shown in the draft vision document. Residents surrounding the marina can be assured that their concerns have been provided to Places Victoria and will be used to inform the final Fishermans Bend framework.

There were also a significant number of submissions which supported the proposed light rail route. Landowners and developers in the Fishermans Bend urban renewal area emphasised in their submissions the importance of this connection to the central business district. The Napthine government is committed to a well connected transport friendly vision to ensure the area can realise its full potential.

### **Prison drug treatment programs**

**Raised with:** Minister for Corrections

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 12 November 2013

**REPLY:**

This adjournment debate was raised for the Minister for Mental Health, the Honourable Mary Wooldridge. This matter falls within the responsibility of the Minister for Corrections.

There is no precedent for a needle and syringe exchange program in an Australian prison. The ACT government has announced its intention to implement a program but it is still in the consultation phase. The operation of needle and syringe programs in prisons is complicated by the illegality of drug use and occupational health and safety concerns of staff. The Community and Public Sector Union opposes the implementation of this program within Victoria.

To manage and support prisoners who have entrenched drug problems, the Victorian prison system takes a balanced and multi-faceted approach. This includes a comprehensive range of barrier control and detection measures to minimise the introduction and use of drugs in prison while making available a comprehensive mix of drug treatment services. Treatment services range from harm reduction programs offered to all prisoners to intensive long-term group treatment programs aimed at reducing re-offending. A pharmacotherapy program providing medications such as methadone is available to prisoners to reduce the demand for illicit drugs and reduce the risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses. Bleach is also available to prisoners to minimise potential disease transmission from unsafe injecting practices.

The recent Auditor-General's report into the prevention and management of drug use in prisons found that the prison system is generally effective at detecting and deterring drug use and providing drug treatment programs for those who need them.

The Auditor-General's made a number of recommendations for improving performance reporting and evaluation of its detection and deterrence measures and its management and treatment programs. In response, the Department of Justice has accepted all six recommendations and has developed an action plan addressing each.

### **Mildura Base Hospital**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Ms Broad

**Raised on:** 13 November 2013

#### **REPLY:**

The cost of pharmaceuticals required following a patient's discharge from hospital are not provided free of charge.

Mildura Base Hospital is a participant in the national pharmaceutical reform arrangements, designed to ease patients' transition following their discharge from hospital.

Under the reform arrangements, patients are able to receive up to a month's supply of medication when discharged from hospital. Before leaving hospital, patients are given a prescription that can be dispensed either at the hospital pharmacy or a local pharmacy. Patients are able to choose to have their prescription dispensed at a local pharmacy where it is more convenient and the hospital doctor considers it appropriate. Patients who receive their medication through the hospital pharmacy are charged a fee consistent with the PBS statutory co-payments as set by the commonwealth government, and will cost about the same as their local pharmacy.

Further information for patients on the pharmaceutical reforms, including a list of participating Victorian public hospitals, is available at: <http://health.vic.gov.au/pbsreform/consumer.htm>.

### **North Melbourne public housing residents**

**Raised with:** Minister for Housing

**Raised by:** Ms Mikakos

**Raised on:** 27 November 2013

**REPLY:**

The Melrose Street property is a 12-storey older persons' high rise that has 109 units.

The Department of Human Services met with tenants of 159 Melrose Street on 21 November 2013 to discuss tenants' concerns including access to the smart meters. The cabinets housing the smart meters also contain essential electrical and other services for the properties and it is not possible to leave these permanently open so that tenants can have unlimited access to their smart meters.

A process for tenants to access the smart meters was agreed at the meeting whereby access can be gained by contacting the local housing office and a staff member will attend the property and open the locked cabinets for residents' viewing.

Concerns have also been raised by a small number of tenants regarding balcony windows which were restricted from opening. Windows on the communal balconies were initially secured in all high-rise tower blocks across metropolitan Melbourne as a measure to address a number of occupational health and safety issues. This includes the risk of items being thrown from high rise buildings onto the streets and causing potential harm to pedestrians.

As a result of a number of serious incidents (fatalities) and ongoing health and safety concerns in high-rise buildings, the previous North and West Metropolitan Region (NWMR) requested that the department's fire risk management unit (FRMU) review the balcony window locks in all high-rise buildings.

A review of the restriction was undertaken by the department's fire risk management unit and, as a result, windows that have safety screens were installed with window blocks to allow them to be opened to a maximum of 12.5 centimetres. This allows for increased airflow while still complying with health and safety requirements.

The department agreed that all windows would be checked to ensure that where possible those with security screens are able to be opened to the maximum 12.5 centimetres. The checking of windows commenced on 4 December 2013.

The department is happy to continue to talk to residents regarding issues that may be of concern to them.

**Victorian Music Library**

**Raised with:** Minister for the Arts

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 27 November 2013

**REPLY:**

The Victorian Music Library (VML), like many Victorian community collections, provides a valuable service to its clients.

The member raised this matter because it appeared that the VML would have to vacate its current accommodation by the end of January 2014. I am advised that the VML's tenancy has been extended again to at least the middle of 2014.

If it is established that the State Library of Victoria (SLV) is not a suitable option for housing or hosting a sheet music community lending service, the SLV's consultancy expertise is available if the VML wishes to contact them. I understand that contact with the SLV is yet to be made on this issue.

If the VML has not already done so, it would be prudent for them to formally consult with their main clients and client groups to jointly develop a business plan which includes options for lasting accommodation solutions.

**Country Fire Authority Fiskville facility**

**Raised with:** Assistant Treasurer

**Raised by:** Mr Leane

**Raised on:** 11 December 2013

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) is continuing its investigation into allegations of health and safety breaches at the Country Fire Authority's (CFA's) Fiskville training facility.

The VWA received a request from the United Firefighters Union (UFU) on 20 November 2012 to investigate concerns arising from exposure to allegedly contaminated water at the Fiskville site.

The investigation request was made pursuant to section 131 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS act).

As with all its investigations, the VWA is committed to ensuring that this investigation is conducted in a thorough and comprehensive manner.

I am informed that the investigation time frame has been extended due to the significant volume of evidence obtained to date, and the need to engage additional technical expertise to review this material.

The investigation is expected to be completed, and a decision made on whether a prosecution may be brought, by mid-2014. The VWA advises that this is approximately a five month extension to the previously anticipated time frame.

The OHS act allows the VWA to commence a prosecution at any time within two years after an offence is committed. However, the director of public prosecutions can authorise the commencement of a prosecution at any time and is not limited by the two-year period.

The VWA is conducting a thorough investigation with appropriate attention to detail, and it will conclude its investigation when all relevant evidence has been obtained. As the investigation is still underway, it is inappropriate for me to intervene in this process.

**Prahran electorate secondary schools**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 11 December 2013

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

In the 2012–13 state budget, the Victorian government allocated \$200 000 to undertake a feasibility study on secondary education in the Prahran area, consistent with the government's election commitment.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has completed the first stage of the study and is currently undertaking stage two.

Stage one involved a detailed local demographic study to understand the current and future demand for government secondary education within the area. The study analysed current and future secondary school provision within the

broader Prahran area and included detailed demographic analysis on the catchment areas of five standard entry government schools, Hawthorn Secondary, Albert Park College, Elwood College, Collingwood College and Glen Eira College.

The full report is available publicly on the department's website.

The qualitative findings of stage one have informed the scope of stage two. Stage two is currently undertaking a coordinated review of the breadth of secondary educational offerings in the Prahran network, to identify and assess the viability and sustainability of options for improving secondary education provision.

It also involves targeted stakeholder engagement to understand the views and concerns of students, principals, community organisations and local government, to identify key issues in respect of choice, outcomes, benefits and opportunities relating to existing secondary education provision, to then address local challenges and build on education offerings in the area.

The second stage is anticipated to be completed by the first quarter of 2014.

The collective findings from both stages will be used to guide future investment decisions in the Prahran area, ensuring any investment is sustainable and targeted to improve learning outcomes.

### **Cemetery workers enterprise bargaining**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr Melhem**

**Raised on: 11 December 2013**

#### **REPLY:**

Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT) have been negotiating in good faith for several months with their employees and their representatives, the Australian Workers Union (AWU), for an agreement which provides fair and reasonable wage increases in return for implementing much needed workplace reforms which seek to amalgamate varied conditions into a single set covering all sites operated by SMCT and to ensure a productive operating environment into the future.

Throughout negotiations SMCT have demonstrated a willingness to move from their initial claims in an attempt to address some of the key concerns raised by the union during bargaining and to focus on the key workplace reforms.

In return the AWU have made no counter proposals which in any way attempt to address any of the key productivity reforms issues raised by SMCT and have maintained their constant opposition to any workplace reform. Instead the union has resorted to a campaign of industrial action which has caused disruption to burial schedules of SMCT and to mourners and grieving families in a time of great distress.

In an endeavour to progress negotiations SMCT recently sought further assistance from the Fair Work Commission by way of conciliation conferences to assist the parties to bridge the gap between their respective bargaining positions. I understand such conciliation commenced in the week beginning 16 December 2013.

The Victorian government strongly supports this process as the best way to reach agreement between the parties and I implore the union to desist from its campaign of disruptive industrial action and participate in this process in good faith to reach an agreement which is acceptable to both the employer as well as their employees.

As you know I was very critical of the union's extraordinary industrial action that saw it:

1. refuse to fill graves after burial leading to potential health hazards and the risks of burials being left exposed; and
2. the refusal to 'lift ledgers' as an action resulting in a culturally insensitive outcome where burials in family plots were effectively being prevented.

I remain disappointed that any union would put a pay claim ahead of the interests and understandable sensitivities of grieving families at their most vulnerable point.

**Penshurst Football Netball Club**

**Raised with: Minister for Sport and Recreation**

**Raised by: Mr O'Brien**

**Raised on: 12 December 2013**

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government recently announced funding of \$3555 from the 2014 Country Action Grant scheme to the Penshurst Football Netball Club, for first aid training, netball coaching and development of a web based policy and procedures manual.

The Penshurst Football Netball Club were also previously funded \$70 000 from the country football netball program in June 2012, to extend and resurface their netball courts and install training sports lighting.



## WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

**Wednesday, 19 February 2014**

**Fire services funding**

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

**Raised by:** Ms Broad

**Raised on:** 10 December 2013

**REPLY:**

Victoria's fire agencies are well resourced to manage the 2013–14 fire season and other emergencies. As publicly stated by the government, there will be no reduction to the capacity of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) to meet their frontline obligations.

Funding to the CFA under the coalition government has continued to increase. The government's contribution to the CFA budget (including the new property levy) for 2013–14 is \$446.2 million, an increase from \$430.8 million in the previous year. The significant one off funding boost to the CFA in the 2011–12 financial year was based on delivering and completing the recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, and did not constitute ongoing expenditure.

The 2013–14 budget included a \$61 million investment to complete the coalition government's election commitment to replace and upgrade 250 CFA stations. A further investment of \$49 million has completed the delivery of 124 new medium tankers to CFA brigades across the state.

In 2012–13, the government provided CFA brigades with \$8.67 million for 166 Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program grants, and in 2013–14, CFA brigades will receive another \$8.87 million. This record funding will enable brigades to acquire operational equipment, vehicles and appliances and improve amenities.

The government's contribution of \$315.9 million in 2013–14 to the MFB budget is the largest in history. The government has also announced the new \$109 million MFB training facility in Craigieburn that will give firefighters one of the best emergency services training facilities in Australia.

Three community fire refuges at East Warburton and Ferny Creek Primary School, and Blackwood CFA station are available for use by the community in the event of a significant bushfire.

This government will continue to invest significant resources into building Victoria's fire fighting capability and supporting firefighters, the fire agencies and communities.