

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**25 and 26 March 2014**

**(Extract from book 4)**

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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

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

**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.

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

**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 Delahunty.

**Environment and Natural Resources Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Koch and Mr D. D O'Brien. (*Assembly*): Ms Duncan, Mr Pandazopoulos and Ms Wreford.

**Family and Community Development Committee** — (*Council*): Mrs Coote. (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr Madden, Mrs Powell and Ms Ryall.

**House Committee** — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*) Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr D. R. J. O'Brien 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 Kanis, Mr Kotsiras, Mr McIntosh 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 D. R. J. 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 D. R. J. O'Brien. (*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

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**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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**Leader of the Opposition:**

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**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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Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
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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**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Tuesday, 25 March 2014**

**Building Commission: consumer protection**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr Tee

**Raised on:** 29 March 2012

**REPLY:**

In relation to the Zaitsen case, I have met with the Zaitsens and their representatives. Further to this I have undertaken to meet with them, should they have any further issues.

**Wellington planning scheme: amendment**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr Scheffer

**Raised on:** 12 December 2012

**REPLY:**

Amendment C33 to the Wellington Planning Scheme introduces new, and modifies existing, flood and land subject to inundation overlays in areas known to be affected by mainstream flooding during a 1 in 100 year average recurrence interval flood.

The controls are intended to ensure that new development allows for the free passage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with flood hazard and local drainage conditions, and will not cause any significant rise in flood levels or flow velocities.

Exhibition of the amendment resulted in a range of submissions and a panel hearing. The Napthine coalition government listened to the concerns of residents and amendment C33 has been approved and the proposed flood controls over urban zoned land in Port Albert have been removed from the amendment.

The amendment was gazetted and came into operation on 16 January 2014.

**Arthurs Seat quarry site**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 4 September 2013

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government has actively supported efforts to ensure the former quarry site did not become a landfill. The government has no doubt about public enthusiasm for the site, as it is clearly a matter of great interest to the local community. Additions to the Crown conservation estate are considered on a case by case basis. At this time, the government is not considering acquisition of the former quarry site. This is definitely a beautiful site and it may warrant consideration in the future.

**Solar panel grid connection**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Barber

**Raised on:** 28 November 2013

**REPLY:**

Powercor claims that the new pre-approval requirement is necessary to maintain reliability and quality of supply in accordance with its obligations under the electricity distribution code.

Under Victorian regulation, distribution businesses cannot refuse connection, but may ask customers to contribute to connection costs where network upgrades are required to support the new system. For smaller systems, this may occur in areas where solar is concentrated and/or the network is less resilient.

Affected customers are able to dispute the costs and terms of distribution business connection offers with the federal Australian Energy Regulator.

**Electricity prices**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Ramsay

**Raised on:** 11 December 2013

**REPLY:**

Powercor claims that the new pre-approval requirement is necessary to maintain reliability and quality of supply in accordance with its obligations under the electricity distribution code.

Under Victorian regulation, distribution businesses cannot refuse connection, but may ask customers to contribute to connection costs where network upgrades are required to support the new system. For smaller systems, this may occur in areas where solar is concentrated and/or the network is less resilient.

Affected customers are able to dispute the costs and terms of distribution business connection offers with the federal Australian Energy Regulator.

**Cairnlea land rezoning**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr Eideh

**Raised on:** 12 December 2013

**REPLY:**

I am advised that:

- Cairnlea Mixed Use Precinct is former commonwealth defence land in the City of Brimbank which has been progressively developed for housing, open space and commercial uses over the past 15 years. In 2013, Places Victoria conducted community consultation on a redevelopment proposal to rezone the final stage for residential, industrial, commercial, retail and open space uses.

- Following this consultation, Places Victoria revised and amended the master plan to address community concerns about a range of matters including open space provision and industrial land uses. The revised master plan indicates 31 per cent of the overall site area will be open space.
- The revised master plan separates commercial uses from residential uses. Commercial uses are now located at the corner of Cairnlea Drive and Ballarat Road. The Commercial 1 Zone allows for a range of uses including community uses such as primary schools and kindergartens.
- The redevelopment proposal involves the removal of vegetation which has been determined by an independent arborist to be unsafe and to pose a risk to current and future residents. New plantings of more than 750 trees elsewhere on the site will offset the loss of the sugar gum trees, with proposed replacements to increase habitat for birdlife. A landscape plan has been prepared showing areas of passive and active recreation and suggested street tree species and their location.
- The revised master plan has been circulated to residents and is available on the Places Victoria's website – [www.places.vic.gov.au](http://www.places.vic.gov.au)
- The Member for Western Metropolitan has been provided a summary of the consultation process directly by Places Victoria. Places Victoria have also offered to brief the Member for Western Metropolitan on two occasions and have met with Cairnlea residents as recently as February 2014.
- The Napthine coalition government takes the views of the Cairnlea community seriously.

### **Greaves Road**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads**

**Raised by: Mrs Peulich**

**Raised on: 4 February 2014**

**REPLY:**

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

VicRoads has investigated the intersection of Narre Warren–Cranbourne Road and Greaves Road, and determined that the most appropriate treatment is to realign Greaves Road to join Narre Warren–Cranbourne Road at the current intersection with Pound Road.

VicRoads has also investigated your safety concerns relating to the right turn movement from Greaves Road to Clyde Road. Based on safety considerations, modifications to these intersections will be considered for funding in a future program.

VicRoads will continue to monitor the safety and operation of the intersection to determine the need for any future improvements.

### **Public housing**

**Raised with: Minister for Housing**

**Raised by: Ms Broad**

**Raised on: 5 February 2014**

**REPLY:**

The Department of Human Services current policy states that air conditioning can be provided where a tenant, irrespective of age, provides evidence of this need due to a medical condition or disability.

In the previous twelve months, over 500 air conditioners have been installed for this purpose across Victoria.

Tenants can also install air conditioning at their own expense after obtaining permission from their local office.

In addition, the department operates 'Cooler Places' on declared heat health alert days. These are community facilities that are designated and open as air conditioned drop in centres for all tenants seeking relief on days of extreme heat.

In recognising the vulnerability of elderly tenants, the department also operates the Keeping in Touch program which provides regular contacts with tenants who are aged 75 years and over and live alone. Phone calls are made to all tenants registered to receive weekly calls to check on their welfare and advise on support available during heat wave periods and heat health alert days.

The Residential Tenancies Act (1997) does not require landlords to provide air conditioning. A comparison of current Victorian policy against policies in other state jurisdictions found that air conditioning is generally not provided for public housing tenants. As an example, air conditioning units are not provided in Northern Queensland where the highest average monthly temperature in Cairns is 32 degrees.

The current air conditioning policy has been in place for many years under both coalition and Labor governments. In fact, the shadow Minister for Housing Richard Wynne has recently spoken in support of the policy, and was quoted in *The Sunday Age* (9 February, 2014) as saying 'If the Greens are calling for wholesale air conditioning for public housing towers, the cost for low-income earners would be enormous.'

### **Food task force**

**Raised with: Premier**

**Raised by: Mr Somyurek**

**Raised on: 6 February 2014**

#### **REPLY:**

In response to the matter raised by Mr Adem Somyurek, Member for South East Metropolitan, in relation to the activities and initiatives of the Food and Agriculture into Asia Taskforce.

As the shadow minister is aware, I launched the Victorian coalition government's Food to Asia Action Plan, on 5 March, at the opening breakfast of the International Food and Beverage Trade Week. The taskforce played a key role in developing the strategy in partnership with industry and government.

I encourage Mr Somyurek to read the Food to Asia Action Plan which will enable a more profitable food sector, create new and more sustainable jobs in Victoria and drive long-term economic growth for the state.

The taskforce has also been involved in initiatives aimed at developing opportunities for Victorian food and agricultural businesses. For example:

- providing advice to the Victorian government on the opportunities and challenges facing Victoria's food sector to increase exports to Asian markets;
- identifying practical new actions to increase exports for inclusion in the Food to Asia Action Plan;
- attending a number of ministerial industry roundtables on dairy, horticulture and processed foods; and
- working with the government in an ongoing capacity to promote the benefits of the action plan to industry and the general public.

As Mr Somyurek raised in his question, members of the taskforce also travelled with me to China and Japan in 2013. The Taskforce members participated in the China super trade mission to promote Victoria's food and

agriculture producing and exporting capabilities to potential buyers, distributors, investors and government agencies.

### **Woods Point fire refuge**

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

**Raised by:** Ms Broad

**Raised on:** 18 February 2014

**REPLY:**

The Woods Point mine adit was designated as a fire refuge by the Mansfield Shire Council, under the state's 2005 Fire Refuges Policy. It was the only remaining refuge in Victoria still in existence designated under that policy. By virtue of its construction, the mine adit cannot meet the current requirements of a community fire refuge under the new policy developed at the direction of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC).

In line with the VBRC recommendation, the Victorian government replaced the 2005 Fire Refuges Policy in 2011. The government allocated \$2 million in the 2012-13 budget to support the establishment of community fire refuges through a refuges pilot.

Victoria now has three designated fire refuges as part of that pilot, two at the primary schools of East Warburton and Ferny Creek and one at Blackwood that is collocated within the Country Fire Authority (CFA) fire station. The pilot is a significant achievement following the VBRC recommendation.

Mansfield Council's recent decision to de-designate the Woods Point mine adit as a refuge is in line with advice first given to it in 2011. This issue is essentially one of naming rather than use.

There is no suggestion that the people of Woods Point will be prevented from using the mine adit as a place of last resort shelter. The township has a practised plan for retreat to the mine in the event of a fire emergency.

The fire services commissioner (FSC) is working closely with the shire and the Country Fire Authority to have the site formally redesignated as a neighbourhood safer place—place of last resort. To that end, members of the FSC's Building Advisory Panel — who oversaw the performance standards around the new community fire refuges—recently visited Woods Point to assist CFA in assessing the site for compliance as a Neighbourhood Safer Place.

As part of that process, it is likely that further improvements will be made to the facility, such as vegetation management around the entrance and the installation of a door to prevent smoke entering the tunnel.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Beaconsfield Parade—Victoria Avenue, Albert Park**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 18 February 2014

**REPLY:**

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

Victoria Avenue is a local road managed by the City of Port Phillip. The investigation regarding whether a pedestrian crossing is feasible on Victoria Avenue will need to be investigated by the City of Port Phillip.

Following the investigation by the City of Port Phillip, VicRoads would be pleased to assist the council on the matter.

**Live music round table**

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

**Raised by:** Mr D. R. J. O'Brien

**Raised on:** 19 February 2014

**REPLY:**

The Victorian coalition government recognises that live music is an important part of the social and cultural fabric of Victoria, and that live music provides a considerable economic benefit for the State, with many people employed directly or indirectly in the industry.

To support the growth of live music in Victoria, the coalition government established the live music roundtable in 2012, which brings together music industry representatives, live music venue licensees, government representatives and Victoria Police to discuss and address various issues affecting the live music industry.

The roundtable has met five times since it was established, and is progressing work in a number of ways to improve the operation and regulation of live music venues in Victoria for government consideration.

The coalition government has already taken a number of steps to address matters raised by the roundtable. For example, the government has introduced proposed legislative changes to Parliament that, if passed, will remove the requirement for licensees to seek approval to host underage and alcohol-free mixed-age live music events on their premises. This reform will encourage a vibrant live music industry in Victoria, by allowing these events to be held without undue restriction or the burden of unnecessary red tape.

The roundtable has also published Best Practice Guidelines for Live Music Venues as an on-line resource for venues, operators and others involved with the industry. It was my pleasure to publicly launch the guidelines in November last year, which were a product of cooperative effort across the sector.

As recently noted in the Legislative Council by the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Matthew Guy MLC, the coalition government is currently undertaking work to ensure that the 'agent of change' principle is utilised to provide certainty to live music venues, developers and local communities.

The Environment Protection Authority has also committed to making music and industry noise a priority in its review of State Environment Protection Policies, which is due to commence in the first half of 2014.

In addition, the government is reviewing the classification of live music venues under the Building Code of Australia, to determine whether building requirements imposed on such venues are appropriate.

The roundtable has been instrumental in bringing these matters to the coalition government's attention and many of these issues raised either have been or are in the process of being addressed by the coalition government. The coalition government looks forward to continuing to work with the Live Music Roundtable and measures that will contribute to a thriving live music industry for many more years to come.

**Volunteer West**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mr Melhem

**Raised on:** 20 February 2014

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government recognises the important role of volunteers in supporting Victorian communities.

More than 1.5 million Victorians volunteer their time across a wide range of areas including emergency services, health and welfare, the environment and sports.

Core funding for volunteer resource centres in Victoria has historically been provided by the commonwealth government through the Volunteer Management program. I understand there is a review underway and no announcements have been made by the commonwealth government about this funding.

Whilst the Victorian government does not provide core funding directly to Victorian Volunteer Resource Centres, it has in the past provided time-limited project funding to Volunteer Resource Centres across Victoria, including to Volunteer West.

The Victorian government currently provides annual funding to Volunteering Victoria in its capacity as the peak body in Victoria, and will continue to work with Volunteering Victoria in recognition of the critical functions that volunteers perform in community not-for-profit organisations across the state.

### **Grampians tourism**

**Raised with: Minister for Tourism and Major Events**

**Raised by: Ms Pulford**

**Raised on: 20 February 2014**

#### **REPLY:**

I wish to thank the Honourable Member for Western Victoria for her question regarding the tourism recovery following the January 2014 bushfire in the Grampians National Park.

The government recognises the importance of the Grampians National Park to Victoria's tourism industry and is committed to ensuring its long-term sustainability as an iconic tourism destination. The recent fires in the Grampians National Park have had a significant impact upon the regional tourism industry.

The government is working to ensure that the key Park facilities are opened as soon as possible and assist the region to focus its marketing efforts on the Easter School holidays. These visitor sites include Zumsteins and MacKenzie Falls.

A print and radio campaign will run from 23 March to 6 April to encourage travel during the school holiday and Easter period, targeting Melbourne, Adelaide and regional Victorians. The activity aims to raise awareness of the range of experiences available in the Grampians region.

The Victorian government has provided \$50 000 for further promotion of the Grampians Grape Escape, the region's premier food and wine event to be held in May, attracting more visitors to the region.

Tourism Victoria will continue to work closely with the region to ensure regular positive messages on social media such as Twitter and Facebook and focussing on the Grampians on the [visitvictoria.com](http://visitvictoria.com) homepage.

In addition to the recovery marketing activities, Small Business Victoria is providing access to the Small Business Mentoring Service, a mobile business support service and low cost loans of up to \$100 000 for businesses impacted.





**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 26 March 2014**

**Koala protection**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 17 September 2013

**REPLY:**

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) is aware of the audit carried out by the Rainforest Alliance in late 2013 which resulted in the suspension of the Australian Blue Gum Plantations certification. DEPI regards this self-regulation as being an important part of a sustainable plantation forest industry in south west Victoria.

DEPI has worked with The Green Triangle Regional Plantations Committee (GTRPC) to develop an industry-wide policy and guidelines to mitigate impacts on wildlife arising from harvesting. The guidelines were developed in consultation with DEPI and wildlife carers and are designed to prevent harm to koalas living in blue gum plantations.

GTRPC members are now working to implement the policy and guidelines on the ground, with a focus on improved koala detection measures, prevention of injury and provision of refuge areas.

DEPI will continue to work with the blue gum plantation industry and wildlife carers in the south west to enhance their guidelines to ensure this approach results in an effective and humane response to the presence of koalas in plantations in the south west.

The Rainforest Alliance commenced an audit in January 2014 to review the status of the Australian Blue Gum Plantations certification. Contact has been made with Forest Stewardship Council Australia, who has advised that the Audit report being undertaken by Rainforest Alliance has not been completed at this stage.

**Background**

Increasing numbers of koalas across south-west Victoria has created a number of challenges and has prompted DEPI and Parks Victoria to jointly explore future management options.

DEPI has worked with industry to look at the use of infra-red and other technologies for improving koala detection rates and to implement more intensive harm mitigation measures during harvesting to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring.

DEPI has directed industry to seek immediate veterinary attention for any injured koalas.

DEPI is also providing guidance on the provision of more effective refuge areas on harvested blocks and closer monitoring of koalas left in these areas.

The Victorian government's approach to the issue of koalas affected by plantation harvesting has been to work with industry to improve their practices, however, the Victorian government will continue to monitor industry's adherence to the Wildlife Act 1975 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.

Where it has been determined that breaches of the legislation exist, government will undertake appropriate enforcement action.

DEPI participated in a round table discussion with industry and stakeholders in January 2014 to review the Australian Blue Gum Plantations' latest Koala Protection and Management Plan and is also working with other south-west Victorian industry companies to refine their practices.

### **Heatwaves**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Mr Melhem

**Raised on:** 19 February 2014

#### **REPLY:**

Victoria had its hottest four day period on record between 13 and 18 January 2014, surpassing records for maximum and daily average temperatures set in 2009.

The significant heat wave event in February 2009 is estimated to have resulted in 370 deaths. Since then, considerable efforts have been made by the government to improve its emergency management arrangements, including its preparedness for heatwaves.

In 2011, the Department of Health developed a Heatwave Plan for Victoria (2011) which guides the statewide response to heat health issues arising from a heatwave. The plan aimed to address the shortcoming of the previous government's response to the 2009 heatwave, and sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Victorian government, local councils, emergency management and the health and community service sector.

On 19 November 2013, the government released the third edition of its State Health Emergency Response Plan which is a sub plan of the State Emergency Response Plan.

Despite significant demand on resources, early evidence suggests that the planning put in place during the January heat wave event was effective and resulted in a significantly lower loss of life.

Most recently, the government released the Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan in March 2013. The Plan outlines the government's response to heatwaves including heat health measures and work to strengthening policy frameworks to support climate change resilience.

I have passed this matter to the Minister for Health so that he may provide a more detailed response outlining the government's health heat approach to the January 2014 heatwave.

### **Victoria Legal Aid**

**Raised with:** Attorney-General

**Raised by:** Ms Tierney

**Raised on:** 20 February 2014

#### **REPLY:**

The Victorian government is currently providing record levels of taxpayer funding to Victoria Legal Aid (VLA). Within the Magistrates Court, Victorian legislation expressly prohibits direct cross-examination in family violence intervention order matters. Funding for family law matters is a commonwealth responsibility within the terms of the National Partnership Agreement of Legal Assistance Services.