

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

27, 28 and 29 May 2014

(Extract from book 7)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

The ministry

(from 17 March 2014)

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Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Community Services, and Minister for Disability Services and Reform	The Hon. M. L. N. Wooldridge, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Mrs I. Peulich, MLC

Legislative Council committees

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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.

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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.

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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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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 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 ⁴	Northern Victoria	LP
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Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald ⁷	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Ronalds, Mr Andrew Mark ⁶	Eastern Victoria	LP
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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
Leanders, Mr John	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP

¹ Resigned 26 March 2013

² Appointed 8 May 2013

³ Resigned 1 July 2013

⁴ Appointed 21 August 2013

⁵ Resigned 3 February 2014

⁶ Appointed 5 February 2014

⁷ Resigned 17 March 2014

⁸ Appointed 26 March 2014

⁹ Resigned 9 May 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, 27 May 2014

Teachers: professional association

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 30 August 2012

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The government has established a regulatory framework for the profession in the form of the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The Victorian Institute of Teaching was established in December 2001 with the responsibility to:

- register all teachers working in Victoria;
- raise the standing of the teaching profession in the community;
- approve teacher education courses;
- investigate and make findings on instances of serious misconduct;
- work with teachers to develop high professional standards; and
- recognise and promote the profession of teaching.

A review of the Institute in 2008 found that the role of the Institute to promote the profession of teaching conflicted with its key role as a regulator and recommended that the Institute not be required to undertake the function of promoting the profession. This recommendation was accepted and the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 was amended in 2010 to remove the Institute's role in 'promoting' the profession of teaching.

It is not the role of government to establish a professional association for the teaching profession. Such associations are formed from the profession itself.

Ringwood railway station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 10 December 2013

REPLY:

On 4 February 2014 I was pleased to announce that the final scope for the Ringwood station and interchange upgrade will include lifts as well as ramps, escalators and stairs.

Initial plans for Ringwood station considered a range of access methods. The government wanted to seek community input before determining the final design to ensure that the upgrade would be tailored to local needs.

The Ringwood station and interchange upgrade is expected to be completed in early 2016.

Ringwood railway station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 6 February 2014

REPLY:

On 4 February 2014 I was pleased to announce that the final scope for the Ringwood station and interchange upgrade will include lifts as well as ramps, escalators and stairs.

The Ringwood station and interchange upgrade is expected to be completed in early 2016.

Lifts are expected to be operational at the time of practical completion.

Department of Human Services case management

Raised with: Minister for Community Services

Raised by: Ms Mikakos

Raised on: 20 February 2014

REPLY:

Brayden is an 11-month-old Aboriginal boy who is subject to a Supervision Order with the Department of Human Services. He is currently in the care of his parents.

A meeting was held on 30 January 2014 and 21 March 2014 between my department and the parents, and the parents have informed my department they are satisfied with the outcome.

City of Wyndham councillor

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 11 March 2014

REPLY:

The Victorian coalition government fully supports the vital work done by the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in keeping Victorians safe from fires and other emergencies. The government encourages all members of the Victorian community, including councillors and council staff, to support the CFA and our other volunteer agencies in any way they are able.

Under the Local Government Act 1989, a councillor may obtain leave of absence from the council. The Act provides that this request for leave must not be unreasonably refused and the councillor remains entitled to receive their councillor allowance.

I find it concerning that a councillor who is giving up their time on a voluntary basis to help protect their community, putting the interests of others ahead of his own, should be singled out for criticism.

Many of our councillors and council staff are volunteers with agencies such as the CFA and the SES and they do an amazing job helping to protect and preserve life and property and they should be congratulated for their contribution to the community, not criticised.

I encourage the Wyndham City Council and all other councils to be reasonable in granting requests for leave and otherwise be supportive of councillors who actively participate in the CFA and other community service volunteer organisations.

To this end, I would urge councils to put in place public policies, which set out where leave would be considered appropriate, with particular regard to proposed community volunteering work.

Point Cook bus services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Elsbury

Raised on: 12 March 2014

REPLY:

Since the introduction of the new bus network in Point Cook in April 2013, patronage has doubled in the area. This demonstrates that the route changes made were well aligned with the demand for services and that the creation of well-coordinated, fast and direct routes to key activity centres is what most people want.

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) advises that it is aware of the need for east-west routes through Point Cook, including from Sanctuary Lakes and Seabrook through to the Point Cook Town Centre, the new East Werribee precinct and beyond.

Bus route 493 connects Williams Landing station, the Point Cook Town Centre and East Werribee via Hoppers Crossing.

PTV will continue to review the need for bus routes in the area and adjust and enhance the network over time.

Disability funding

Raised with: Minister for Community Services

Raised by: Ms Mikakos

Raised on: 12 March 2014

REPLY:

The Victorian government is committed to ensuring people with a disability have choice and control over the way they receive their support.

The member for Burwood, Graham Watt has advocated strongly for 'Alice' and I thank him for raising this matter with my office on a number of occasions.

The Department of Human Services is actively working with 'Alice' and I can advise 'Alice' has been allocated an individual support package of \$15 908 per annum. This will enable 'Alice' to have an ongoing level of support consistent with what she has been receiving from UnitingCare Community Options.

'Alice' remains on the Disability Support Register and will continue to be considered for an increase to her current individual support package as resources become available. Resources are allocated by a panel, which includes members independent of the Department of Human Services. When allocating resources, the panel takes into account a range of factors relevant to each individual's circumstances as well as compatibility with existing residents. For these reasons, it is not possible to give a definite timeframe when resources will become available for any particular individual.

The Department of Human Service's new service delivery model, Services Connect is currently being trialled in five lead sites across the state. This new model offers client-directed personalised support to people with a range of complex issues, helping them to build their capabilities and resilience.

'Alice' does not currently reside in a trial site for Services Connect. It is inappropriate that the member for the Northern Metropolitan Region should cite Services Connect in this context. Her reference to Services Connect shows that she neither understands this new way of working nor appreciates the demonstrable benefits of reform for Department of Human Services clients.

Early evidence suggests Services Connect results in improved outcomes for clients across a range of life domains such as managing their disability, mental health, personal relationships and connections to community and culture. The government is committed to extending Services Connect to new sites in the future.

Swinburne University of Technology

Raised with: Minister for Higher Education and Skills

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 25 March 2014

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

In 2010, the Swinburne University of Technology Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) was replaced by the Swinburne University of Technology Act 2010. In the remaking, a number of provisions were removed that specifically referred to Swinburne University's obligations and activities in the Outer Eastern region of Melbourne.

Under section 16A of the 1992 Act, the council members had a responsibility to further the objectives of the University, including fostering participation in a university of technology of persons living or working in the Outer Eastern region of Melbourne (section 6(i) of the 1992 Act).

If the sale of the Lilydale site had been proposed when the 1992 Act was in force, the council would have had a specific obligation to ensure that the objective to foster participation in the Outer Eastern region would have continued to be met. Additionally, when seeking my approval for the sale of the site, under section 42 (3B) of the 1992 Act, the University would have had to demonstrate how the objective would continue to be met with the sale.

Notwithstanding, the Victorian government is committed to supporting the ongoing delivery of education in the Lilydale area and Melbourne's outer east. Swinburne University continues to work closely with local authorities, training providers, and government to ensure this occurs.

In particular, Swinburne University is working closely with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Government Land Monitor (GLM), and the Valuer-General's Office throughout the Expression of Interest (EOI) process for the sale or lease of the Lilydale campus.

The EOI process commenced on 26 February 2014 and closed on 10 April 2014. An evaluation of EOIs is now underway.

The Lilydale site remains zoned for education purposes and EOIs for sale or lease of the site were sought on that basis.

The GLM has advised that EOIs cannot be restricted to parties who will retain the education zoning. However, as indicated on the Swinburne University's website, the University's preferred outcome is to identify a user for part, or all, of the site for ongoing educational purposes, consistent with the underlying zoning.

The criteria for assessing expressions of interest is set out in documentation that is available to registered parties. Those criteria take into consideration the proposed zoning and use of the site.

Warrnambool Special Developmental School**Raised with: Minister for Education****Raised by: Ms Tierney****Raised on: 25 March 2014****REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

To accommodate growing enrolments at Warrnambool Special Development School, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development commenced planning in early October 2013 to provide a relocatable classroom building to the school.

Due to site constraints at the school, the department successfully negotiated with the neighbouring community college to place a relocatable building on its property. Agreement was reached in November 2013, at which time a relocatable order was placed for the most appropriate building available, which was an existing staff and administration building located in storage.

Further consultation with the school in early February 2014 resulted in a change to the previously agreed refurbishment design, and significant works were required to ensure the building was fit for student use in accordance with the school's requirements. The works included asbestos removal, reinstatement of ceilings and eaves, new toilets, kitchenette, light fittings, wiring, painting, additional joinery and a repositioned external fence.

I am advised that the refurbishment has been completed and the building was ready for use on 31 March 2014. I am further advised that every decision made throughout this process has been in consultation with, and had the prior approval of, the school principal, who was also regularly updated on the timing and progress of the works.

The cooperation of all school communities whilst these works were completed is appreciated and I am confident that the end result will allow Warrnambool Special Development School to meet the needs of students into the future.

Altona rail loop**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mr Elsbury****Raised on: 26 March 2014****REPLY:**

PTV acknowledges that the passengers for the Altona Loop are required to change trains to travel to Flinders Street during the time between the morning and evening peak (from 9.30am to 4.30pm) when a shuttle train between Newport and Laverton operates at a 20 minute frequency. Werribee trains run direct from Laverton to Newport. During peak times, a 22 minute train frequency is provided for the Altona Loop from Flinders Street.

PTV anticipates further upgrades to the timetable for the Werribee line following the completion of the Regional Rail Link project in 2015, when V/Line trains will use dedicated country tracks to Southern Cross. This will allow off peak Altona Loop trains to run through to Flinders Street so that passengers will no longer need to change trains at Newport. Peak period trains will also be able to operate more reliably.

Further information on travel times, timetabling and stopping patterns will be available closer to the completion of the Regional Rail Link project.

PTV has raised with Metro the issue of passenger communication and information during service disruptions. Metro has advised that it is currently developing additional staff training with a view to improving communication standards.

Social housing

Raised with: Minister for Housing

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 27 March 2014

REPLY:

On 28 March 2014, the Victorian government released a new framework that sets clear directions for the future of social housing in Victoria: building better communities, delivering better opportunities for tenants and developing better social housing assets.

New Directions for Social Housing — A Framework for a Strong and Sustainable Future outlines the steps the Victorian government will take to create a more sustainable social housing system that supports the most vulnerable Victorians.

The framework responds to long-standing issues such as the deterioration of public housing stock and the lack of an overarching strategy for the future of public and community housing.

The long-term decline of the portfolio was reported in 2012 by the Victorian Auditor-General, who found that public housing properties had deteriorated to the point where some 10 000 properties were at risk of becoming obsolete.

Under the framework the Victorian government will deliver better social housing assets. \$1.3 billion will be invested over five years in maintenance and upgrading of public housing stock, including 9500 major upgrades of public housing properties.

Timely and appropriate maintenance and upgrades are essential to maintain the current stock of social housing. Further actions under the framework's Better Opportunities and Better Assets directions help to deliver positive outcomes for tenants and communities through improved housing that better meets the needs of current and future tenants. We seek to achieve this in partnership with the community housing sector and the community.

The framework will also deliver better opportunities for existing and prospective social housing tenants to achieve greater levels of independent through connecting tenants to work and study opportunities. There will be support to help tenant's access services they need, providing more support for tenants to enter the private rental market when they are ready. This will be achieved through a new housing assistance website, an expanded tenant house sales program and for the first time, providing rental references to our tenants.

Big Hill goldmine

Raised with: Minister for Energy and Resources

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

Raised on: 27 March 2014

REPLY:

I refer to the matter raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 27 March 2014, regarding the opportunities for the Stawell Gold Mine.

I thank the member for Western Victoria for raising the importance of the Stawell gold mine to Western Victoria, in particular to the Stawell community and the opportunities to generate further economic benefits as the underground operations work towards planned closure.

The Victorian government recognises the importance of the state's earth resources sector and the economic value it brings to Victoria's regional communities. Having lived and worked in the Latrobe Valley for my entire life, I have a strong appreciation of the benefits of the energy and earth resources sector.

The Stawell Gold Mine has been an important employer and contributor to the local economy for 30 years. I have been advised that mining employs 7 per cent of the Stawell work force and generates around 22 per cent of the economic value that is added to the community, making it Stawell's highest value industry. Stawell Gold Mine employs about 280 people and another 100 contractors. The Proposed Big Hill project will enable Stawell Gold Mine to continue operation and employ about 100 people for a further 4–5 years.

Stawell Gold Mines, a subsidiary of Crocodile Gold Corporation, is proposing a new open cut gold mine on the edge of the Stawell township called the Big Hill Enhanced Development Project. The company proposes to mine two open cut pits on the Big Hill ridgeline.

This is a challenging project, as the proposed extraction is close to the Stawell township and there is the potential for significant environmental effects in the areas near the proposed open cut mine. As a result, the Minister for Planning required an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the proposed project.

Stawell Gold Mines has completed the Big Hill EES and has received authorisation from the Minister for Planning to exhibit it for public comment for 30 business days. The EES will be exhibited from 28 March 2014 to 13 May 2014. Following the public exhibition of the EES, the Minister for Planning will appoint an Inquiry panel to review the EES and any public submissions, conduct public hearings and provide a report to the minister.

The Minister for Planning will then make an assessment of the project, which includes recommendations about whether or under what conditions statutory approvals should be granted, and provide decision makers with the assessment.

As Minister for Energy and Resources, I will be taking into account all relevant factors, including the views of the Northern Grampians Shire Council and other interested parties. On this basis, I encourage landowners, key stakeholder groups and the wider Stawell community to use the Big Hill EES process as the opportunity to participate in the public review and make submissions.

I am aware that the Northern Grampians Shire Council is currently leading a project to investigate the feasibility of economic development opportunities for the longer term benefit of the Stawell community and economy post closure of Stawell Gold Mine. I am advised by the Department of State Development, Business and Innovation that the study has been co-funded by the Australian government (via the Grampians Regional Development Australia Committee), the Victorian government (Regional Growth Fund), the Northern Grampians Shire Council and Crocodile Gold and is nearing completion.

I would welcome the opportunity of being briefed on these identified opportunities by representatives of the Northern Grampians Shire Council once the Big Hill EES process is concluded.

The state government has additionally awarded the Northern Grampians Shire Council \$150 000 from the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund to produce a master plan for the Western Stawell Business Precinct as a prime location for industrial and business development. I expect the master plan would play a key role in the council's strategic planning over the next 15 years and will assist the local and regional economy in transitioning as mining eventually ceases at Stawell.

Northern Metropolitan Region councils

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Ondarchie

Raised on: 1 April 2014

REPLY:

I thank Mr Ondarchie for his kind invitation and commend him on his passion and commitment to local representation and the interests of his local community.

I wish to advise the house that on the 30th of April I took up Mr Ondarchie's invitation to join him on a visit of three of his local councils, being Whittlesea and Banyule councils and the Shire of Nillumbik.

The visit provided me a great opportunity to speak with and learn first-hand about some of the innovative projects these councils are working on and their priorities for the future.

I want to thank the councillors, CEOs and council staff that took the time to meet with me and I particularly wish to congratulate Mr Ondarchie on his constructive support of the many local councils in his region.

There is no doubt that Mr Ondarchie is a tireless advocate on behalf of his community.

Health funding

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Mikakos

Raised on: 2 April 2014

REPLY:

I responded to these questions extensively on Tuesday 1, Wednesday 2 and Thursday 3 April 2014, and I direct you to my detailed responses in *Hansard*.

Sunbury municipality

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mrs Millar

Raised on: 2 April 2014

REPLY:

I thank Mrs Millar for her extensive and outstanding work as the Chair of the Sunbury Out of Hume Community Consultative Committee and for her invitation to take part in one of the many meetings held by the committee.

I was delighted to be able to take up Mrs Millar's kind offer and on the 8th of April I joined Mrs Millar at the public forum held in Sunbury. I was incredibly impressed by the number of people who braved the poor weather on the day to attend the forum and on the range of questions asked and suggestions offered.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Mrs Millar on her role as chair of the committee and the enormous amount of time and effort she has devoted to ensuring the people of Sunbury have a say in this important decision. I also extend my appreciation to the members of the committee—all are volunteers and each has contributed a significant amount of time to this process.

The Community Consultative Committee has taken this process to the people not only of Sunbury, but also the wider Hume community and are to be congratulated on their commitment to local democracy.

I look forward to receiving the committee's report, which will also be presented to the Sunbury Out of Hume Panel and I look forward to delivering on the coalition government's commitment to giving the people of Sunbury a real say in their future.

Ambulance services

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 2 April 2014

REPLY:

Since coming to government, the coalition has increased funding to Ambulance Victoria by 17 percent, to a record \$662 million in 2013–14. This record increase in funding has resulted in more than 20 000 shifts across the state each year, when compared to July 2010. Further, the government has already exceeded its commitment to roll out an extra 310 paramedics and 30 patient transport officers across Victoria, with several officers having already commenced in the Barwon South West region. There are now more paramedics, more shifts and more vehicles on the road than at any point in the history of Victoria, including Labor's tawdry 11 years that saw a botched merger and an investigation by the Auditor-General.

Specific to Geelong, there has been an increase of more than 1000 shifts per year, over the recent 3 years. We have seen a new ambulance station built in Geelong, with another in construction in Leopold, along with 10 new ambulances for the region.

Job losses

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 3 April 2014

REPLY:

The Victorian coalition government is committed to growing jobs for Victorians. There are now 54 800 more Victorians in employment than in December 2010.

Employment in regional Victoria is also growing. Over the past year, 18 800 additional jobs were created in regional Victoria (three month rolling average). Victoria's regional unemployment rate of 6.3 per cent remains below the national regional average of 6.7 per cent.

The Victorian government has supported this growth through a number of initiatives, such as its \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund (RGF). At the end of March 2014, the RGF has invested almost \$400 million in over 1400 projects, which will create over 4400 full time equivalent jobs. Some of these investments include:

- Ballarat Technology Park expansion—1820 new jobs anticipated once fully operational;
- Epworth Geelong — 780 new jobs;
- Wodonga Logic Transport Project — 120 new jobs;
- Hazeldene's water and wastewater security project — 105 new jobs;
- Olam Orchards almond processing plant — 41 new jobs; and

- Burra Foods water saving project and plant expansion — 26 new jobs.

In response to the announcements by Victoria's major automotive manufacturers, the Victorian government is working to create new jobs in the areas most affected. Together with Ford and the commonwealth government, the Victorian government established the Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund (GRIIF) and the Melbourne's North Innovation and Investment Fund (MNIIF).

The MNIIF will provide \$24.5 million of grants, while the GRIIF was recently boosted by \$5 million through a contribution from Alcoa. The GRIIF will now provide \$29.5 million of grants to encourage new investment that results in sustainable jobs in the Geelong region.

In round one, the GRIIF provided \$8.4 million to five businesses, which is expected to create 254 new jobs in the Geelong region and leverage a further \$39.6 million of capital investment from these companies.

A number of MNIIF grants have been announced to date, with further announcements to come. Grants announced to date include:

- \$3 million for Koko Black, which will create 102 new jobs;
- \$2.6 million for PMI Imageworks, which will create 110 new jobs;
- \$1.2 million to Lakeside Packaging, which will create 32 new jobs;
- \$1 million for New Age Caravans, which will create 65 new jobs; and
- \$700 000 to Alepat Taylor, which will create 14 new jobs.

These five MNIIF grants collectively generate more than \$25 million in new investment for the region.

I also note significant investment by major retailers, which is growing jobs in Victoria. Announcements have been made by: Coles, for 3500 new jobs; Woolworths, for 1800 new jobs; and Emporium Melbourne, for 1000 new jobs. Last year, the Victorian government worked with Eastland, which will see both the Ringwood station and Eastland shopping centre undergo significant redevelopment, creating 1600 construction jobs and 1700 ongoing retail jobs. The Victorian government also facilitated investment by Cotton On in Geelong, creating more than 500 new jobs.

The Victorian government invested \$22 million in SPC Ardmona, securing 2700 jobs in the Goulburn Valley. The subsequent investment by SPC Ardmona will see it grow in the future.

The Victorian government also recently announced it had supported the establishment of:

- EnergyAustralia's national contact centre in Geelong, creating 300 new jobs;
- a new pharmaceutical manufacturing facility, Fresenius Kabi, in Victoria, creating 120 new jobs; and
- Sky Software's Global Support Centre in Geelong, creating 40 new jobs.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 28 May 2014

Graffiti

Raised with: Minister for Crime Prevention

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 19 February 2014

REPLY:

I refer to your matter raised in the Legislative Council on 19 February 2014 relating to graffiti removal.

The coalition government is serious about responding to community concerns about graffiti vandalism. The Victorian Graffiti Prevention Act 2007 provides tough penalties for graffiti vandals, with maximum fines of more than \$34 500 and up to two years prison time. Additionally, the coalition government's Graffiti Prevention and Removal Grants provide funding to local councils to partner with community organisations to develop and deliver local graffiti prevention and/or removal solutions. The grants are part of the coalition government's broader \$35 million Community Crime Prevention Program, which provides support and funding for local communities to identify and prioritise local crime issues to help deliver a safer, more secure Victoria.

In 2013, I was pleased to announce Greater Dandenong City Council was awarded \$13 226 through the third round of the Graffiti Prevention and Removal Grants for a Community Clean Up Day at Hemmings Park in Dandenong.

As you would be aware, Hemmings Park is a highly visible and well-used recreational space in Dandenong with a range of facilities for families and young people, including a skate park, BBQ area and playground. Unfortunately, these facilities have been damaged by graffiti tags on fences, buildings, footpaths, play equipment and signage in the park and surrounding area.

I had the pleasure of attending the Hemmings Park Community Clean Up Day on 15 March 2014. The project saw the council partner with Victoria Police and Neighbourhood Watch to deliver the community clean up day.

The clean up day was a successful event, with graffiti removal demonstrations, paint-out activities, the distribution of paint vouchers and graffiti removal kits for local residents. In addition, the local community enjoyed the CFA fire truck and free sausage sizzle.

Projects such as the Hemmings Park Community Clean Up Day actively engage the community and ensures that community members are able to feel directly responsible for improving their park, fostering a sense of local pride and ownership.

Thank you for your interest in this important crime prevention initiative.

Ballarat security cameras**Raised with: Minister for Crime Prevention****Raised by: Mr Ramsay****Raised on: 20 February 2014****REPLY:**

I refer to your matter raised in the Legislative Council on 20 February 2014 regarding CCTV cameras in Ballarat.

The coalition government has allocated \$35 million to its Community Crime Prevention Program, reflecting its strong commitment to making our community safer. One of these commitments was to the City of Ballarat for \$200 000 to support the upgrade of the existing CCTV system in Ballarat.

This included the installation of 11 new cameras and the integration of the system into one new monitoring station at the Ballarat Police Station complex. The coalition government's \$200 000 has also funded the upgrade of transmission equipment and a refurbished monitoring station.

Thank you for joining me at the Ballarat Police Station on 27 February 2014 to get a first-hand look at how the cameras are operating and benefiting the Ballarat community. The upgrade to Ballarat's CCTV infrastructure is a great example of how the coalition government is supporting communities to improve public safety.

It was also wonderful to meet with representatives of the Ballarat Community Safety Advisory Committee and receive an update on their 2014–17 Community Safety Strategic Plan. It is pleasing to see the Ballarat community taking steps to address violence against women and tackle drug and alcohol-related issues at a local level through its Community Safety Plan.

Thank you for your interest in this important crime prevention initiative.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 29 May 2014

Public transport: disability access

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 12 June 2013

REPLY:

I would like to thank the member for Southern Metropolitan Region for travelling to Traralgon to seek feedback on the State Disability Plan from Latrobe City Council and stakeholder organisations in the region.

Karleen Plunkett, who has proposed the idea of a public transport access forum, is a member of my Public Transport Access Committee (PTAC) and keeps me well informed about public transport issues in Gippsland.

In 2012, I was appointed National Disability Champion for Accessible Transport and Infrastructure for the COAG Standing Council on Community Housing and Disability Services.

As Disability Champion I am required to work with my ministerial colleagues across the country to ensure the interests of people with a disability remain high on their portfolio agendas.

As Minister for Public Transport I am very aware of the critical role that public transport plays in enabling people with a disability to participate in community life. I welcome suggestions and innovative ideas from the Gippsland community for making public transport more accessible.

In December 2013 the government released the Accessible Public Transport Action Plan 2013–2017. This Action Plan which complements the State Disability Plan sets out how we will improve customer service and consultation processes, access to public transport services and facilities over the next few years.

The Action Plan will complement other initiatives in Victoria that remove barriers to people accessing public transport services.

This builds on the government's overall investment in public transport including substantial investment in Gippsland over the past two years.

These initiatives include:

- An additional 827 services were introduced across the Latrobe Valley bus network on 23 January 2012
- All routes are now serviced by ultra low floor accessible buses and bus stops and bus interchanges have been upgraded with DDA compliant hardstand and tactile ground surface indicators (TGSI)
- New bus routes including in Traralgon and Moe to Traralgon via Yallourn North and Tyers
- Significant improvements and expanded network coverage to accommodate growth areas in the towns of Traralgon, Moe, Morwell, Churchill and the inclusion of smaller communities with complimentary improvements to connecting intertown services
- Increased service frequency, operating hours and service availability on public holidays

- The Warragul Rail Precinct Upgrade, a \$26.04 million project to build a new rail underpass and a new car park and bus interchange
- Further station accessibility improvement works scheduled for Warragul, Nar Nar Goon, Trafalgar and Yarragon. These works include platform resurfacing and the installation of TGSI.

Mitcham and Ringwood railway stations

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 20 February 2014

REPLY:

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

Following my announcement late last year to install lifts at the Mitcham Station, VicRoads, Public Transport Victoria and their contractors working on the removal of the rail grade separations at Mitcham Road and Rooks Road, have arranged to have the lifts installed and operational as soon as practicable.

VicRoads advises me that the designs for the lifts have been finalised and tenders have been received for the supply and installation of the lifts. VicRoads expects the lifts to be manufactured and delivered to site in August 2014. Installation and commissioning of the lifts is planned to occur in September 2014.

After issues with lifts at Laverton station prior to 2011, ramps are now included as a part of station design to ensure full access at all times. Also, to ensure the issues at Laverton are not repeated, the lifts that will form a part of the Mitcham and Ringwood stations are designed to be large enough to hold an ambulance stretcher and include a back-up power supply to ensure customers are not left stranded during an emergency or a power outage.

In the meantime, train passengers will continue to use the new access ramps and stairs, which are compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. These access ramps and stairs were available for use when the new Mitcham station came into service on 25 January 2014.

The Ringwood Interchange and Upgrade Project involves upgrading the existing station precinct to provide a modern fully accessible train station and bus interchange. The project includes the provision of lifts, stairs, ramps and escalators. The lifts at the Ringwood Station will be installed and commissioned before the project is completed in early 2016.

Shepparton bypass

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 2 April 2014

REPLY:

The Shepparton Bypass was included in the Victorian government's 2012 Priority Project Submission to Infrastructure Australia for federal funding, and is included as a project under consideration that supports the freight network in Victoria: The Freight State. The government recognises the importance of the Shepparton Bypass and will continue to work with the commonwealth government to progress this project.

National disability insurance scheme

Raised with: Minister for Disability Services and Reform

Raised by: Ms Mikakos

Raised on: 3 April 2014

REPLY:

The Victorian coalition government has made a substantial commitment to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This has resulted in the significant work underway in the Barwon trial area, the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Agency's headquarters in Geelong and in our commitment, with the commonwealth, to full scheme implementation of the NDIS in Victoria.

The NDIS is currently being implemented for 5000 people in the Barwon area of Victoria, and this will inform our planning for rolling the scheme out to more than 100 000 Victorians, beginning 2016–17.

The government continues to be a strong supporter of the NDIS and has committed \$2.5 billion for the full scheme implementation of the NDIS from 2019–20. We remain committed to the timetable for roll out as it is detailed in the Heads of Agreement between Victoria and the commonwealth.

Rosebud aquatic centre

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 3 April 2014

REPLY:

On 8 May 2012, pursuant to section 40(1) of the Coastal Management Act 1995 (the act), I consented to an application made by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council to the use of the Rosebud foreshore as the location of the Southern Peninsula Aquatic Centre.

In deciding to consent to the use of the Rosebud foreshore as the location of the Southern Peninsula Aquatic Centre, I gave regard to the Victorian Coastal Strategy, the relevant Coastal Action Plan and advice received from the Victorian Coastal Council.

Prior to accepting an application under the act for the development of the Southern Peninsula Aquatic Centre, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council has been advised that further information is required, including evidence of net community benefit and evidence of broad-based community support.

When I receive this information, a full assessment of the development proposal will be made in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Creswick Library

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

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

Raised on: 6 May 2014

REPLY:

I thank the member for Western Victoria Region for raising the matter. I was pleased to accept your offer to visit Creswick library on Tuesday 13 May 2014 to get an understanding of the many services offered at that library, and

also the proposed redevelopment of the facility. I understand that Hepburn Shire Council has submitted an expression of interest for funding consideration under the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program. Expressions of Interest for the fourth funding round closed on 28 March 2014. I look forward to shortly receiving recommendations for funding from the independent panel following their assessment.

The Victorian government has committed \$17.2 million over four years to the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program to enhance existing public library facilities and build new libraries across the state. In three funding rounds so far, a total of \$12.4 million has been allocated to 45 projects across the state.

Woodend Library

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mrs Millar

Raised on: 7 May 2014

REPLY:

I thank the member for Northern Victoria for raising the matter. I understand that Macedon Ranges Shire Council has submitted an expression of interest for funding consideration under the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program 2014 for the refurbishment of the Woodend Library. Expressions of Interest for the fourth funding round closed on 28 March 2014. I look forward to shortly receiving recommendations for funding from the independent panel following their assessment.

The Victorian government has committed \$17.2 million over four years to the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program to enhance existing public library facilities and build new libraries across the state. In three funding rounds so far, a total of \$12.4 million has been allocated to 45 projects across the state.

Local government rates

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

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

Raised on: 8 May 2014

REPLY:

On 13 May 2014, I met with a number of farmers from the Western Victoria region, including farmers from Moorabool shire and Ararat rural city where we discussed farm rates and differential rating for farms.

The Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating were released in April 2013 following an extensive consultation process led by a ministerial committee. The Guidelines provide clarity on the extent to which the system can be applied. The current differential rating system provides great flexibility for councils to set a rating system that best suits their local circumstances, as well as their own considerations of equity and fairness.

It is important therefore that councils undertake the detailed work to establish the impact on different property types and their ratepayers so they can make informed decisions and clearly explain them to the community.

I understand that Moorabool Shire Council is currently undertaking a review of their rating strategy in light of the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating and the community will have an opportunity to comment on the rating strategy alongside council's 2014–15 draft budget between 13 May 2014 and 10 June 2014.

I am next scheduled to meet with the Victorian Farmers Federation on 2 June 2014.