

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

4, 5 and 6 February 2014

(Extract from book 1)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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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Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, and Minister for Regional and Rural Development	The Hon. P. J. Ryan, MP
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Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.	The Hon. E. J. Powell, MP
Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Technology and Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry	The Hon. G. K. Rich-Phillips, MLC
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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 and Mr Ramsay.

Economy and Infrastructure References Committee — Mr Barber, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Mr Leane, Mr Lenders, Mr Melhem, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford and Mr Ramsay.

Environment and Planning Legislation Committee — Mr Dalla-Riva, #Mr 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, Ms Crozier and Mr O'Brien. (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McGuire and Mr Wakeling.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*) Mr Drum, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland and 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 Hennessey, Mr Morris, Mr Pakula and Mr Scott.

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

Rural and Regional Committee — (*Council*): Mr Drum. (*Assembly*): Mr Howard, Mr Katos, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): 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

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Mr M. VINEY

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Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. W. A. LOVELL

Leader of the Opposition:

Mr J. LENDERS

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

Mr G. JENNINGS

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. R. HALL

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Mr D. DRUM

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Cote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Millar, Mrs Amanda Louise ⁵	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
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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 ⁴	Northern Victoria	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
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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 ⁶	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

¹ Resigned 3 February 2014

² Resigned 26 March 2013

³ Appointed 8 May 2013

⁴ Resigned 1 July 2013

⁵ Appointed 21 August 2013

⁶ 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, 4 February 2014

Water: authority dividends

Raised with: Treasurer
Raised by: Mr Lenders
Raised on: 20 June 2012

REPLY:

The dividends from the metropolitan water businesses were set out in the 2012–13 Annual Financial Report on page 69, and in the water corporations' annual reports.

Moonee Valley Racecourse: development

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Ms Hartland
Raised on: 6 February 2013

REPLY:

On 6 December 2012, I agreed to appoint an advisory committee to provide advice to both myself and Moonee Valley City Council on all relevant matters associated with the proposed redevelopment of the racecourse, including the master plan, heritage matters and the draft planning scheme amendments. At the same time I sought comments from Moonee Valley Racing Club and council on the draft Terms of Reference. Both parties provided their comments together with comments from Save Moonee Ponds and Moonee Ponds Central School. All comments were taken into consideration prior to the approval of the final Terms of Reference on 19 March 2013.

The advisory committee commenced its public hearing on 2 October 2013. All submitters were given an opportunity to be heard at the public hearing and I understand both Save Moonee Ponds and other local residents were heard by the advisory committee.

The Napthine coalition government is committed to a fair and open process with input sought from all relevant parties.

The public hearing concluded on 24 October 2013 and the advisory committee is required to submit its report to both myself and council by 19 December.

Barwon Health residential aged-care facilities

Raised with: Minister for Ageing
Raised by: Ms Tierney
Raised on: 18 September 2013

REPLY:

The residential aged care sector is regulated by the commonwealth government, which requires all approved providers to have appropriately qualified staff with the right mix of skills to meet residents' needs.

Barwon Health as a public sector provider is also required to roster nursing staff at Wallace Lodge and Alan David Lodge under nurse to patient ratios, in accordance with the Nurses and Midwives (Victorian Public Health Sector) Enterprise Agreement 2012-2016.

I am advised that Barwon Health is committed to staffing at the mandated levels of the enterprise agreement. I am further advised that the health service has made recent investments in improving technology, infrastructure and nursing practices at its residential aged care facilities.

Individual health services make their own decisions regarding public health service delivery. The particular initiative outlined in the budget Update of December 2012 to reallocate a number of public sector places to non-government providers applies to metropolitan areas only.

Protective services officers

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 29 October 2013

REPLY:

In delivering on the government's commitment to improve public safety, PSOs are being deployed to rail stations to address crime, violence and anti-social behaviour, and to improve perceptions of safety for commuters across the rail network. As part of their important role, PSOs actively patrol rail station car parks. If a commuter requires an escort to his or her car in a rail station car park, I am pleased to note that PSOs are available to provide this service, where circumstances permit. This is just one of the ways in which PSOs are improving safety on the rail network and delivering benefits for Victorian commuters.

Ambulance services

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 30 October 2013

REPLY:

At the 2010 election, the coalition promised to deliver 310 additional paramedics and 30 patient transport officers. Rollout of these new paramedics continues on-schedule, with new staff already providing an extra 41 new services, with 20 more still to come. The 30 new patient transport officers are already deployed, along with 10 new MICA single responder units in rural and regional Victoria.

The Victorian coalition government has committed a record \$662 million to Ambulance Victoria in 2013-14. This is a 17.2 per cent increase in funding since 2009-10.

Since coming to government, the coalition has added 465 paramedics state-wide. This record increase in paramedics has seen the number of shifts across the state increase by 28 598.

Reg Geary House

Raised with: Minister for Ageing

Raised by: Ms Mikakos

Raised on: 30 October 2013

REPLY:

The Chief Executive of Western Health has advised me that the board had made a decision to progress the closure of Reg Geary House. Under Victoria's devolved governance model, individual health services make their own decisions regarding public health service delivery.

I have every faith that the Western Health board has made decisions in the best interests of their community.

As I said previously I have spoken to the CEO, Professor Cockram, and she informs me that satisfactory alternative accommodation will be found for each resident and that every member of staff will be offered alternative employment within Western Health.

I have requested that Western Health keep my office informed as this matter progresses.

Suicide prevention

Raised with: Minister for Mental Health

Raised by: Mr Ondarchie

Raised on: 31 October 2013

REPLY:

I am saddened to hear of the death of a friend of the Member for the Northern Metropolitan region and Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Mr Ondarchie.

Preventing suicide is a complex issue. Suicide can involve individual self-efficacy, psychiatric issues, significant life transitions or change, and social and cultural factors. Prediction of long term risk of suicide is complicated because the evidence shows that suicidal behaviour is influenced by factors that can't be predicted such as loss of support, business losses, medical conditions and the exacerbation of severe psychiatric symptoms.

Since coming to government the coalition has been determined to improve the infrastructure and services dedicated to this significant community issue. Last year we spent approximately \$1.2 billion on the treatment or prevention of mental illness and mental healthcare through both inpatient and community-based services. Indeed, since coming to government we have invested in more than 420 new or redeveloped beds. These beds provide specialised and specific care to those suffering mental ill-health and our investment in them is recognition of their value in providing a response to people struggling with mental illness.

While the infrastructure is a critical part of our response to these issues so is the ability for people to seek support and information. The government invests close to \$1 million each year in Victoria's suicide helpline, SuicideLine while additional funding of \$500 000 to LifeLine has enabled Lifeline to respond to an additional 12 000 calls. The government has also committed \$1 million over four years to GriefLine for that organisation to continue its work.

The state government has also been a strong supporter of the work of Beyondblue, providing approximately \$3.5 million per annum for its depression, anxiety and suicide prevention initiatives and research.

The government is also partnering with providers of services in this area to ensure we continue to strive to improve how we deliver services. For example, the coalition government has made a \$6 million investment in the organisation headspace. This investment includes \$4 million in capital funding as well as \$2 million for selected services over four years.

We have been particularly pleased to support the School Support Casey/Cardinia Community Initiative, where funding will allow headspace to provide intensive support in up to 12 secondary schools and TAFES in the area that have been impacted on significantly by youth suicide in recent years. Under the initiative school communities will be provided with a range of services, including screening and well-being assessments, early intervention programs and clinical back-up, resilience programs for students and their families, and training for school staff.

The Victorian government is also recommissioning mental health community support services to establish more individualised client support packages and to target services to those people most in need.

Finally, in 2014 the government has committed to delivering a community-wide suicide prevention statement. The statement will acknowledge the issue and be accompanied by practical information about support available for people who are experiencing extreme psychological distress and suicidal behaviour.

I would encourage anyone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts to go to their general practitioner or call SuicideLine on 1300 651 251.

I am very sorry for the loss of Mr Ondarchie's friend and my condolences go to his friend's family and loved ones.

Guardianship legislation

Raised with: Attorney-General

Raised by: Mr Scheffer

Raised on: 31 October 2013

REPLY:

The Victorian Law Reform Commission completed the Guardianship-Final Report (the Report) following a reference from the previous Attorney-General. This government tabled the Report in April 2012, as required by the Victorian Law Reform Commission Act 2000 (Vic) (the Act). The Act does not require that government table a formal response to the Report.

The Victorian coalition government is working on reforms in response to the Report, together with reforms to power of attorney laws in response to the Parliamentary Law Reform Committee's 2010 report on Powers of Attorney. The government is giving priority to reforms that will make it easier for individuals and their families to provide for their current and future needs, while strengthening and enhancing the last-resort and protective roles of VCAT and the Office of the Public Advocate.

The Victorian government recognises that the law should support people to make their own decisions where possible, encourage and empower the involvement of supportive family and friends, and protect against abuse and exploitation of those with impaired decision-making capacity.

The government also appreciates the significance of these issues to families and carers of people with a disability and plans to consult with key stakeholders, including carers groups and people with disability.

Prison drug treatment programs

Raised with: Minister for Mental Health

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 12 November 2013

REPLY:

As the issues you raise relate to the responsibilities of the Minister for Corrections, I have referred this adjournment matter to Minister O'Donohue for a response.

Geelong region job losses

Raised with: Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 12 November 2013

REPLY:

On the 17 September 2013 Qantas announced it would undertake a review of the future of its heavy maintenance base at Avalon Airport, due to the gradual retirement of Boeing 747 aircraft significantly reducing the workload at the facility.

This is part of a broader Qantas plan to rationalise its Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul operations as the airline prepares for new-generation aircraft to enter its fleet.

The Premier has met personally with Qantas and the Minister responsible for the Aviation Industry has met with the company on several occasions.

Senior representatives of my department have also been in constant dialogue with the management of both Qantas and maintenance sub-contractor Forstaff at Avalon since the announcement of the review in September.

Qantas' decision to close its Avalon engineering base is purely a commercial and structural one, driven largely by the technical advances in new aircraft that have significantly altered the composition of the Qantas fleet and, as a consequence, future maintenance demands.

The Victorian government, is working closely with all parties impacted by this announcement to ensure that all possible assistance is being provided to help affected workers.

As soon as the government was notified of the closure we responded immediately to activate our highly successful 'Workers in Transition' program. This program seeks to provide opportunities for workers to transition their skills into other industries.

One of the benefits of the 'Workers in Transition' program is that retrenched workers are eligible for government-funded training to support their transition to new employment in skill-shortage occupations or in response to local industry needs. This reskilling is done through local Registered Training Organisations and is coordinated by Skills Victoria.

Avalon Airport and the Port of Geelong feature strongly in Plan Melbourne, the metropolitan planning strategy. These two pieces of vital infrastructure form crucial linchpins in Victoria's booming freight industry.

The state government is providing the right infrastructure for industry, setting the conditions for increased economic activity, which in turn provides opportunity for the growth of the Greater Geelong economic region and increased opportunity for local employment.

In terms of ongoing aviation sector jobs, The Victorian government has also worked with Jetstar to secure a \$100 million investment and a commitment to 100 new jobs for its Boeing 787 base in Melbourne. In doing so, the state government is securing the future of the aviation industry's next generation aircraft maintenance here in Victoria.

The government has also helped secure around 350 new maintenance repair and overhaul jobs in Melbourne that include 100 at Jetstar, 115 with Singapore International Airlines Engineering Company (SIAEC), an immediate 30 with BAE Systems and more to come and there are other companies that will be performing more maintenance repair and overhaul in Melbourne.

The Victorian government also remains committed to supporting economic growth in the greater Geelong area. The state government, in co-operation with the federal government, is delivering a special \$24.5 million Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund, which provides grants for new and existing businesses to set up or expand operations in the Greater Geelong area, creating hundreds of jobs in the process for displaced workers.

Further highlighting this government's commitment to the region was the announcement of our intention to move the head office of the Workcover Authority to Geelong. This relocation would see the transfer of around 550 jobs to the regional hub, and would generate more than \$50 million per year in additional economic benefit for the region.

This will be a huge boost for Geelong and the Barwon region. The measures of support the Victorian government is providing demonstrate the importance we place on the people of the Greater Geelong region, as the effects of structural readjustment in the economy are felt by the community.

Mount Helen Country Fire Authority station

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 14 November 2013

REPLY:

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) has advised that the contract to build a new fire station for Mount Helen was finalised and the builder will commence construction within the next few weeks. The site is located adjacent to the Technology Park of the University of Ballarat. This project is due for completion in early May 2014 and will service an area identified as being at high-risk from bushfires, and gives the local community confidence that assistance is at hand.

The Victorian government is delivering on its commitment of building or upgrading a total of 250 CFA stations. The government will continue to be guided by the CFA in determining the priority order for these upgrades, based on community and operational requirements.

These stations will strengthen rural and regional communities and maintain a viable and sustainable volunteer fire fighting capability.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Geelong region job losses

Raised with: Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 14 November 2013

REPLY:

The government continues to work closely with business and key stakeholders in Geelong, to attract new investment and generate jobs.

The government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund (RGF) is investing in projects to strategically drive jobs, investment and innovation in regional Victoria.

Since 2011, the RGF has provided more than \$350 million to support over 1200 local projects, leveraging almost \$1.5 billion in total investment. This fund has already assisted important Geelong projects including infrastructure to support the new Geelong Epworth Hospital that will create 780 healthcare jobs, the new Geelong Library and Heritage Centre, and infrastructure for Deakin University and the Queenscliff Ferry Terminal.

The government is supporting major job creation projects in Geelong. This includes securing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) headquarters for Geelong and up to 450 new jobs, through a \$25 million state government commitment. The relocation of the Victorian WorkCover Authority head office to Geelong is also a commitment of the coalition government that will create 550 jobs in Geelong. This relocation is anticipated to generate an additional \$50 million in economic activity in Geelong and further strengthen insurance and disability related services and administration in Geelong.

Government support for Cotton On, to create a global headquarters in Geelong and 500 new jobs, is another example of significant job creation underway. The expansion by Cotton On positions the company to service its rapidly growing international business from Geelong.

The \$11 million Geelong Advancement Fund (GAF) and the \$4 million Greater Geelong Industry Fund (GGIF) are also playing an important role in facilitating new jobs and investment in Geelong. The Greater Geelong Industry Fund has supported almost \$5 million in new investment by business and over 90 new jobs, from businesses including Carbon Revolution, Express Promotions, IXL Metal Castings and Farm Foods Retail Services.

The first two Geelong Advancement Fund projects were recently announced and will facilitate almost \$70 million of new investment and significant new jobs, including investment to help revitalise Central Geelong.

Geelong manufacturing businesses have benefited from government programs and initiatives including the Manufacturing Productivity Networks program, the Investing in Manufacturing Technology program and initiatives with the Geelong Manufacturing Council such as the Industry Innovation program, which is working to increase the application of research from Deakin University into manufacturing businesses in the Geelong region.

The recently released Victorian Small Business Statement, 'Supporting Small Business 2013', contains initiatives to boost small business productivity, innovation, employment and growth. The supports the highly successful annual Small Business Festival in Geelong, in addition to delivering the Small Business Workshops and Seminars Program, the Small Business Mentoring Service, the Grow Your Business program, and other programs and initiatives to assist the small business sector.

The \$24.5 million Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund (GRIIF) was recently established by the federal and Victorian governments to respond to job losses in Geelong and attract new investment and create jobs in the Geelong region. Applications under Round 1 of the GRIIF are currently under assessment with successful projects to be announced in 2014.

The government is also assisting businesses in Geelong and across the state to access new market opportunities through the \$50 million International Engagement Strategy, including the comprehensive program of international trade fairs and missions, the outcomes of which are helping to drive new investment, jobs and exports for Victoria.

Geelong is a regional city with a proud history and a strong future. My department, through Regional Development Victoria, is working to ensure that opportunities to attract and facilitate new investment, create jobs and grow exports are captured for Geelong.

Mildura region transport infrastructure

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Ms Broad

Raised on: 26 November 2013

REPLY:

The Victorian government allocated \$170 million over three years in the 2013–14 budget to maintain and restore Victoria's roads. As part of this, VicRoads is currently investigating rehabilitation options for the Calder Highway near Sea Lake.

In addition, VicRoads is currently investigating options for the provision of future overtaking lanes, which will improve the safety and efficiency of the Calder Highway between Mildura and Ouyen.

The Murray Basin Freight Demand and Infrastructure Needs Study, is expected to be finalised in early 2014. This is a pre-feasibility study that will identify long term freight needs in the Murray Basin, and infrastructure requirements to meet these needs. The outcomes of this study will identify the next steps in working towards the Transcontinental Rail link, as outlined in Victoria's submission to Infrastructure Australia.

The Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, through Transport Investing in Regions, is contributing \$20 000 for the 'Central Murray Rail Freight Economic Assessment', (co-funded \$20 000 from Regional Development Victoria and \$13 000 from the Central Murray Transport Forum). This study has recently commenced, and will identify and prioritise opportunities to increase freight onto rail at key rail-loading facilities within the Central Murray region.

Sunbury municipality

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 26 November 2013

REPLY:

The Sunbury poll conducted in October 2013 by the Victorian Electoral Commission showed strong support for the separation of Sunbury from the City of Hume. More than 50 per cent of eligible voters cast a ballot in the voluntary poll, with 67.2 per cent of participating Sunbury voters supporting the separation.

I have now announced the establishment of a Local Government Panel to recommend new municipal boundaries for the Sunbury region. This step is in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 which requires the establishment of a Local Government Panel to provide advice to the government on any changes to municipal boundaries.

The current Hume City Council was elected for a four year term to represent their community until November 2016. It will remain business as usual for the council while the panel undertakes its work.

Unlike the previous Labor government that reneged on its promise to allow the Sunbury community a say on its future, the Victorian coalition government has listened to the people of Sunbury and is delivering on their wishes.

Goulburn Valley Highway–Moss Road, Wahring

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 27 November 2013

REPLY:

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

VicRoads is currently investigating the causes of crashes at this intersection, including options to improve safety as part of the Safer Road Infrastructure Program.

The Safer Road Infrastructure Program is funded by the Transport Accident Commission, and is a key component of Victoria's Road Safety Strategy 2013–2022, which aims to reduce deaths and serious injuries on our roads by more than 30 per cent by the end of 2022.

The Victorian government has boosted funding for the program by more than 30 per cent, to \$1 billion over the next ten years, to improve safety at intersections and along sections of road with a history of casualty crashes.

Music festival ticket scalping

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs

Raised by: Mr O'Brien

Raised on: 28 November 2013

REPLY:

While ticket on-selling at major sporting events in Victoria is regulated under the *Major Sporting Events Act 2009* (the MSE act), the unfair trading of tickets for other events, including live performance events such as the Meredith Music Festival, is covered under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL).

The MSE act was introduced to assist with the safe and efficient staging of major sporting events and thereby contribute to making Victoria attractive as a host destination for world class events. Among other matters, the MSE act deals with ticket on-selling.

Under the MSE act, if the minister responsible for the Act declares a sporting event to be subject to that Act, the event organiser must submit their ticketing scheme to the minister for approval. Once the ticketing scheme is approved, it is an offence not to comply with the scheme and to on-sell tickets otherwise than as approved by the scheme. Events that have been declared under the MSE act include AFL grand finals, the Australian Masters and the President's Cup for golfing events.

In 2010, the Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council (CCAAC) undertook a study into ticket scalping. The CCAAC report entitled *Consumers and the Ticket Market: Ticket on-selling in the Australian market* was released in November that year and is available at www.treasury.gov.au. It found that while there was consumer dissatisfaction with specific issues related to ticket on-selling, there was no significant consumer detriment. This is because the incidence of unauthorised ticket on-selling in Australia is low, and the number of on-sold tickets for popular events is low compared to the total number of tickets sold.

The CCAAC report concluded that the existing consumer protection framework under the then commonwealth *Trade Practices Act 1974*, was adequate to protect consumers from unfair practices in the ticketing market. Since then, the consumer protection framework has been enhanced by the introduction in January 2011 of the ACL. The

ACL prohibits misleading, deceptive and false conduct and representations in trade or commerce and provides statutory guarantees for goods and services purchased by consumers.

If any consumer believes that they have been misled about the terms of re-sale for tickets to the Meredith Music Festival or that the seller did not have the right to re-sell the tickets, they may wish to contact Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 55 81 81 for the matter to be assessed.

Thank you for your advice about the Bill currently before the New South Wales Parliament dealing with ticket scalping generally. I understand that the Bill proposes to amend the New South Wales *Fair Trading Act 1987* to empower event organisers to use ticket terms and conditions to restrict on-selling and to enforce these conditions.

Having examined the Bill, I note that it may not apply to all events, such as the Meredith Music Festival where tickets are in the form of a wrist band. Additionally, I note the concerns expressed in the CCAAC report regarding potential issues with the enforcement of industry-specific regulation in the ticket on-selling market.

In these circumstances, my preference is to observe the operation of the proposed New South Wales regulations, if passed, before giving further consideration to the Victorian position.

Kerferd Road, Albert Park, school crossing

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 10 December 2013

REPLY:

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

Kerferd Road is classed as a local road managed by the City of Port Phillip. The location of school crossing supervisor sites is also reviewed annually by councils. As such, it is appropriate that this matter be pursued with the City of Port Phillip Council.

I praise the initiative shown by the students of the Middle Park Primary School in proactively identifying a need to address a particular road safety issue affecting school children crossing Kerferd Road in Albert Park.

Fisheries cost recovery

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 10 December 2013

REPLY:

In relation to the issues raised by Mr Lenders regarding the recent fisheries cost recovery RIS, I have been advised that:

The Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) provided independent advice that the fisheries cost recovery RIS met the requirements of section 10 of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994, prior to it being released for public consultation. The public consultation process provided DEPI with avenues to further explain how costs were derived. The nature and extent of services for particular fisheries was discussed in four forums convened across the state during the RIS consultation period, and further in the FCRSC in the process to consider submissions received. DEPI also had further engagement with representatives of particular fisheries. This engagement process will continue as the new approach is implemented. DEPI is establishing fishery specific forums to discuss services for particular fisheries. Those forums will commence in early 2014.

I am satisfied that the RIS, coupled with the public consultation process in question provided adequate levels of information to enable informed stakeholder consultation.

Healesville freeway reservation

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Mr Tee

Raised on: 12 December 2013

REPLY:

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

The section of the Healesville Freeway Reservation between Springvale Road and Boronia Road is an important state asset that has significant value to the local and broader Victorian community.

Discussions with the community on three land use concepts began on 25 November 2013 and have included three community workshops and an online forum. The three workshops were held on 26, 27, 28 November 2013 and were well attended with over 300 participants over the three workshops.

The community consultation on land use concepts closed on 23 December 2013, as publicly announced.

Acknowledging the importance of the Healesville Freeway Reservation to the City of Whitehorse and the schedule of council meetings, VicRoads has accepted the council's request to submit the council's comments on the three land use concepts by the end of January 2014.

A report on the community consultation will be produced in early 2014, following the feedback provided by the City of Whitehorse at the end of January 2014.

Feedback from the community will be considered in finalising the land use concept, which will be used to form the basis of the Structure Plan.

Holden job losses

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 12 December 2013

REPLY:

The Victorian coalition government is committed to ensuring that workers and their families who have been affected by Holden's decision to cease manufacturing operations in Australia by 2017 are fully supported through the transition. This includes through recognition and certification of workers' existing skills. The Victorian government also stands ready to help workers re-skill and up-skill by providing them with access to training institutions and programs, such as the Workers in Transition Program and the Victorian Training Guarantee.

Following Holden's decision to cease vehicle manufacturing in Australia from 2017, the Victorian government moved quickly to convene an automotive industry roundtable to discuss and plan the next steps for the future. The roundtable, held on 18 December 2013, included senior representatives from vehicle manufacturers, component suppliers, unions, industry groups, training bodies and local government.

There was a unanimous view that the Holden decision, on top of the recent Ford decision, is a significant and fundamental issue for Victoria's and Australia's manufacturing capabilities. Stakeholders agreed that assistance needs to be both immediate and long term, with a focus on ensuring workers are supported to re-skill and find new

jobs, and that the automotive industry, manufacturing sector and wider economy needs to be supported to ensure ongoing investment, job creation and growth.

Following the roundtable, I wrote to the Prime Minister to inform him of the important issues raised by participants. I am reconvening the automotive industry roundtable in February 2014 to review progress in securing outcomes for workers and businesses and to ensure that Victorian industry and workers continue to have input into the commonwealth government's plans for addressing the departure of Holden.

I have invited both the Prime Minister and the commonwealth Minister for Industry to participate and to hear, first hand, the impacts that Holden's decision will have on Victorian workers and the community more broadly, and what needs to be done.

In addition, I welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement for a \$100 million industry fund as an important first step. The Victorian government is providing \$12 million towards the initiative.

Establishing the \$100 million fund is vital in formulating a full and comprehensive strategy to assist the Victorian economy and the automotive sector. The fund will help supply chain manufacturers to expand, innovate, develop new products and reach new markets. It will also be utilised to help new businesses establish themselves with preference given to any enterprises that employ automotive workers.

The Victorian government will continue to work with the commonwealth government on what is required to support workers, supply chain businesses, regions and the wider economy.

With regard to Ford's closure announcement, in recognition of the economic and social impact that the closure of Ford will cause in the Geelong region and Melbourne's north, the Victorian and commonwealth governments and Ford Australia established two funds consisting of \$24.5 million each. These funds will encourage investment to create new or additional business capacity that results in sustainable jobs.

The \$24.5 million Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund will allocate funding over the three financial years from 2013–14 to 2015–16. The fund will support investment by businesses that leads directly to new sustainable jobs in the Geelong region and assists the region to diversify its economic base.

In addition, the \$1.8 million Skilling the Bay Initiative was created as a partnership between the Victorian government, The Gordon Institute of TAFE and Deakin University. The initiative is designed to grow existing and emerging industries by linking future job creation to skill development in the Geelong region.

On 4 December 2013, the Victorian government launched the Skilling the Bay Priority Actions Report as part of this initiative and committed to a \$4.6 million investment in training over four years to grow future employment opportunities in Geelong. The actions identified in the report aim to engage, attain and increase participation of students and workers across the region. Extensive consultation with key stakeholders informed the type of training and education integral to the creation of local jobs.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 5 February 2014

Emergency services hoax calls

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr O'Brien

Raised on: 18 September 2013

REPLY:

Emergency service organisations have procedures in place to deal with hoax calls and false alarms. False calls generally fall into three categories — deliberate hoax calls, members of the public calling triple zero when unsure of a fire or the risk of fire, and false alarms activating in protected premises. In the event of a suspected deliberate hoax call, the information is passed on to Victoria Police.

The fire service agencies educate the public through media campaigns and work with alarm companies to ensure that fire detectors are not too sensitive to the environment. Both the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) may also charge for call-out attendance to a false alarm after investigation.

The MFB and Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) advise that whilst hoax calls are frustrating, the number of hoax calls received by them compared to genuine calls received, is not significant.

Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) has also introduced a process to deal with mischievous and nuisance calls. Where the caller's telephone number can be identified, such calls are diverted to a recorded announcement that highlights that triple zero is reserved for persons who require urgent emergency service response.

ESTA informs the caller that it has recorded the caller's telephone number, and that it maintains a register of telephone numbers. ESTA advises the caller that the improper use of triple zero in these circumstances is a serious offence, and the penalties reflect the serious nature of the offence. Persons making hoax calls can be fined or the penalty could be imprisonment.

Regarding the Bells Beach incident on 29 August 2013, Victoria Police is treating this as a hoax call and investigating the matter.

Hoax calls are frustrating and put the public and emergency service officers' lives at risk and waste taxpayers' money. It also means crew members are not available for other genuine road rescue or other emergency calls. Emergency service organisations will continue to play a role in reducing hoax calls.

Women's Health West

Raised with: Minister for Community Services

Raised by: Mr Elsbury

Raised on: 14 November 2013

REPLY:

Women's Health West (WHW) is a long-standing and valued provider of family violence and health promotion services in Melbourne's western suburbs. Many of WHW's services are directed to women and children affected by family violence. This includes family violence outreach, counselling, case management and refuge accommodation and support.

This financial year, WHW will receive around \$3 million in funding from the Victorian government. This includes a substantial boost of \$200 000 per year, announced in September 2012 as part of an additional \$16 million statewide, to address the growing numbers of police family violence and sexual assault referrals. These additional funds will enhance the capacity of family violence services such as WHW to support women and children experiencing family violence.

The Victorian government remains committed to responding to family violence and sexual assault. We have an important strategic framework to address violence through the Action Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children, 2012–2015. The Action Plan is a whole-of-government plan which takes a direct approach to addressing violence against women and children. It contains practical actions underpinned by an investment of over \$90 million per year, so that our long term vision of women and children living free from violence in Victoria becomes a reality over time.

Bayswater North Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 27 November 2013

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

I am advised that in accordance with the division 6 hazardous materials audit report completed on 22 November 2013, the only asbestos that is contained in each of the two relocatable buildings is two asbestos porch floors and one asbestos heater flue per building. All asbestos material will be removed in accordance with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's comprehensive asbestos management systems prior to the relocation.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 6 February 2014

Wild horses: control

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 26 June 2013

REPLY:

As the member may be aware, Parks Victoria has been actively engaging with local community groups, including the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, to assist with a number of programs. However, in this instance, Parks Victoria could not source Australian contractors with the experience and capability to guarantee the desired outcome of total eradication of the population in question.

The eradication of this pest population required specialist expertise, high level of fitness to work in remote and rugged terrain, radio and satellite tracking, and specially trained dogs. The selected company had the capability to perform this task, having worked intensively and continuously for three weeks in very rugged and isolated country, and achieving the desired result.

The tender for the eradication of feral goats in the northern section of the Snowy River National Park was awarded to a company in May 2012, in accordance with the government's procurement policy. The company was selected due to its worldwide experience and capability as appropriate for the task.

Volunteers have been used in previous successful campaigns to reduce the local feral animal population and recognised they could not undertake the specialised operation.

If Parks Victoria had attempted to achieve this outcome with volunteers the costs associated with supervision and ongoing management of volunteers and the ongoing cost of managing the environmental damage caused by a continued feral animal population would eventually overtake the cost of the tendered project.

The member ought consider this an instructive lesson in cost/benefit analysis.

Water management investigation

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 17 October 2013

REPLY:

The VEAC investigation into freshwater-dependent ecosystems has not been established as it would be a duplication of work undertaken by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

The Victorian Waterway Management Strategy was recently released, which provides clear, holistic policy directions for managing rivers, estuaries and wetlands across Victoria.

The Strategy aims to maintain or improve the condition of our waterways so they can support environmental, social, cultural and economic values that are important to communities.

It also provides direction for regional decision-making, investment and management issues for waterways, as well as the roles and responsibilities of management agencies.

Western suburbs air pollution

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 12 November 2013

REPLY:

I am informed that:

As the Victorian government's environmental regulator, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is responsible for monitoring and responding to pollution reports affecting the environment and community (including odour). EPA has received 48 odour reports in and around the Caroline Springs area since July 2013.

In response to community reports of odour and litter in the area, EPA has carried out multiple inspections of local sites at which there are activities and processes that can generate odour, including a landfill at Derrimut owned by Boral Recycling Pty Ltd and an adjoining composting facility owned by PineGro Pty Ltd, that share the same site.

EPA's most recent inspection of these sites was carried out on 17 October 2013, where they provided advice to site managers on controlling potential odour sources. EPA will continue to closely monitor the performance of these sites, and any other potential odour sources.

EPA recommends residents report odour on the EPA pollution hotline 1300 372 843. This will help ensure that officers can respond when odour is occurring in the local area and trace odour back to its source.

The Victorian government's Getting Full Value: the Victorian Waste and Resource Recovery Policy will also ensure that our waste management and resource recovery system will protect public health and preserve local amenity by continually improving the performance of waste and resource recovery facilities and operations to avoid or minimise the risk of harm to the community.

Roadworks speed limits

Raised with: Minister for Roads

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 27 November 2013

REPLY:

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

VicRoads generally imposes conditions for roadwork sites to minimise adverse impacts to the road network, particularly preventing lane closures being implemented during peak hours, and speed reductions to be removed, provided it is safe to do so.

Roadwork speed limits are sometimes required afterhours due to safety concerns with a changed condition of the road. Examples of this include loose stones, no line marking, narrow lanes, edge drop-offs and temporary hazards close to traffic lanes. It is not uncommon for a worksite to have a reduced speed limit afterhours for these reasons. If it is not immediately clear to the motorist as to the reason of the reduced speed limit, appropriate warning signs should be in place to alert motorists of the associated risks.

VicRoads has systems and processes in place to ensure that worksite speed limits being implemented on arterial roads are safe for both motorists and workers, and are consistent with community expectations.

If motorists observe speed limits on arterial roads that are not consistent with their expectations, they should be encouraged to contact VicRoads on 13 11 70 to report their concerns.

Royston Range logging

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 27 November 2013

REPLY:

The Victorian coalition government supports the significant role the timber industry has in our state's economy, particularly in providing employment in rural and regional areas. The timber industry coexists with tourism and other industries in a range of areas across Victoria. Ensuring there are a range of industries working side by side is crucial to providing diversity in local economies. The timber industry has long been a part of the Rubicon Valley, and itself has contributed to the historic appeal of the region to visitors, through its old tramways and mill sites.

I am well aware of the range of other popular activities that the Rubicon Valley supports, including the educational and recreational camps, as well as horse riding, bushwalking and cycling. The forest in the Royston Range has been zoned to meet this range of uses, with the area closest to Rubicon excluded from harvesting in a Special Protection Zone to ensure immediate foreground views are not impacted by operations. Consideration is also given to visual impact of harvesting during the planning of VicForests' operations.

VicForests' staff have met with Rubicon Valley residents to discuss their concerns. VicForests has also shared information with the Shire of Murrindindi regarding planning for operations in the area. Unfortunately time constraints prevent me from visiting the area at this time, however I have spoken to and will continue to speak with Cindy McLeish, the Member for Seymour, who has visited the valley and discussed the issues with residents, and VicForests and DEPI staff.

I encourage residents to continue to be involved in consultation on future timber harvesting operations. As you are aware, the community has an opportunity to raise concerns about VicForests' planned operations during the Timber Release Plan community consultation period each year. VicForests advertises this process in local papers and other mediums including its website.

The government recognises that the Victorian wine industry is a vital part of the state's agricultural sector and it is critical that we address the threat posed by smoke taint. The Centre for Expertise in Smoke Taint Research, located five kilometres south of Mildura is a national collaboration that aims to find solutions for the wine industry and fire and land managers. The centre was established as a result of the Victorian coalition government's election commitment to invest \$4 million into researching smoke taint. It aims to explore strategies to manage and reduce uptake of smoke taint compounds, and communicate results with industry.

Macarthur feedlot

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

Raised by: Mr Lenders

Raised on: 28 November 2013

REPLY:

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) was made aware of the Chenoweth's concerns with regard to the Macarthur feedlot and composting operations in late June 2013. DEPI officers have since been collaborating with Moyne Shire Council, the Environmental Protection Authority, the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme, the Australian Lot Feeders Association and the feedlot operator to provide technical advice and support.

I understand that constructive steps are being taken by the Moyne Shire Council, with assistance from the DEPI and the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme, to work with the operator towards a satisfactory resolution.

East–west link

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Ms Mikakos

Raised on: 28 November 2013

REPLY:

The Linking Melbourne Authority has released its Comprehensive Impact Statement in relation to the East West Tunnel.

Based on the Comprehensive Impact Statement, its associated technical reports, Zoos Victoria's knowledge of its animals, consultation with international zoos and the zoo's own professional skills, Zoos Victoria has advised me that there will be no significant impact on the Melbourne Zoo animals and visitors as a result of the construction of the East West Tunnel.

Zoos Victoria has expressed its satisfaction that the Linking Melbourne Authority has taken into account the potential impacts that we raised at the start of the consultation process.

Zoos Victoria will continue to work with the Linking Melbourne Authority and with potential contractors throughout the project.

Marina Reserve, St Kilda, skate park

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 11 December 2013

REPLY:

Since the completion of the skate park, the facility has been a huge success.

The City of Port Phillip is the appointed manager of the facility at Marina Reserve.

I would be happy to consider any applications from the City of Port Phillip should they wish to make the facility available for skating competitions.