

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

**14 and 15 April 2015**

**(Extract from book 5)**

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**Procedure Committee** — The President, Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Davis, Mr Jennings, Ms Pennicuik, Ms Pulford, Ms Tierney and Ms Wooldridge.

### Legislative Council standing committees

**Economy Infrastructure Legislation Committee** — Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Dalidakis, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

**Economy Infrastructure References Committee** — Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Dalidakis, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

**Environment and Planning Legislation Committee** — Ms Bath, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Leane, Ms Shing, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

**Environment and Planning References Committee** — Ms Bath, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Leane, Ms Shing, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

**Legal and Social Issues Legislation Committee** — Ms Fitzherbert, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

**Legal and Social Issues References Committee** — Ms Fitzherbert, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

### Joint committees

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**Dispute Resolution Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O'Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh

**Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Elasmr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mr Perera and Ms Ryall.

**Electoral Matters Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Dalidakis and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon, Mr Northe and Ms Spence.

**Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Mr Battin, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson and Ms Ward.

**Family and Community Development Committee** — (*Council*): Ms Lovell. (*Assembly*): Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards, Ms Kealy, Ms McLeish, and Ms Sheed.

**House Committee** — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson.

**Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mrs Fyffe, Mr Hibbins, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Richardson, Ms Thomson and Mr Wells.

**Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee** — (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward.

**Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kealy, Ms Kilkeny and Mr Pesutto.

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*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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The Hon. D. K. DRUM

**Leader of the Greens:**  
Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Bath, Ms Melina <sup>2</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>1</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	V1LJ
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 25 February 2015

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 15 April 2015

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;  
DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;  
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;  
SFP — Shooters and Fishers Party; V1LJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs



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**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

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

**Tuesday, 14 April 2015**

**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Rich-Phillips  
**Directed to:** Special Minister of State  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

There is no whole of Victorian government policy on the use of 13/1300 numbers by Victorian government agencies and departments.

13/1300 numbers are frequently utilised by public and private entities as they offer a state/national presence and offer routing features that normal phone numbers are not capable of providing.

The cost of calls to 13/1300 numbers are actually shared by the caller and the business. Noting this, the cost to individuals calling 13/1300 numbers is also influenced by the type of telephone used to make the call. Calls from landlines are charged at a fixed local call rate, currently set at \$0.49 per call. Calls from mobile phones are timed and charges are set by the caller's telephone company.

Any additional costs for calls to 13/1300 numbers are applied by the caller's telephone carriage service provider. Constituents with concerns about additional charges for calls to 13/1300 numbers should discuss this with their phone service company.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Tierney  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian Government has committed to establishing Victoria as a global centre of learning and development excellence—a cohesive education and training system that relentlessly pursues excellence and opportunity for every child, regardless of their background or their starting point for learning.

The Education State cannot be achieved without a vibrant, energized and expert regional presence that provides sufficient support to principals. I am conscious that principals have felt unsupported and that regional resources have been spread too thinly.

I have asked the Department of Education and Training to develop a range of options to help re-shape its regional presence. I appreciate that principals want clarity around the future of regions as soon as possible, and to that end work is progressing on this as a matter of priority.

The outcomes of the consultation process will be publically released later this year. It is expected that additional support will be provided to regions from 2016. The process for change will depend on the model selected, through extensive consultation with school principals.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Pennicuik  
**Directed to:** Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Auditor General's office tabled a report into the Management and Oversight of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve in Parliament on 17 September 2014, during the term of the former government.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is working closely with the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust to improve its governance arrangements, including the development of an appropriate suite of documents that meet good governance practices for public sector entities.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

As McGregor Road is a local road managed by the Cardinia Shire Council, your question should be directed to the Council for its consideration.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Leane  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Minister for Education: I am informed as follows:

The Leave Replacement portal in the Student Resource Package system was developed for managing all leave reimbursements, both short and long term, and brings together two previously separate systems and processes into a single module and entry point for all schools. I am pleased to announce the leave replacement portal went live to all schools on 24 February 2015 and approximately \$7.1 million has been reimbursed to schools to date.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Shing  
**Directed to:** Minister for Corrections  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

On 25 February 2015, Fulham Correctional Centre at Sale opened 54 new medium-security prison beds to ease pressure on the prison system. Prisoners have now started moving into the cells and beds are expected to be progressively filled over the coming weeks. Each unit includes three self-contained cells designed to be used in a medium-security prison. With the opening of the new beds, Fulham can now accommodate more than 940 prisoners.

Fulham Correctional Centre remains an important source of local employment and economic development in the Gippsland region. The 18 three-cell portable accommodation units have generated 40 jobs during construction and 10 ongoing prison jobs.

With Victoria's prison population increasing significantly over the past four years, these beds will help relieve a system under significant pressure. The Government is working with Corrections Victoria to address pressure on the prison system including announcing ongoing funding for 357 temporary beds, which were previously funded up to the end of this financial year. Further work to reduce pressure on the prison system and address increasing recidivism rates has also commenced.

### **Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ondarchie  
**Directed to:** Minister for Emergency Services  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Country Fire Authority has advised that the Epping CFA Fire Brigade Medium Rescue Vehicle is included in the '2014-15 CFA Medium Rescue Vehicle Production Program'. The program involves upgrading Medium Rescue Vehicles to the specifications of Heavy Rescue Vehicles. The program is due to be completed by June 2016.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

Tyre stockpiles can impact the Victorian community and environment, predominantly due to the risk of fire. There are a number of high risk sites across the state, including a very large stockpile in Stawell.

To manage the fire risk in the short-term, an interim Waste Management Policy (Storage of Waste Tyres) was introduced by the previous Coalition government on 29 April 2014. The waste management policy, developed by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) requires that tyres are stored in compliance with fire services guidelines.

The EPA and fire services are inspecting high risk sites across Victoria, including the very large stockpile in Stawell, to ensure that waste tyres are being stored in compliance with the Waste Management Policy. The Stawell site occupier has been issued with an EPA notice with instructions to develop an emergency management plan in compliance with the fire services guidelines.

The fire services are also actively protecting the Stawell site at times of high fire risk. The Country Fire Authority maintain an emergency management plan for the site and undertake regular routine inspections.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

Victorians increasingly prefer to access government services online. Consequently, Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) has a digital first strategy which provides comprehensive web information that can be used on a 24/7 basis and through which consumers and traders receive detailed information about issues that affect them. CAV's website receives on average over 200,000 visits each month.

CAV also provides a telephone enquiry and advice service that is available 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

The hours of operation of CAV's shopfront service in Exhibition Street Melbourne have been limited to 12pm to 2pm, Monday to Friday. The changed operating hours commenced on Monday 9 February 2015. The change of hours reflects a considerable decline in face-to-face transactions over recent years, particularly with the expansion of CAV's online information and advice service and the transfer of a range of transactions (business names, liquor licences) to other agencies. A drop box is available to consumers outside opening hours.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Tierney  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 25 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

Thank you for forwarding your constituency question relating to the delivery of Bannockburn P-12 school.

Bannockburn Primary School is being relocated to Milton Street, Bannockburn through the New Schools Public Private Partnership (PPP) Project. The PPP Project will deliver 13 schools across Victoria's fastest growing communities. The new schools will help to alleviate pressure in Victoria's growth suburbs and provide greater education choices for Victorian children and families.

As you have noted, on 5 February the Government announced it was acting on its election commitment to expand the relocation of Bannockburn Primary School to include Year 7 to Year 12 education provision and deliver Bannockburn as a Prep-Year 12 school.

The design and layout of Bannockburn P-12 and the other schools within the Project will be determined through the competitive tender process. This process will ensure the delivery of exemplary and innovative school design that is consistent with the Government's education agenda.

The PPP tender was released to the two experienced bidders on 25 February 2015 and the final bids are due in mid-June 2015. Following the receipt and evaluation of proposals a contract is expected to be signed by October.

The opening date for the new primary school component and further detail on the timing for the secondary school component will be confirmed following the conclusion of the tender process.

The Government acknowledges the need for secondary education provision within the growing community of Bannockburn and is taking action to deliver its commitment to the Bannockburn community.

**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 25 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

There is currently a pedestrian refuge on Fletcher Road to allow pedestrians to stage their crossing. The sight distance in both directions is adequate and there is a pedestrian fence either side of the refuge to provide an additional level of safety.

A proposal for pedestrian-operated signals on Fletcher Road in Frankston will be considered for funding under a future program.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Mulino  
**Directed to:** Minister for Local Government  
**Asked on:** 25 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Cardinia Ratepayers and Residents Association through the Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury and Finance for raising the current Government's election commitment to implement the Fairer Rating System.

The Government is committed to a policy of 'capping' local government rate increases at CPI. This policy will ensure that local governments do not impose unreasonable and excessive rates on families, communities and businesses.

Based on information reported in Cardinia Shire Council Annual Reports, rates have increased between 5.9 to 6.9 per cent in the last five financial years.

I agree with the Member for Eastern Victoria that it is important that we strike the right balance with the policy. While we want councils to seek efficiencies in the way they operate, councils should be allowed to raise the revenue necessary to provide the infrastructure and services that is needed and wanted by the community.

Ratepayers should feel empowered to participate in the priority-setting and decision-making that underpins the local government budgeting process. The Fairer Rating System aims to increase community involvement in budgeting process to allow councils to better engage their communities so that they can make informed decisions on how best to respond to their community's needs and aspirations. This extends to some of the hard choices and trade offs for the community and local councils that may have to be made in balancing affordability with meeting needs.

Should there be a reasonable case for councils to raise more revenue than what is allowed under the cap, councils will be able to make an application to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) for an exemption from the cap.

To ensure that all views are properly considered, the Government has commissioned the ESC to undertake an inquiry and to make recommendations on how best to implement the Fairer Rating System. The public and local councils would have the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the ESC for how the system should work prior to the ESC reporting to the Minister for Finance and myself by 31 October this year.

### Northern Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Ms Symes  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 26 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

The Victorian Government has confirmed the Western route for the Kilmore-Wallan Bypass.

The Minister for Planning's Assessment of the Kilmore-Wallan Bypass EES Inquiry and the Planning Panel's Advisory Committee Report, released on 11 March 2015, is the final step in the process of selecting the preferred route.

The assessment recommended the Western option as it would have the lowest environmental, social and amenity effect on the community.

On 11 March 2015, I visited Monument Hill in the company of the Member for Northern Victoria, to make the announcement to members of the local community.

The priority now is for VicRoads to get the appropriate statutory approvals in accordance with the Minister for Planning's Assessment, finalise planning and then submit a funding proposal to government for consideration.

The announcement of the Western option also allows VicRoads to proceed with finalising designs to construct a roundabout to improve safety at the notorious Broadford-Kilmore Road / Northern Highway intersection. The roundabout is an important part of the Western option.

### Eastern Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Ms Shing  
**Directed to:** Minister for Training and Skills  
**Asked on:** 26 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The Government's \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund is already flowing to TAFEs in need. Seven TAFE institutes have already received a share in the first \$20 million of the TAFE Rescue Fund.

The fast-tracked TAFE Rescue Fund grant will help TAFEs in financial turmoil to stay afloat, so they can retain staff and improve training, courses and job opportunities for students.

### Western Metropolitan Region

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade  
**Asked on:** 26 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The small business bus visited the western suburbs of Melbourne on the following dates:

– Tuesday 10 March 2015, 10am–4pm, Newport

- Wednesday 11 March 2015, 10am–4pm, Footscray
- Thursday 12 March 2015, 10am–4pm, Keilor

The small business bus is due to visit the western suburbs of Melbourne on the following dates in April:

- Monday, 20 April 2015, 10am–4pm, Sunshine
- Tuesday, 21 April 2015, 10am–4pm, Sunbury
- Wednesday, 22 April 2015, 10am–4pm, St Albans

There will be further visits to the Western Metropolitan region in 2015, which will be announced once the schedule is finalised.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 26 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

In 2012-13, VicRoads carried out the Point Nepean Road Study to investigate traffic and safety issues on Point Nepean Road, between Rosebud and Portsea, and to develop a strategic plan for the future arterial road network in the southern Mornington Peninsula.

As identified by the study, VicRoads is currently developing a proposal to improve safety and reduce congestion at the Point Nepean Road and Truemans Road intersection.

The proposal is expected to reduce delays for cars and buses, improve safety for cyclists and reduce 'rat-running' in local streets. Improvements at this intersection have been identified as a short-term measure to ease congestion, and will be considered for future funding.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  
**Asked on:** 17 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

Following the creation of Barmah National Park, the Victorian Government allowed for residual timber from past commercial logging to be collected and taken away for domestic firewood use for a limited period only.

Domestic firewood was made available until the end of the current autumn season, being 30 June 2015. These arrangements were not altered by the previous Coalition Government.

Parks Victoria is working closely with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to continue identifying suitable sites for future firewood collection areas in northern Victoria.

The Energy for the Regions Program commenced in March 2011 and is fully committed with 19 regional gas projects at various stages of development.

Under the program, Brookfield Infrastructure Group (Australia) (Brookfield) has been contracted to supply natural gas to 11 regional towns, including Nathalia, using a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) delivery solution.

Brookfield has commenced the CNG project and is currently in the process of procuring the land required for its CNG infrastructure at each town, negotiating engineering, procurement and construction contracts and identifying environmental, safety and planning requirements.

Based on decisions made by the previous Coalition Government, Barmah is not one of the towns selected under the program and Nathalia is scheduled to have access to reticulated natural gas by mid-2017.

The Victorian Government is proceeding to implement all of the gas projects as contracted in the respective Development Agreements.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Emergency Services  
**Asked on:** 17 March 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of volunteer and career firefighters of the Narre Warren Country Fire Authority (CFA) Brigade who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

The Government has committed to a range of measures to better support firefighters, including the recruitment of 350 CFA career firefighters; new CFA stations and upgrades; installation of toilet and washroom facilities at up to 100 rural CFA stations; delivery of 50 Medium Tankers; and expansion of the Emergency Medical Response Program.

The Government has also committed to implementing presumptive legislation for career and volunteer firefighters. The proposed new Victorian legislation will reflect the cancers covered and service thresholds in the current Tasmanian legislation and will consult with relevant stakeholders before finalising it.

The Government has also committed \$12.6 million for new or upgrade CFA stations. The Government will honour the \$100,000 upgrade commitment for the Narre Warren East CFA fire station.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Emergency Services  
**Asked on:** 18 March 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) volunteers, including volunteers of the Loch Sport SES Unit who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

The Loch Sport SES Unit has 28 volunteer members and, headed by a Unit Controller, and responds to an average of 38 requests for assistance each year. The unit has one four wheel drive vehicle used extensively in flood and storm events and a storm trailer to carry equipment required in those events.

The Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) is an ongoing program funded by the Victorian Government, which provides local emergency services volunteer groups, including SES Units access to grants for operational equipment, vehicles, trucks, tankers, watercraft, trailers and minor facility improvements.

Applications for funding through VESEP for 2015-16 are now open. I would encourage the unit to apply for funding through the program. The Loch Sport Unit Controller should contact the Volunteer Support Officer in



SES' East Region for further details on VESEP and how to apply. The unit should also seek support from the SES' East Regional Manager, Mr Jamie Twidale for this project.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Tierney  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 18 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

I can confirm that, in accordance with our election commitment, on 26 February 2015 the Surf Coast Council was offered the property to purchase for \$500,000 on a restricted-use basis to allow it to be used for "public park and recreation purposes". This offer was also conditional on Council rezoning the land from General Residential to Public Park and Recreation.

I am advised that the matter was considered at Council's meeting of 24 March 2015 where Council agreed to accept the offer and authorised the CEO to execute the Contact of Sale.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Springle  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 18 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The timing and allocation of funding for the delivery of new schools, including Keysborough South Primary, is considered annually as part of the State Budget process. As part of this process residential growth, demographic change and enrolment trends are analysed across Victoria to ensure new schools are delivered in areas of highest need.

Consultation is also undertaken with local councils, the Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning, and developers to accurately predict growth at a local level.

I am advised that there is currently capacity in the Keysborough network, which includes Chandler Park Primary, Wallarano Primary and Keysborough Primary, to accommodate short term growth forecasts.

The Department is aware that Keysborough South is a growing community. Enrolment and population forecasts will be refreshed annually to reassess the timing for the delivery of Keysborough South Primary.

The Department will continue to work with the City of Greater Dandenong and other relevant stakeholders, to monitor and plan for government education provision in the area to ensure all Victorian students have access to high quality education as the population continues to grow.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  
**Asked on:** 18 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Government believes that water is critical to the social fabric of our communities and we will always work to do all we can to ensure communities water needs are met.

I have had extensive briefings about the challenges facing all of our regions and will continue to work with individual water authorities to listen and deal with issues on a case by case basis.

I have been briefed on local water issues by Member for Shepparton Suzanna Sheed as well as Government representatives in the upper house and had the opportunity to meet with many members of the community, including local irrigators, at a recent visit to the region that had been in my diary for a number of weeks.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Dunn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  
**Asked on:** 18 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor government is committed to preserving the Healesville Freeway Reserve as public open space and investing in infrastructure such as bike and pedestrian paths.

We have begun the process to transfer the land from VicRoads to the Crown so that it becomes Crown land reserved for public purposes under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.

Once this transfer is complete the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning will work with Parks Victoria on appropriate land management arrangements.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Young  
**Directed to:** Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  
**Asked on:** 19 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

Kow Swamp was proclaimed as a sanctuary for native game under the Game Act 1890. Hunting has not occurred since 1911.

Kow Swamp is closed to hunting this duck hunting season by a notice under section 86 of the Wildlife Act 1975.

Current hunting opportunities in the vicinity of Kow Swamp include pest animal hunting. In addition, there are duck hunting opportunities in state forest and the state game reserves nearby. Whilst duck hunting is not permitted at Kow Swamp during the open season, hunting can occur on adjacent private land with the permission of the landowner.

The Land Conservation Council's final recommendations for the Murray Valley study area in 1985 noted that Kow Swamp was a wildlife sanctuary and bank erosion was a significant problem in the area. The Land Conservation Council recommended that Kow Swamp be used for:

- (a) storage and distribution of water for irrigation and domestic purposes and flood mitigation;

(b) nature conservation and recreation to the extent consistent with (a) above;  
and that:

- (c) native tree-planting programs be initiated in consultation with the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands to enhance nature conservation and recreation values; and
- (d) occupancies, licensed pump stations, and grazing continue at the discretion of the land manager consistent with (a) above and that no further exclusive occupancies be permitted on public land surrounding these storages and that these areas be reserved under section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 for water supply purposes.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 19 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

National Playgroup Week celebrates the important role that playgroups play in our local communities. Approximately 40,000 children from 30,000 families attend playgroups across Victoria.

Playgroups bring families together for fun and enjoyment and also play a vital role in connecting families. At playgroups, families can learn from each other and share helpful information about their experiences and local resources. Playgroups provide opportunities for children to be involved in play activities, and learn to socialise with other children. Being part of a playgroup can make a real difference to the lives of children and families.

The Andrews Labor Government's \$50,000 investment will enable new playgroups across Victoria to apply for small grants through the 'Great Start Community Playgroup Fund'. The grants program will be administered by Playgroup Victoria and will support new community playgroups and provide practical resources such as play equipment and books when they are first established.

In addition, the Department of Education and Training also funds supported playgroups in Melton, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Wyndham and Hobsons Bay in the Western Metropolitan Region. These playgroups aim to engage disadvantaged families who may have difficulties accessing community playgroups and other early childhood services and supports and aim to improve the early home learning environment for young children.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Special Minister of State  
**Asked on:** 19 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

As the member will be aware, community and public events are organised by agencies and departments across the government sector. This includes the use of photographers and the distribution of invitations. Community and public events continue to be delivered under the same arrangements that applied under the former Baillieu/Napthine Coalition Governments.

**Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Patten  
**Directed to:** Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade  
**Asked on:** 19 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Hon Martin Foley MP, as Minister for Creative Industries, has direct responsibility for development and growth of the fashion sector in Victoria, including the recently held 2015 Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival (VAMFF).

The Victorian Government supports the annual VAMFF to promote business growth, as well as industry best practice and innovation. The Victorian Government will continue to be a major sponsor of VAMFF until 2017.

Therefore, I am looking forward to working with Minister Foley on ways in which the State's small businesses can leverage this leading event in future years.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Symes  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 19 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

Playgroups play an important role in our local communities with approximately 40,000 children from 30,000 families attending playgroups across Victoria.

They bring families together for fun and enjoyment and also play a vital role in connecting families. At playgroups, families can learn from each other and share helpful information about their experiences and local resources.

Playgroups provide opportunities for children to be involved in play activities, and learn to socialise with other children. Being part of a playgroup can make a real difference to the lives of children and families.

The Andrews Labor Government's \$50,000 investment will enable new playgroups across Victoria to apply for small grants through the 'Great Start Community Playgroup Fund'. The grants program will be administered by Playgroup Victoria and will support new community playgroups and provide practical resources such as play equipment and books when they are first established.

Playgroup Victoria are well placed to provide advice to families about setting up a new community playgroup in their area including in the Northern Victorian Region.

**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

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

**Wednesday, 15 April 2015**

**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Springle  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 26 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

The Andrews Labor Government, as part of its pre-election commitments has agreed to invest \$100 million to improve Victoria's bus networks, adding more routes, expanding others, restoring cut services and fixing the missing links in Melbourne's growth areas. This commitment includes significant improvements to the City of Casey's bus network, including options for improved public transport access to Dandenong South.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Health  
**Asked on:** 17 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I acknowledge the constituency question raised by the Member for Western Victoria Region Mr Simon Ramsay in relation to funding for the Healthy Ageing and Wellbeing Centre in Belmont which provides exercise programs in an aged and disability friendly environment.

I advise the Member for Western Victoria Region that the Hon Martin Foley MP, Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing has been responding to constituency concerns regarding this matter.

I am advised that St Laurence Community Services determined that the Healthy Ageing and Wellbeing Centre's gym is not financially viable and have made a business decision to close it.

Understandably, members of the community are disappointed about St Laurence's decision to close the centre however, the Victorian Government encourages all sporting facilities to be welcoming of all abilities. As part of the closure process, St Laurence have provided members with information about other local gyms and programs, including the City of Greater Geelong's LiveWell Health and Fitness Program for people aged over 55 years and for younger people with pre-existing medical conditions.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Shing  
**Directed to:** Minister for Training and Skills  
**Asked on:** 19 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The former Liberal Government's \$1.2 billion cuts to TAFE had a devastating impact on TAFE and training in Victoria. TAFEs were forced into mergers out of financial desperation. Campuses were closed. Hundreds of courses were cut and fees skyrocketed. Some 3,000 jobs have been lost in TAFE institutes.

That's why the Andrews Government has committed to rebuild the TAFE sector, to re-open closed campuses, upgrade TAFE buildings, workshops and labs, and provide cash support where necessary. Our \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund is crucial to enabling our TAFEs to deliver more training that supports job creation.

The Government moved quickly after the election to fast track \$20 million from the Fund to support TAFEs most in need. Federation Training received \$2.5 million of this TAFE Rescue funding to secure its financial position.

The first \$2.5 million of TAFE Rescue funding to Federation Training will ensure that the TAFE will play a major role in supporting the local economy and employment. It will help the institute to establish a new student support team, which will help keep at-risk learners engaged in their training and reduce the number of people dropping out. The funds will also allow Federation Training to increase its engagement with local industry and refocus course offerings to better meet local training needs.