

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

23, 24 and 25 June 2015

(Extract from book 9)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. A. Somyurek, MLC
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Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Drum, Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, Ms Mikakos, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, and Ms Wooldridge.

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

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Dalidakis, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning — Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, #Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — Ms Fitzherbert, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.

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 Elasmarr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe 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*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson, Mr Tilley and Ms Ward.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Finn. (*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*): 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 Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto.

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

Council — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	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
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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			

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² 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, 23 June 2015

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 6 May 2015

ANSWER:

Southland station is designed to be accessed via Southland Shopping Centre. Community consultation on the design and the location of the new station closed on 1 May 2015. The feedback is being considered and a report back to the community is expected in June 2015. Meanwhile, PTV has called for expressions of interest to finalise the design, and construct the station, which is expected to be completed in 2017.

The *Railway station car parking fund* is being used to identify locations already owned by VicTrack which could be used to expand car parking across the network.

There are no current plans to use Sir William Fry Reserve as a car park for Southland station. The preliminary design and artist impressions of the new station, including locality maps, are available for download on the PTV website: <<http://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/projects/railway-stations/new-station-at-southland/>>

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 6 May 2015

ANSWER:

VicRoads has completed the initial works of the Bacchus Marsh Traffic Improvements Package, which included safety improvements on Hopetoun Park Road and an upgrade of the exit ramp from the Western Freeway to Bacchus Marsh Road.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to the Bacchus Marsh Traffic Improvement Package and is currently seeking a funding contribution from the Federal Government to enable the works to be delivered.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 7 May 2015

ANSWER:

VicRoads has an ongoing program to remove peppercorn trees on arterial roads routes as part of its noxious weed program.

Over the past five years, a number of peppercorn trees have been treated on the Murray Valley Highway between Cobram and Yarrawonga.

This has been an ongoing program with some works completed in the past few weeks.

VicRoads has offered to have a joint inspection of the Murray Valley Highway to gain a better understand the concerns raised.

VicRoads will continue to monitor trees on the Murray Valley Highway for mistletoe and if it is ascertained that a tree is under threat, then VicRoads will put a strategy in place to manage the impacted trees.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 26 May 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Government is committed to delivering the Barwon Health-North project for the residents of the northern suburbs of Geelong.

To this end, officers from the Department of Health and Human Services have been working closely with Barwon Health to progress this important piece of health infrastructure.

Capital planning consultants are currently finalising masterplanning for the Barwon Health-North facility based on extensive user group consultation with Barwon Health staff. Detailed design and documentation will then be undertaken prior to tendering the construction.

In addition, I am particularly pleased to confirm that the City of Greater Geelong has endorsed the masterplan for Northern ARC which includes Barwon Health-North on this site. The Andrews Labor Government, the Department of Health and Human Services, the City of Greater Geelong and Barwon Health have worked together to finalise the location of this new facility, which will ensure Geelong North families can access the health care they need closer to home.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 26 May 2015

ANSWER:

On behalf of the Minister, I can confirm that Mr Thwaites and Ms McLeod are not members of the selection panel to shortlist, interview or nominate candidates for the Minister's consideration.

As published on 3 June, the selection panel comprises:

- Craig Cook - former board member of Goulburn-Murray Water;
- Peter Wilson - Chair, Yarra Valley Water;
- Sonia Petering - board member Transport Accident Commission and former Chair, Rural Finance Commission;
- Peter Tuohey - President, Victorian Farmers Federation; and
- Eleanor Underwood - former Chair, South East Water and Melbourne Water.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Tierney
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 27 May 2015

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) will work with the community to build on the Inspector-General's recommendations.

During his review, the Inspector-General sought submissions from the Victorian public. He received 127 responses from individuals and organisations. DELWP and EMV will be talking to experts and stakeholders to discuss the report, test the recommendations and see what is most valuable to them and then build this into the government's response. DELWP and EMV will also work with the Inspector-General to contact those that made submissions to the review to discuss recommendations and the government's response process.

DELWP and EMV will take the report to a series of state and regional level stakeholder roundtables. These conversations will be a key part of developing the government's response. In Western Victoria Region, DELWP and EMV will engage with the Grampians Bushfire Management Roundtable. The Roundtable has worked with DELWP for several years and has representation from a variety of industries and interest groups, including:

- Barengi Gadjin Land Council
- Central Victorian Apiarists Association
- CFA District 5 Serra Group
- CFA District 17 Grampians Group
- Friends of Grampians
- Glenelg Hopkins CMA
- Goulburn Wimmera Mallee Water
- Grampians Health
- Grampians Park Advisory Group
- Grampians Tourism
- Grampians Wine Growers
- Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation
- Hamilton Field Naturalists
- Horsham City Council
- Landcare
- Martang Registered Aboriginal Party
- Parks Victoria
- Rural City of Ararat
- Southern Grampians Shire
- Victorian Climbers Club

– Victorian Farmers Federation

The Grampians Bushfire Management Roundtable will meet on 23 June to discuss the Inspector-General's report.

There will also be a small number of engagement sessions with a cross-section of high bushfire risk communities around Victoria. One of these will be held in the member's electorate, in Anglesea. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for 29 June.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 28 May 2015

ANSWER:

Public Transport Victoria will soon commence consultation for the Network Development Plan - Regional Victoria. As part of the plan, communities will have the opportunity to identify their travel needs and discuss potential service solutions to meet local needs for travel both within regional Victoria and to Melbourne. Service delivery solutions, such as sprinter trains between Shepparton and Seymour, can be considered as part of the Network Development Plan - Regional Victoria.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Tourism and Major Events
Asked on: 28 May 2015

ANSWER:

Thank you for your interest in Brae restaurant at Birregurra making the World's Best Restaurant Awards. Brae placed 87th in the world.

I congratulate Brae on their success. To have Brae place 87th in the World's Best Restaurant Awards is a record achievement for Victoria, reflecting our unique combination of innovative chefs and some of the freshest produce in the world along with award winning wines, beers and ciders.

Brae has received significant recognition winning numerous awards including the Australian Gourmet Traveller 2015 New Restaurant of the Year, Regional Restaurant of the Year and The Age Good Food Guide 2015 Restaurant of the Year with Three hats. Brae also performed well in The Australian Financial Review Australia's Top Restaurants, placing fourth. Victoria performed extremely well with a total of 37 restaurants in the Top 100 of which 33 are Melbourne restaurants and four from Regional Victoria.

Food and wine is a key strength for Victoria, a critical component of the brand and a key driver of travel to the state.

Tourism Victoria continues to profile food and wine as a prominent brand pillar of Victoria to international and domestic visitors through its marketing activities by showcasing innovation, fresh local produce and stunning regional settings.

Brae's recent success adds to Victoria's food and wine credentials and has been promoted across the following marketing initiatives:

- Profiled in all of Tourism Victoria's public relations and social media channels achieving significant publicity for the region both domestically and internationally.
- Tourism Victoria, with partners Tourism Australia, brought the Chair of the World's Top 50 restaurants and four of the other international judges to Australia in November 2014 as part of the Restaurant Australia initiative (a factor in this regional restaurant making it into the top 100 restaurants in the world in 2015).

-
- Tweeted by Tourism Victoria's @Melbourne handle to 100,000 followers and their networks. Coverage has also appeared across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
 - Featured on the Best Restaurants page and in the restaurant highlights modules within Tourism Victoria's consumer website visitvictoria.com.
 - Furthermore, Victoria's food and wine experiences will be highlighted across branding and events associated with the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) hosted in Melbourne from 21-25 June 2015. ATE brings together Australia's tourism industry in a forum to showcase their products directly to tourism wholesalers and retailers from around the world. It is also a unique opportunity for international travel Buyers to experience Victoria first-hand.

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

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

Wednesday, 24 June 2015

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 26 May 2015

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government is committed to providing all government school students with access to modern and fit-for-purpose school facilities. This includes planning and providing new schools in areas of growth, and transferring relocatable buildings between schools to meet enrolment fluctuations.

The new primary school for South Melbourne will be built as a vertical school, with multiple-storey classrooms allowing as much space as possible to be used for open play. As with other inner-city schools of limited site size, nearby parks, sports grounds, recreational and community facilities will be used by the school to provide students with the amenities they need for a full and balanced education.

The complexity of the South Melbourne project and its location within an old industrial area requires careful planning, consultation with local government and community groups, and extensive soil works to ensure that the site is ready for construction. Further project funding will be provided after the planning stage reaches completion.

With regard to asbestos in relocatable buildings at Port Melbourne Primary School, the porch floor of the facility in question had the material removed and the area safely reinstated. An asbestos audit of the school was completed on 30 March 2015, and at this time, no further high-risk asbestos was identified. Removal of the remaining low risk asbestos in the relocatable buildings will be completed in the forthcoming June-July school holidays.

The Government has provided \$40 million in the recent State Budget to accelerate the replacement of old relocatable buildings which contain asbestos. The buildings to be replaced will be prioritised over the coming months, based on the amount of existing asbestos they may contain as well as their age and condition.

The 2015-16 State Budget also provided \$35 million to purchase 100 new relocatable buildings, including five double-storey units. These buildings will be allocated to schools in accordance with enrolment need and site size.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Attorney-General
Asked on: 27 May 2015

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government understands that the parents of very sick children who are currently using medicinal cannabis as part of their medical treatment face dire circumstances and extremely difficult choices.

In the current case, the complex legal and medical issues relating to the use of medicinal cannabis are still under review. The reference the government has made to the Victorian Law Reform Commission on the issue of medicinal cannabis is a crucial step in the government's aim of allowing legal access to medicinal cannabis in exceptional circumstances. The Commission's final report is due by 31 August 2015.

Seeking the agreement of the Chief Commissioner to an amnesty, which of necessity would require strict eligibility criteria, would appear to pre-empt the outcomes of the Commission's report. In particular, the report will provide important guidance to the government on matters such as how to identify patients who should be permitted in

exceptional circumstances to access medicinal cannabis, and what special considerations may justify access by persons aged under 18 years who lack the capacity to consent.

The government also anticipates that it would be difficult to implement such an amnesty in practice. Police officers would be required effectively to investigate each case to determine the eligibility of the persons involved and guard against any persons who wished to take advantage of the amnesty's legal protections, but did not meet its criteria.

In April, the government announced that Victorians suffering terminal illnesses or life-threatening conditions will be able to participate in medicinal cannabis clinical trials being conducted by the NSW Government.

These trials will help to enhance the evidence around medicinal cannabis, and will form an important part of the overarching work the Victorian Government is doing to legalise medicinal cannabis for use in exceptional circumstances.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 28 May 2015

ANSWER:

A well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing, is critical to keeping communities safe.

This is why in the 2015-16 State Budget, the government provided \$148.6 million to recruit, train and deploy 400 custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria. The custody officers may be progressively deployed to other locations over time, depending on resourcing needs and allocation of resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong.

The roll out of custody officers will begin this year, with 400 more police to be progressively released to focus on tackling crime and keeping the community safe. Custody officers will initially work at the following police stations: Sunshine, Dandenong, Heidelberg, Ballarat, Geelong and Broadmeadows.

The residents of Ballarat receive a 24-hour police response from across the Ballarat Police Service Area. Work is progressing on the new Ballarat West Police Station. The tender for construction of the building was recently advertised and the tender applications closed on 17 June 2015. It is expected that construction will commence later this year following the selection of a successful tender, with work to be completed by mid 2016.

During the twelve months to 31 March 2015, the number of offences recorded in the Ballarat Local Government Area decreased by 1.6 per cent. Property and deception offences decreased by 13.1 per cent, with notable decreases in property damage, theft and deception offences. Public order and security offences also recorded a decrease of 10.7 per cent. While crimes against the person offences increased overall, there was a 9.4 per cent decrease in assault and related offences.

The government is working with the Acting Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community, including family violence and the use of Ice and other illicit drugs. In supporting rural and regional communities across Victoria, the government also provided \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new encrypted digital radio network and new radios. The upgrade will enable police working in regional areas to communicate more securely, preventing members of the public from listening in on police operations.

Actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the recent State Budget with the government investing \$81.3 million to boost family violence support services and protect victims, including \$40 million for the Royal Commission into Family Violence and \$4 million to support stakeholder engagement.

I visited the Ballarat Police Station in January to discuss the impact Ice is having on regional Victoria. On 5 March 2015, the Andrews Government released the Ice Action Plan, which was developed on the advice of the Premier's

Ice Action Taskforce. The government's new investment of \$45.5 million, also outlined in the 2015-16 State Budget, focuses on priority initiatives to reduce the supply, demand and harm of a drug that is ruining lives.

Under the plan, the government will spend \$18 million over four years to expand drug and rehabilitation services especially in rural Victoria, helping to address the disproportionate impacts that Ice is having on rural and regional communities. A new Ice Help Line will be set up to support rural families, service providers and other community members as part of a \$4.7 million investment in broader community support services.

The government has also recently announced a total of \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 100,000 roadside random drug testing per year for the next two years.

Local police initiatives to tackle crime associated with illegal drugs includes the 'I Wish I'd Locked It' campaign encouraging people to lock their homes and vehicles. Victoria Police is also piloting a Policing for Prevention initiative at Ballarat by using an evidenced based approach to policing aimed at preventing crime and meeting the needs of victims through targeted face-to-face interactions with police.

I am assured by the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police that the allocation of police resources across Victoria is continuously monitored by respective command officers, with a view to maintaining an optimum law enforcement response.

The government understands the impact of crime has on local communities and believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to preventing crime. One of the most important approaches to keeping the communities safe is to provide young people with opportunities to encourage them to make positive choices for their future, through education, training, jobs and appropriate support, instead of being caught in a cycle of crime and incarceration.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 10 June 2015

ANSWER:

The government recognises that a well resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing, is critical to keeping communities safe.

The government understands the impact crime has on local businesses and residents, and believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to prevent crime. One of the most important approaches to keeping our communities safe is to provide young people with opportunities to encourage them to make positive choices for their future, through education, training, jobs and appropriate support, instead of being caught in a cycle of crime and incarceration.

This is why, in the 2015-16 State Budget the Government provided \$148.6 million to recruit, train and deploy 400 custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria. The custody officers may be progressively deployed to other locations over time, depending on resourcing needs and allocation of resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong.

The roll out of custody officers will begin this year, with 400 more police to be progressively released to focus on tackling crime and keeping the community safe. Custody officers will initially work at the following police stations: Sunshine, Dandenong, Heidelberg, Ballarat, Geelong and Broadmeadows.

The government is working with the Acting Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community, including family violence and the use of Ice and other illicit drugs. These issues remain a focus for Victoria Police.

Actions to address these key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-2016 State Budget with the Government investing \$81.3 million, including \$40 million for the Royal Commission into Family Violence and \$4

million to support stakeholder engagement. The Royal Commission will explore solutions for preventing and identifying strategies to strengthen Victoria's response to family violence. The Royal Commission's work began in February 2015 to investigate the entire support system from the ground up, and to report by early 2016.

On 5 March 2015, the Government released the Ice Action Plan which was developed on the advice of the Premier's Ice Action Taskforce. The Government's new investment of \$45.5 million, also outlined in the 2015-2016 State Budget, focuses on priority initiatives to reduce the supply, demand and harm of a drug that is ruining lives.

Under the plan, the government will spend \$18 million over four years to expand drug and rehabilitation services. A new Ice Help Line will be set up to support families, service providers and other community members as part of a \$4.7 million investment in broader community support services.

The government is also investing \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 100,000 roadside random drug tests per year for the next two years, taking more alcohol and drug affected people off our roads.

The State Budget also announced the Government's investment of \$4.5 million to help police track down and close clandestine drug labs more quickly by hiring additional forensic scientists for the Forensic Drug Branch.

While the government determines the level of funding required to resource Victoria Police, the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police is responsible for determining how such resources are allocated, based on assessed operational need.

Victoria Police has introduced an operational safety policy to enhance the safety and wellbeing of all employees. The safety policy was developed in consultation with police officers and The Police Association and focuses on operational safety equipment, single officer activities and the security of marked police vehicles.

Police are encouraged to conduct risk assessments before and throughout their duties and apply a consistent and common sense approach when responding to operational duties and responsibilities.

Victoria Police advises that there will be no reduction in patrols or police response and Executive Command will continue to evaluate the impact of these measures.

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

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

Thursday, 25 June 2015

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 27 May 2015

ANSWER:

While it is interesting that the member is so willing to assume that his Liberal colleagues will be defeated at the next federal election, the Victorian Government is not in a position to pre-empt the result. Regardless of who wins the next federal election, we will consider the specific implications for Victorians of all federal legislation, just as we have taken account of the devastating cuts that the Abbott Government have made to health, education, local governments and more. I note that the federal Coalition has not compensated families of small businesses in Melbourne's West for those cuts.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 28 May 2015

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure, and this has been demonstrated through the allocation of \$730 million to school facilities in the 2015-16 State Budget.

The Budget focuses primarily on funding our election commitments, and these we will deliver in full throughout this term of government. In relation to Wonthaggi and Koo Wee Rup, no election commitment was made by the Labor Party. An inaccurate statement was published in a newspaper, which was later clarified and corrected.

The funding provided through the Budget represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State, and we will continue to invest in education infrastructure throughout this term of government.

The capital needs of all schools will continue to be monitored when determining priorities for future Budget funding, and this means working closely with communities across the state, including those of Wonthaggi and Koo Wee Rup.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Asked on: 28 May 2015

ANSWER:

The location of the Indian Cultural Precinct will be determined in consultation with the Indian community and relevant experts.

An eight member advisory panel has been established to provide recommendations to me, in my capacity as the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. The Panel comprises key representatives from the Indian community across Melbourne, as well as an expert in Urban Planning.

As agreed by the Panel, three community consultations and an independent feasibility study will be undertaken to determine the precinct location. The community consultations will be held in Dandenong, Melbourne CBD and Werribee.

Following the Panel's first meeting in May, five possible locations, including Dandenong are being considered for further consideration.

The recommended location will need to be supported by the local council, traders association and local community.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 10 June 2015

ANSWER:

The Department of Health & Human Services has established the Departmental Advisory Committee on Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections to provide strategic advice on implementation of the five national strategies for blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections in Victoria.

Through this Committee, sector-wide consultations were held for hepatitis B in 2014 and HIV in 2015. A further three consultations are currently being co-ordinated for hepatitis C, sexually transmissible infections and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander blood borne viruses and sexual health.

The consultations bring together affected communities, clinicians, community organisations, researchers and policy makers to consider primary prevention, vaccination, increasing rates of treatment, and the lived experience of living with blood borne viruses.

The consultations are expected to be completed by the end of July 2015. At their conclusion, strategic priorities to guide the Victorian response to blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections will be considered by the Government.