

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

**26 and 27 May 2015**

**(Extract from book 7)**

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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

**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 Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Leane, 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, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

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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

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**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.

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*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina <sup>2</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats	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, 26 May 2015**

**Western Victoria Region**

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

**ANSWER:**

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

Both the Victorian and Federal Governments have confirmed a commitment of \$363.5 million to construct the duplication of the Princes Highway from Winchelsea to Colac. This is in addition to \$9.5 million of funding to undertake planning activities.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Leane  
**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 contract to widen a 1.4km section of High Street Road between Stud Road and the Burwood Highway in Wantirna South was awarded to BMD Constructions in December 2014. Construction on this project started in January 2015 and is expected to be completed by mid 2016.

The features of the project are:

- Widening High Street Road to provide two lanes in each direction;
- Two fully signalised pedestrian crossings at the Tyner Road and High Street Road intersection between Wolf Street and Wallace Road;
- A new shared user path south of High Street Road; and
- Upgrading the intersections of the Burwood Highway and Stud Road.

So far, the following works have been undertaken:

- Construction of new lanes have begun (south of High Street Road);
- Work has started on improving the Burwood Highway and High Street Road intersection;
- A new shared use path between Wallace Road East and Wallace Road West is now open; and
- Intersection upgrade works between Wallace Road and High Street Road have been completed.

Upcoming activities

- In mid-2015, traffic will be moved onto the new lanes to the south of High Street Road. This will allow the existing lanes to be widened and upgraded;

- Improvements to the intersection of the Burwood Highway and High Street Road will continue intermittently until early 2016; and
- Work on the remaining sections of the new shared user path will continue and is expected to be completed by late 2015.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Local Government  
**Asked on:** 26 February 2015

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Member of Western Victoria for raising the issue of the impact of the current local government rating system on farmers.

The Government is committed to better Local Government. That is why we are delivering on our election promise to implement a fair-go rates system & review the Local Government Act

I note that during the four years as a member of the former government, Mr Ramsay did nothing in relation to this issue.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

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

**ANSWER:**

The Mordialloc Bypass is considered to be a longer term road project. VicRoads is currently developing a network strategy which will identify network improvements for the short to medium term within the broader Mordialloc Bypass corridor. As part of this work, VicRoads will identify the timing for any new road development for the Mordialloc Bypass.

### **Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Leane  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 17 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

The Maroondah City Council and VicRoads regularly discuss road infrastructure improvements on the arterial road network. The Maroondah City Council also participates in the Eastern Cluster of municipalities that identify needs and priorities across the network. The Eastern Cluster includes the municipalities of Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Knox, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges.

In 2014, the Eastern Cluster municipalities, in consultation with VicRoads, identified five infrastructure improvement proposals within the Maroondah City Council. These proposals include:

- widening of Canterbury Road between Dorset Road and Liverpool Road;
- duplication of Dorset Road between the Maroondah Highway and Hull Road;
- upgrading of the Maroondah Highway and Oban Road intersection;

- upgrading of the Maroondah Highway, Dorset Road and Bellara Drive intersection; and
- upgrading of the Wicklow Avenue, Croydon Road, Kent Avenue and Coolstore Road intersection

These proposals will be prioritised for future investigation and funding along with other projects across the state.

In addition, the following four projects are currently being considered for funding under a current road safety program:

- Oban Road/ Mullum Mullum Road intersection (local roads);
- Bedford Road / Great Ryrie Road intersection (local roads);
- Oban Road / Wonga Road intersection (local roads); and
- Canterbury Road between Wantirna Road and Scoresby Road

Finally, funding of \$3.5 million has been allocated for the signalisation of the Canterbury Road and Armstrong Road intersection in Heathmont. These works will improve safety and access for traffic using this intersection. VicRoads is currently undertaking preconstruction activities, with construction works expected to commence in early 2016.

In relation to your request for a meeting with the Council, a meeting was held with relevant Council officers on 23 April 2015 at which there was discussion regarding local priorities for future funding consideration.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Local Government  
**Asked on:** 18 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Order in Council constituting on 1 July 2016 a new Sunbury City Council was gazetted on 16 April 2015.

To review the issues involved in the separation process, the Minister for Local Government has appointed the Hon Frank Vincent AO QC and Mr John Watson as transition auditors. The transition auditors will work closely with Hume City Council and the community to ensure the necessary planning is undertaken and local residents are fully informed of all the implications of the separation.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 19 March 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The 2015-16 State Budget invested close to \$4 billion in Victoria's education and skills system — the single biggest boost to education funding in Victoria's history.

Investment in school infrastructure is a priority for the Victorian Government, which is why we committed \$730 million for school facilities in 2015-16.

This is the first year and the first step in creating the Education State and addressing the chronic under investment in our schools by the previous government. The 2015-16 State Budget focused on delivering funding to our existing election commitments.

Our challenge is to responsibly balance and prioritise the needs of over 1,500 government schools in Victoria, all in varying condition, during the term of this Government. We will do this by using all available data including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, to assess and identify school infrastructure needs when allocating resources in State Budgets.

Schools in the Benambra area will certainly be considered in future capital works programs, with decisions based on available data.

In addition, Victorian Government schools are directly allocated \$51 million annually for maintenance through the Student Resource Package, and this funding should be used to address maintenance issues as they arise.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Springle  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 14 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to supporting local employment opportunities wherever possible.

The procurement of new trams is essential to provide a quality service and accommodate growth in patronage. The order of 50 new trams and its option for up to an additional 100 more demonstrated this government's ongoing commitment to Melbourne's important and iconic tram network.

I am pleased to advise you that the Government is furthering its commitment by purchasing an additional 20 trams from the Bombardier factory in Dandenong, supporting local employment.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 14 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

Over the next eight years, the Andrews Government will remove 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings in Melbourne. This significant program is a key step to transforming our public transport system into an international-style metro, while removing congestion on our road network.

The Werribee Street level crossing that intersects with Cottrell Street in Werribee will be removed by 2022 as part of the level crossing removal program, and will provide welcome relief for communities in the area.

To facilitate the level crossing removals, the Government has brought forward funding of \$100 million to establish the Level Crossing Removal Authority. The Authority is developing a strategic plan for the efficient removal of the 50 level crossings, including optimal planning, procurement and construction methods and best practice community and stakeholder engagement.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Crozier  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 14 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to taking all steps possible to ensure that rail crossings across Victoria are as safe as possible. We will remove 50 of Melbourne's most dangerous level crossings, which are not only a traffic hazard but also a safety hazard.

Whether travelling by train, tram, bus, car, bike or foot, the removal of these crossings will help Victorians get to work faster and back home again safer and sooner.

In addition, the Andrews Labor Government's first budget allocates \$50 million to the Safer Country Crossings Program, which will boost safety at 52 priority roads and level crossings that carry high-speed passenger trains or a high number of heavy vehicles. The upgrades will include works to install flashing lights and boom gates.

In relation to the rail crossing on Centre Road in Bentleigh, a 'second train coming' was trialled. However, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) has advised me that the sign, by itself, was not found to deliver any material safety benefits. Instead, the current safety measures at the crossing, which include automatic locking gates that remain shut until it is safe to cross, have been found to be adequate until the level crossing can be removed.

I also note that the contract for the removal of the level crossing on Centre Road, Bentleigh has been awarded and construction is expected to begin within weeks.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Planning  
**Asked on:** 14 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

Works commenced on the Lal Lal wind energy facility in April 2013 signifying commencement under the planning permit. On 9 February 2015 the proponent for the facility wrote to me to request that I extend the time to complete works for the wind energy facility. On 9 March this year I granted an extension of time to complete construction. The facility must be now be completed by 30 April 2020.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 15 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Government will ensure that the best possible decision to meet Shepparton's transport needs for the future is made. The Government will provide advice to the Shepparton communities once a decision has been finalised.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 15 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

In April 2015, the Premier of Victoria, the Hon Daniel Andrews MP, announced that the Government is considering a market led proposal from Transurban for a new motorway that would provide an alternative route to the West Gate Bridge and would move trucks off roads in the city's inner west.

Regardless of the outcome of the assessment of the Western Distributor proposal, Stage 1 of the West Gate Distributor project will proceed.

The Expression of Interest to construct Stage 1 of the West Gate Distributor, which includes widening Moreland Street to provide an upgraded connection to Footscray Road and the widening and strengthening of Shepherd Bridge over the Maribyrnong River, has now closed and the request for tenders will be issued shortly.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 15 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Government was elected with a plan that puts people first and that creates a smarter, fairer and more prosperous Victoria. The Victorian Government has used its first State Budget to allocate \$730 million for school infrastructure across the State to ensure students are educated in high quality learning environments.

This includes funding for land acquisition for a new Senior Secondary School for Taylor's Hill West. Funding to commence construction is subject to the annual budget process.

In addition, \$35 million has been allocated to new relocatable classrooms to help meet demand in the short term. This funding is in response to the lack of new schools opening in recent years, with no new school set to open in 2016.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) continues to work with the local council and Melbourne Planning Authority (MPA) to monitor population forecasts and plan new schools to meet future demand.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Tierney  
**Directed to:** Minister for Energy and Resources  
**Asked on:** 15 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Representative for Western Victoria Region for asking this question. The Government's reforms to Victoria's wind farm planning laws took effect in early April and are now part of Victoria's planning law. These reforms include reducing the exclusion zone around wind farms and returning responsibility for wind farm planning decisions to the Minister for Planning.

These reforms, as well as further initiatives to be outlined in the Government's Renewable Energy Action Plan, aim to make Victoria an attractive destination for renewable energy investment and to help Victoria reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, if the Federal Government act to allow States and Territories to establish their own renewable energy target schemes, the Andrews Labor Government will establish the Victorian

Renewable Energy Target (VRET) scheme. Through VRET, Victoria will attract even more investment in renewable energy generation, including in Western Victoria.

The Western Victoria Region has excellent wind resources. The Western Victorian Region is home to more than 90 per cent of Victoria's wind energy projects with planning approval, and would stand to benefit considerably from improvements to Victoria's renewable energy investment environment. For example, if half of these approved wind farm projects were to go ahead, Western Victoria would be expected to gain up to \$2.6 billion worth of investment by 2020. Associated with this investment would be around 1,250 jobs, most of which would be in wind farm construction.

These benefits would be felt by both the established wind energy industry in the region, including Keppel Prince Engineering, and the economies in the region more broadly, which would benefit from wages spent in local communities and increased council revenues.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 15 April 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

Over the next eight years, the Andrews Government will remove 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings in Melbourne. This significant program is a key step to transforming our public transport system into an international-style metro, while removing congestion on our road network.

There are eleven level crossings to be removed on the Frankston line by 2022 as part of this program, which is a major investment in these bayside communities and will considerably enhance community safety, urban amenity and quality of life. Three of the first eight level crossing to be removed are on the Frankston Line.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority is developing a strategic plan for the efficient removal of the 50 level crossings, including optimal planning, procurement and construction methods and best practice community and stakeholder engagement. The most appropriate solution for the Frankston line level crossings removals will be determined as part of this process, as well as during planning and stakeholder engagement for each level crossing.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 16 April 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, as part of our election commitments, the government undertook to provide \$148.6 million to transition the management of police cells to new custody officers, releasing around 400 frontline police back into the community where they can focus on tackling crime and keeping the community safe. Victoria Police is working to implement this important initiative. The government will continue to consult with Victoria Police about overall police resourcing across the state.

In accordance with Section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013, I am unable to give directions in relation to the allocation or deployment of police officers to or at particular locations. The deployment of police resources, including the allocation of police officers and the determination of operating hours of police stations across the State, is a matter for the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police.

I am assured by the Acting Chief Commissioner 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.

Police are currently reviewing the staffing of the Somerville Police Station, with a decision to be made in the coming months. I assure you that the residents of the Mornington Peninsula, including Somerville, will continue to receive a 24-hour police response from frontline officers.

If any person requires urgent police assistance, they should contact Victoria Police on the emergency number '000'. Calls made to '000' are processed and responded to by the closest appropriate police personnel.

### **Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Patten  
**Directed to:** Minister for Creative Industries  
**Asked on:** 16 April 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

Since moving to its Federation Square site in 2003, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) has played host to Melbourne Queer Film Festival (MQFF) as one of its significant cultural partnerships. The current support offered to the festival includes event delivery services, marketing and promotion and venue hire at 40% below commercial rates. Reflecting its ongoing commitment to the future sustainability of MQFF as one of Melbourne's major cultural festivals, ACMI recently extended its partnership agreement through to the end of 2016.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Employment  
**Asked on:** 16 April 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

While there are challenges facing the Victorian economy, Victoria's total employment has increased by 52,100 workers since November 2014, with 14,300 of these being full time jobs. During this time, Victoria's unemployment rate has fallen 0.5 percentage points to 6.2 per cent and the number of unemployed Victorians fell 15,300.

In Melbourne's south east region, employment has increased by 20,600 workers between November 2014 and April 2015, with the region's participation rate also increased by 3.5 percentage points over this period (3-month averages).

This is a stark contrast to the record of the previous Government, which presided over:

- an increase in the statewide unemployment rate from 4.9 per cent to 6.8 per cent;
- nearly 65,000 more Victorians being unemployed; and
- a 0.9 per cent fall in the State's participation rate.

The Andrew's Labor Government understands that these aren't just numbers on a page.

This is about people. This is about families. This is about communities.

The Government is committed to supporting job creation across both Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria and that's why we're implementing our Back To Work Plan—a promise we took to the election and a promise we're proud to deliver.

Our Back To Work Plan includes a number of initiatives:

- The Back To Work Scheme—a \$100 million fund that focuses on getting unemployed young people, long term unemployed and retrenched workers back into the workforce:



- The Premier's Jobs and Investment Panel which brings together expertise across business, the community and industry to ensure that the Government is working with all key stakeholders on our economic growth agenda. The Panel is supported by a \$508 million Premier's Jobs and Investment Fund;
- The \$200 million Future Industries Fund which will support the development of six sectors with high growth potential; and
- The \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund which will drive jobs growth and economic opportunities in Regional Victoria.

The Government's 10 year rolling stock strategy will provide certainty for manufacturers and support more than 10,000 jobs in Victoria's rolling stock industry.

Our first budget contains a down payment of \$2 billion to buy more metro trains, more regional trains and more city trams—all with a minimum 50% local content requirement.

And we're removing 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings in Melbourne over the next eight years, which will create 4,500 construction jobs—many of which will be within South East Metropolitan Region where 18 level crossings will be removed before 2022.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 16 April 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government has allocated \$40 million in the 2015-16 State Budget for the commencement of Stage 1 of the West Gate Distributor project, which will improve freight access to the Port of Melbourne and reduce the number of trucks on local roads in the inner west and on the West Gate Bridge. Procurement of Stage 1 is proceeding to ensure that these benefits are delivered as early as possible.

Furthermore, on 30 April 2015, the Premier announced that the Government is considering a market-led proposal from Transurban for a new motorway that provides an alternative route to the West Gate Bridge and moves trucks off roads in the city's inner west.

The Department of Treasury and Finance will undertake a thorough assessment of the Transurban proposal. The Government will then decide whether to proceed with Transurban's proposal, modify it, or opt for another option.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 16 April 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I am advised that a 2014 Department led School Bus Policy compliance audit identified that student eligibility assessment and fare collection processes for Shepparton High School, McGuire College, Mooroopna Secondary College and Wanganui Park Secondary College required improvement. In cases such as this, the Department encourages principals to facilitate a transition that best suits their local network. The Shepparton school network principals have identified 2015 as a transition and communication year, with full compliance with the School Bus Program policy for all students from 2016.

In correspondence from the Shepparton and District School Bus Program Coordinator to families of those students identified as ineligible, from 2015 any new student not eligible under the program would be required to pay the appropriate fare before being permitted to travel, and any existing student previously incorrectly assessed as eligible would be required to pay the appropriate fare from 2016 onwards.

Any student identified as ineligible, may travel at no cost if the requirements of an exemption available under the School Bus Program are met. I encourage your constituents to discuss this further with Paul Lucas, Bus Coordinator, Mooroopna Secondary College.

### Western Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 16 April 2015

**ANSWER:**

Investment in education and school infrastructure is a priority for the Victorian Government which is committed to spending \$530 million on school facilities during the period 2015–18. This commitment is the first step in addressing the chronic under investment in school infrastructure under the previous government.

The Portarlington Primary School upgrade project is still currently in the planning phase. I am advised that the Department of Education and Training meets regularly with the leadership team of Portarlington Primary School to ensure that local priorities are considered. I am informed that these meetings have been productive and as such it is anticipated that the project will enter the design phase in May 2015.

I have asked the Department to continue to work closely with the school to ensure the capital works project meets the needs of the school community.

### Western Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Emergency Services  
**Asked on:** 5 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government's first priority is the health and safety of all career and volunteer Country Fire Authority (CFA) members. Following a unanimous decision by the CFA Board on 26 March 2015, the Andrews Government moved decisively to permanently close the Fiskville training facility. On-site testing for the toxic chemical PFOS (Perfluorooctane Sulfonate), showed that while the drinking water and showers were clear of contamination, high levels of PFOS were present around the fire training area and a completely new zone at the site where the chemical had not been previously identified, despite millions of dollars spent under the former government in attempting to remediate the site.

The welfare of the CFA members is paramount and CFA is providing appropriate support to those affected. Case managers have been working with impacted workers, and skill development support workshops have taken place. Training and wellbeing support for workers and the community is ongoing. A number of staff have been relocated and will continue to work from other locations.

CFA has established an internal working party tasked with the comprehensive oversight of the closure of the site. The working party has adopted a number of "in-principle" commitments including:

- all affected staff will be treated equitably, irrespective of their employment status
- actively exploring re-training and re-deployment options within the Moorabool Shire
- providing dedicated case workers to liaise and consult with staff.

The government acknowledges the importance of honouring and remembering Victoria's firefighters who died serving their communities. Consultation will occur so that a new location can be found for the Fiskville memorial for our fallen firefighters.

The interests of the local Ballan community are also at the centre of the government's efforts to minimise the impacts of CFA's exit from the facility.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 5 May 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I appreciate your interest in the Cowes Police Station, and its ability to service the Phillip Island community. The government is committed to a well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing. This is why, in the 2015-16 State Budget the government invested \$148.6 million to recruit and accommodate 400 custody officers. The transition of the supervision of prisoners held in police cells to custody officers, will release 400 police in various locations to return to frontline duties, increasing the capacity to provide policing services and public safety outcomes to the community.

The government is supporting rural and regional communities across Victoria. In the recent State Budget, the government also invested \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new encrypted digital radio network and new radios in regional areas. The upgrade will enable police working in regional areas to communicate more securely, preventing members of the public listening in on police communications, as could occur with the use of analogue radios.

The government recognises that Victoria Police requires appropriate facilities to support police in the work they do, in keeping communities safe. The operational need for new and upgraded police stations is established through the Victoria Police Strategic Facilities Plan, where projects are considered in the context of other police priorities across the state. Where the need for additional police infrastructure funding is identified, the status of projects is determined by government through the Budget process.

The government will continue to consult with Victoria Police in relation to overall police resources, including infrastructure investment, across Victoria.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 5 May 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I understand the local community's interest regarding the staffing of the police station at Minyip. The government recognises that the 105-single officer stations across Victoria provide an important service to their community. Policing is about providing this service, and is not simply about the station.

Under Victorian law, I cannot direct police about the allocation or deployment of police officers to or at particular locations in accordance with section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013. The Acting Chief Commissioner of Police is best placed to determine state wide policing needs.

Victoria Police advises that it is currently completing a review into service demand at Minyip, involving consultation with the Yarriambiack Shire Council, the local community, police officers and The Police Association Victoria. The review will allow Victoria Police to determine the policing service and staffing requirements at Minyip to deliver the best service to the community. Victoria Police advises that the review is nearing completion, and a position will be advertised at the earliest opportunity.

The residents of Minyip receive a 24-hour police response from across the Northern Grampians Police Service Area.

**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 6 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that at the date the question was raised;

The former Government committed \$10.6 million to undertake a planning study and develop a business case for the Mordialloc Bypass. No funds were provided for land acquisition. VicRoads is investigating when development in the Mordialloc Bypass reservation is required and the possible staging of any development. VicRoads is also identifying short to medium term network improvements within the broader road network near Mordialloc to address the current congestion issues.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Tierney  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 6 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian government is committed to investment in education and school infrastructure, which is why \$730 million for school facilities was announced in the 2015-16 State Budget.

The Department of Education and Training is commencing planning for all schools announced as election commitments, including the relocation of Warrnambool Special Developmental School.

I am advised that the first step for securing land for Warrnambool Special Developmental School will be undertaking a public Expression of Interest (EOI) process to source a suitable site for the relocation. An EOI ensures that all possible site options are identified and thoroughly evaluated. Once we have obtained valuations of shortlisted sites and determined the preferred site, we will undertake an acquisition negotiation and reach a commercial agreement. I am further advised that the anticipated timeframe for this process is 6-12 months.

I have asked the Department to work closely with the school to reach agreement on the parameters for the new site.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 6 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

At this time, it is not a priority for this Government to build a rail link to Melbourne Airport. The Government's current priority is to deliver on its election commitment to build the Melbourne Metro rail tunnels. The Melbourne Metro Rail project was ranked number one in Victoria by Infrastructure Australia and will do much more to combat congestion across Melbourne.

It is also important to note that the Citylink Tulla Widening program will provide for much-needed traffic capacity improvements.

### Northern Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Mr Drum  
**Directed to:** Minister for Sport  
**Asked on:** 6 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government and funding to support this objective will be provided through a range of initiatives.

In the 2015-16 State Budget, the Government confirmed an allocation of \$100 million to the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund, \$2 million to continue the Country Football and Netball Program, and another \$9.6 million to develop compliant netball courts across inner Melbourne.

I can also confirm that the Government is committed to supporting the development of the Bendigo Regional Aquatic, Health and Wellbeing Centre in Kangaroo Flat, and the Bendigo Tennis Complex, as supported from the Strategic Sporting Infrastructure Program.

The Government is in continuing discussions with Greater Bendigo City Council about these projects and looks forward to working collaboratively on these important projects for the people of the greater Bendigo region.

### Eastern Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Tourism and Major Events  
**Asked on:** 7 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

Puffing Billy Railway is managed by the Emerald Tourist Railway Board and is one of Victoria's iconic tourism attractions.

The Railway receives over 300,000 visitors per year and is a significant destination for both international and domestic visitors to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region.

The Government has had a long association with the Railway and through Tourism Victoria, provides on-going assistance with its marketing activities and securing new business opportunities.

The Government will continue to work with the Board to ensure Puffing Billy contributes to regional visitation as well as the preservation of steam railway history in Australia.

This support to Puffing Billy assists with delivering improvements to the quality of the State's key tourism infrastructure to grow the \$19.6 billion tourism industry.

### Southern Metropolitan Region

**Question asked by:** Ms Fitzherbert  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 7 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Government has announced a \$730 million education infrastructure package for Victoria. The 2015-16 State Budget provides funding to refurbish and renovate schools, deliver brand-new relocatable classrooms and construct new schools.

I am aware of enrolment pressures on existing schools in the South Melbourne and Port Melbourne areas. The development of both South Melbourne Park Primary (Albert Park Depot) and South Melbourne Primary (Ferrars Street) will ensure that capacity for school places in the area is increased in a timely manner.

Funding of \$5 million was allocated in the 2014-15 State Budget for South Melbourne Primary School (Ferrars Street), to facilitate the demolition of existing buildings, remediate site contamination and start planning.

Planning is underway for the Ferrars Street project, and the selection of architects and project managers will be completed by May. It is the Department of Education and Training's intention to finalise design as soon as possible. As I am sure you will understand, at this early stage we are unable to provide a proposed opening date for the school.

The Labor Government committed \$1 million in the 2015-16 for the initial planning of South Melbourne Park Primary School on the Albert Park depot site. The Department of Education and Training is currently undertaking initial feasibility investigations of the site to inform planning for the construction of the new primary school.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Dr Carling-Jenkins  
**Directed to:** Minister for Sport  
**Asked on:** 7 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government and funding to support this objective will be provided through a range of initiatives.

In the 2015-16 State Budget, the Government confirmed an allocation of \$100 million to the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund that will facilitate the upgrading of community sports facilities over the next four years. Sport and Recreation Victoria are currently developing programs, after which I will be in a position to announce how local government authorities and community organisations can apply for funding.

I also look forward to meeting with the Mayor of Wyndham, Cr Peter Maynard, later this month to discuss the redevelopment of this facility, and other issues in the municipality related to my portfolios.

**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

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

**Wednesday, 27 May 2015**

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 6 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government recognises that high quality early years services are vital to giving every child the best start in life, which is why we have committed to investing \$50 million over four years to develop modern and flexible early childhood facilities. This will help ensure that every Victorian child has access to local, high quality kindergarten and other early childhood services.

The Department of Education and Training is well underway with preparations for the 2015-16 Children's Facilities Capital Program grants round. Eligibility requirements and the assessment criteria under the Children's Facilities Capital Program will be announced shortly.