

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

**4, 5 and 6 August 2015**

**(Extract from book 10)**

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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 Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris, Mr Ondarchie and Ms Tierney.

**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, Mr Somyurek 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, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.

**Electoral Matters Committee** — (*Council*): Ms Patten and Mr Somyurek. (*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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*Council* — 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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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
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Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
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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
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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, 4 August 2015**

**Eastern Victoria Region**

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

**ANSWER:**

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

VicRoads' is currently undertaking detailed investigations to determine the most appropriate treatment for improving safety on this section of the Nepean Highway. As part of this process, VicRoads is working closely with the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, which is responsible for managing traffic on Forest Drive and Uralla Road. These investigations are also considering the broader access needs for Mount Martha residents and businesses.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Dunn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 5 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The question of 18 March was raised with and responded to by the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water.

The Healesville Freeway reserve land does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities and should be raised with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

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

**ANSWER:**

The needs and priorities of interface communities are diverse. They include a mix of fast growing urban populations, productive land and green wedge areas. Additionally, amongst their population are some of the city's most vulnerable communities.

Cardinia, Casey, Yarra Ranges and Mornington Peninsula face unique population growth and environmental pressures. The ongoing liveability of these areas is critical to ensuring Melbourne remains a liveable and sustainable city.

The \$50 million Interface Growth Fund (IGF) will open in early July 2015. IGF grants will fund high priority, implementation-ready community infrastructure which has an immediate impact on the following outcomes:

- Delivery of services that will reduce social disadvantage

- Infrastructure and services which contribute to local economic development and job creation
- Supporting improvements to the resilience, sustainability and liveability of interface communities.

The focus on implementation-ready community infrastructure will support the quick delivery of critical services for these interface communities.

The IGF will fund three broad categories of local infrastructure:

- Community infrastructure such as facilities for the delivery of community activities, family and children's services, community health, adult learning and health and wellbeing programs.
- Economic infrastructure such as town centres and civic places, or public realm improvements such as pedestrian or cycling infrastructure and infrastructure to support activation of public spaces.
- Environmental resilience and liveability infrastructure such as emergency recovery centres, civic revitalisation initiatives, open spaces that improve community amenity and liveability and energy efficient and environmentally sustainable infrastructure.

The IGF will not be allocated in separate streams, but has been designed to ensure a broad mix of projects across these categories are delivered.

Five core criteria will be applied to all individual IGF grant applications. In addition, an evaluation panel will consider broader, program-wide considerations in evaluating the full set of grant applications. These will ensure that the overall IGF program reflects a mix of different types of infrastructure, targeted toward community need and ensuring an equitable distribution of funding based on demonstrated need.

Importantly, interface councils are being consulted in the design and delivery of the fund, ensuring it is best positioned to maximise local community benefits. It is also being designed to complement other State and Commonwealth grants programs. This is to ensure that IGF funding contributes to better meeting the needs of interface communities.

Successful projects will not only demonstrate the community need the project is addressing, but also the limited availability of other funding to address this need.

A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process will ensure the community benefits outlined in successful applications are delivered for interface communities.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 26 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to removing the level crossings at Main and Furlong roads in St Albans, with Furlong Road fast-tracked to be delivered with the project at Main Road.

Leighton Contractors, Aurecon, and Hyder Group have been selected as the preferred contractors to remove the level crossings at Main Road and Furlong Road in St Albans.

Delivering these level crossing removals together will accelerate the delivery of the overall level crossing project for the community, minimise disruption to residents and road users, and reduce the number of closures required on the Sunbury rail line.

The contract will be awarded in the coming months. We are currently reviewing their submission including refining the planned schedule of works. The successful contractor will then form an Alliance with VicRoads, Public Transport Victoria and Metro Trains Melbourne to deliver the works.

Work will start this year with construction on both projects and will take approximately 12-18 months to complete.

We have been working with the community, stakeholders and Brimbank Council to deliver the best solution for the St Albans community. Both projects include lowering the train line below the road, and constructing new stations with access to the lowered platforms via stairs, ramps and lifts. Both station carparks will be optimised to provide at least the same number of spaces and a walking cycling path will be built to improve access to the area.

Early works have been underway at Main Road since the start of the year including service relocation, to prepare the site for major construction. These will continue and early works will commence at Furlong Road over the coming months.

I am proud to be delivering these level crossing removal projects for the community to reduce congestion in the area and create a safer, more connected community.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Springle  
**Directed to:** Minister for Local Government  
**Asked on:** 27 May 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I thank the Member for South Eastern Metropolitan for her question. Section 189 of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) outlines the provisions that councils must follow when they sell or exchange any land.

The Act outlines that the proposed sale of land at is a matter for council, in consultation with the community.

With respect to the Member for South Eastern Metropolitan's comments around Ericksen Gardens, I suggest the member make inquiries with the Council.

### **Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Dunn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 27 May 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) develops and maintains Network Development Plans to plan for Victoria's public transport network and identify a range of infrastructure improvements that are required for the future.

PTV continuously reviews the metropolitan tram network, including the Knox area, with the aim of integrating Melbourne's train, bus and tram services. As part of any planning for the future of Melbourne's tram network, consultation with stakeholders, including local government, is integral.

The Andrews Labor Government has committed to delivering 100 new trams as part of a 10 year rolling stock strategy, with \$274 million for 20 E-Class Trams outlined in the 2015-16 State Budget. This is significant investment, following the former Government's failure to order any new trams in four years. Along with a program to upgrade Melbourne's tram network to make it more accessible and safe, this investment is vital to expand the tram network and improve connectivity.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Wooldridge  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 27 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

The Andrews Labor Government understands the importance of Bolton Street to residents in Eltham and has committed \$10.5 million to upgrade Bolton Street between Main Road and Bridge Road in Eltham. The work will include widening the road, formalising turning lanes, improved footpaths and drainage, and improving the condition of the pavement.

The Victorian Government has provided \$300,000 in the 2015-2016 State Budget to investigate options and develop a detailed project scope for the Bolton Street upgrade. The development of this proposal will be undertaken in consultation with the Nillumbik and Banyule city councils.

VicRoads will work closely with the community and stakeholders to ensure the project scope meets community expectation and construction activities are planned and communicated to local residents in advance of the work.

VicRoads expects project proposals to be completed by early 2016 for consideration in the 2016-17 State Budget process.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 27 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

In May 2010, Labor committed funding for an additional 1,966 police to the frontline. This led to an increase of 140 police in the Southern Region Division 4, which includes Somerville in the Mornington Peninsula police service area.

The Andrews Labor Government's first budget in 2015-16 delivered a record \$2.5 billion to Victoria Police to continue their important work in keeping our community safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to redeploy 400 police to our communities where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 400 custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria.

The custody officers may also be progressively deployed to other locations over time, depending on the resourcing needs and allocation of these resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong. The new custody officers will initially work at six police stations.

This is in contrast to the first Baillieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

Victoria Police has introduced an operational safety policy to enhance the safety and well being 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.

Under Victorian law, I cannot direct the Chief Commissioner about the allocation or deployment of police officers to or at particular locations in accordance with section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013.

I assure you that the residents of Somerville police service area will continue to receive a 24-hour police response. 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.

I am advised that the Somerville Police Complex is still under construction. Originally scheduled to open in June 2015, inclement weather, continuing ground work and the completion of a car park has meant staff will not be able to move into the complex until mid-August 2015.

Crime scene officers and the amalgamated crime investigation units from Hastings, Mornington and Rosebud will operate from the new police station. In future, Victoria Police anticipates that the Highway Patrol Units from Frankston, Hastings and Rosebud could also be stationed at Somerville.

At this time, there are no plans to operate counter services from the new station. Somerville will continue to receive a 24 hour police response across the Mornington Peninsula police service area.

The government works closely with the 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 is providing \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new secure, encrypted digital radio network.

The upgrade will enable police working in regional areas to communicate more securely, preventing members of the public listening in on police operations.

Actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-16 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.

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 impact that Ice is having on rural and regional communities. A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website-ice.vie.gov.au have already been 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 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, taking more alcohol and drug affected people off our roads.

I am assured by the 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.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 27 May 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

Public Transport Victoria is currently undertaking planning to identify the requirements of the new train maintenance and stabling facility at Waurn Ponds. The land required for this project will be identified as part of this planning process.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Bath  
**Directed to:** Minister for Regional Development  
**Asked on:** 28 May 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government.

As part of the 2015/16 State Budget, the Government has confirmed a \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund that will facilitate the upgrading of community sports facilities over the next four years. Sport and Recreation Victoria is currently developing programs, after which the Minister for Sport, the Hon. John Eren MP, will be in a position to announce how local government and community organisations can apply for funding.

Given local government will be instrumental in developing and supporting projects for consideration under these initiatives, I encourage you to advise your constituent to liaise with Latrobe City Council to discuss opportunities for the proposal, once funding programs are announced.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 28 May 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government has recognised the needs of disadvantaged students and families in the State and provided \$148.3 million through the 2015-16 State Budget for the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund to provide these students with learning opportunities. It has also provided almost 4 billion to the Victorian Education system in this year's State Budget.

Assessment of any impact would not be possible, without the full details of the tax, its implications and operation, to be considered in the context of the overall state budget at that time. The question of the reintroduction of a carbon tax by a future or current federal government is purely hypothetical.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Young  
**Directed to:** Minister for Agriculture  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

I note your concerns regarding these incidents. The Victorian Government does not tolerate illegal behaviour of any kind.

Incidents involving protestors allegedly breaching public safety laws, and allegations of criminal damage to vehicles, are currently being investigated by Victoria Police and the Game Management Authority.

The Game Management Authority, along with Victoria Police and other partner agencies, conduct a review of duck season operations each year. The review will look at the 2015 duck hunting season, identify any serious issues that need to be addressed and improve future processes. The alleged criminal activity of protestors will be considered as part of this year's review.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Davis  
**Directed to:** Minister for Health  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

There will be no impact on Health Services in Mr Davis' electorate as a result of the VMIA returning a dividend to Government.

The calculation of medical indemnity premiums by the VMIA is separate to funding arrangements for health services. Premiums are calculated based on a range of factors for individual agencies, including exposures to risk and previous claims experience as well as expected investment earnings.

Recently, a combination of good claims management, benign weather and risk improvements have resulted in lower than expected claims. This has been combined with higher than expected investment earnings to create a surplus.

This capital surplus is being returned to government via the dividend, for allocation throughout government based on priorities for service delivery.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Tierney  
**Directed to:** Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

I welcome the ongoing commitment by the Member for Western Victoria to the construction of a safe harbour at Portarlington. Stage 1 of the Portarlington Safe Harbour project is now underway following the allocation of \$12 million in the recent budget. I have asked the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning to oversee this project, with a particular focus on engaging with the community, stakeholders and industry. Parks Victoria will be managing the construction of the harbour and are currently finalising detailed project plans, to enable the project to commence. The final layout of the harbour and timelines will be provided to me and the public shortly.

Stage 1 of the Portarlington Safe Harbour project is expected to be completed by December 2017.

The Portarlington Safe Harbour project will provide a great opportunity to expand the aquaculture industry in Port Phillip and Corio Bays as well as support tourism and recreational opportunities of the Bellarine and broader Geelong Regions. It is anticipated that the construction phase and ongoing industry growth will create in excess of 20 jobs.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Hartland  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government has committed \$100 million to improve Victoria's bus networks. These improvements include adding more routes, expanding others, increasing frequencies, restoring cut services and fixing the missing links in Melbourne's growth areas.

As part of this commitment, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) will review the bus network in the Maribyrnong area over the coming year to make improvements to the network structure and timetables. This will be done in consultation with council and the local community. As part of this review PTV will be seeking to extend the span of hours of bus services, subject to available funding.

Bus Route 431 has recently had its timetable changed to operate a Saturday timetable on most public holidays. Further timetable changes will be considered as part of the Maribyrnong area review.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Rushworth-Tatura Road and the Bendigo-Murchison Road projects qualified for funding under the state-wide Transport Accident Commission funded Safe Systems Road Improvement Program. Sections of these roads have histories of run-off-road crashes, including serious injuries, and one fatality.

VicRoads has identified a number of hazards close to the road edge on both roads, including road side trees, power poles and culverts. There is an opportunity to make these sections of road safer through the installation of new guardrails, wire rope barriers, shoulder sealing, and the removal of some roadside trees. VicRoads advises me that the removal of some trees along both roads not only eliminates roadside hazards to drivers, but is also necessary to ensure the installation and performance of new safety barriers, which, in turn, will protect drivers from hitting the hazards.

VicRoads has engaged an environmental consultant to review the impacts of the projects on flora and fauna, and any other State or Commonwealth legislative requirements. The consultant's assessments confirm the status of the roadside vegetation. These reports form a very important part of the process, and are undertaken in consultation with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to ensure that the projects comply with the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding established between VicRoads and the DELWP.

VicRoads acknowledges that some members of the local community are concerned about the potential environmental effects of the proposed road safety improvement works, and are seeking more information on both the Rushworth-Tatura Road and the Bendigo-Murchison Road projects.

VicRoads has sought to inform the Rushworth community on the safety benefits of this project, and attended a public meeting arranged by an interested community group on 28 May 2015, as well as conducted a drop-in Information session the following week. A review of the proposed road safety measures including reduced speed



limits, alternative safety barrier treatments, and reduced road and shoulder formation widths, is also being undertaken.

In the meantime, VicRoads advises me that works have ceased on both the Rushworth-Tatura Road and the Bendigo Murchison Road projects, pending further consultation with the community.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Bath  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The 2015-16 State Budget provides \$148.6 million over four years to implement the government's commitment to transition the management of police cells to civilian police custody officers. Victoria Police will recruit and train 400 police custody officers to supervise people held in police cells. Training of these officers will commence as soon as feasible in 2015/16.

The custody officers will initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria, including in Morwell.

Work has already commenced with Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria and the Department of Justice and Regulation working together to support the implementation of this important initiative.

### **Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Fitzherbert  
**Directed to:** Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I am advised that there is no record of cleaning of the external face of the foyer windows in the past four years, a period that coincides with the term of the previous Coalition Government and cuts to the Housing sector of \$470 million.

The cleaning contract requires areas such as the foyer, main lift lobby, lifts cars, grounds and rubbish chute areas to be serviced daily. Communal areas such as corridors, laundries and carparks are cleaned fortnightly.

I am advised that all automatic entry doors are serviced once every month, and that the department has a maintenance contract in place that provides a 24 hour call out response to all reported breakdowns and failures of automatic doors. I am further advised that there was a service callout to 200 Dorcas Street South Melbourne on 5 June 2015, to repair a door that had been vandalised, and the repairs were completed on the day.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Agriculture  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I am aware of the Casterton Kelpie Association and its annual Working Dog Auction. My office met with members of the association on 12 June 2015 to discuss this issue. It is my understanding that the department has been working with Glenelg Shire Council and the Casterton Kelpie Association for the past several years to ensure that the dog auction is conducted in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994: specifically, section 96 which prohibits the sale of animals from a location other than a registered domestic animal business or a private residence. Due to the size of attendance at the auction, it is often conducted in a public location.

In order to provide the association with a legal platform upon which to conduct the auction, Glenelg Shire Council, in consultation with my department, has issued the association with a Domestic Animal Business registration to operate under modified pet shop requirements.

I understand that Glenelg Shire conducts a formal audit of the auction site and paperwork of the auction prior to the issuing of the modified pet shop domestic animal business registration and then attends the auction to inspect.

I am committed to fulfilling the government's election promise, but I assure you that we will be consulting with industry in the process of developing of the legislation, including ongoing consultation and cooperation with the Casterton Kelpie Association. I recognise the importance of the Working Dog Auction to Casterton, and farmers more generally.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 10 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to removing the level crossings at Main and Furlong roads in St Albans, with Furlong Road fast-tracked to be delivered with the project at Main Road.

Leighton Contractors, Aurecon, and Hyder Group have been selected as the preferred contractors to remove the level crossings at Main Road and Furlong Road in St Albans.

Delivering these level crossing removals together will accelerate the delivery of the overall level crossing project for the community, minimise disruption to residents and road users, and reduce the number of closures required on the Sunbury rail line.

The contract will be awarded in the coming months. We are currently reviewing their submission including refining the planned schedule of works. The successful contractor will then form an Alliance with VicRoads, Public Transport Victoria and Metro Trains Melbourne to deliver the works.

Work will start this year with construction on both projects and will take approximately 12-18 months to complete.

We have been working with the community, stakeholders and Brimbank Council to deliver the best solution for the St Albans community. Both projects include lowering the train line below the road, and constructing new stations with access to the lowered platforms via stairs, ramps and lifts. Both station carparks will be optimised to provide at least the same number of spaces and a walking cycling path will be built to improve access to the area.

Early works have been underway at Main Road since the start of the year including service relocation, to prepare the site for major construction. These will continue and early works will commence at Furlong Road over the coming months.

I am proud to be delivering these level crossing removal projects for the community to reduce congestion in the area and create a safer, more connected community.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Purcell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 11 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labour Government will spend \$1 billion to upgrade and repair unsafe and congested roads across regional Victoria.

Construction works are currently being undertaken on the duplication of the Princes Highway West between Geelong and Winchelsea. VicRoads advises that further duplication of the road from Winchelsea to Colac is expected to be completed by 2019.

In 2015-16, VicRoads' pavement renewal project includes \$1.69M to be spent on the Princes Highway, near Mumbannar.

### **Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Wooldridge  
**Directed to:** Minister for Health  
**Asked on:** 11 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government is committed to continuing our state's strong history of tobacco reforms to reduce the impact of smoking on the community, and to protect the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

The previous Liberal Government had four years to take action on banning smoking in outdoor dining areas and chose not to.

I will be taking advice on a range of tobacco control matters and will be considering the full range of options before making any announcements. We know there is more to do and we are committed to doing it right. As we have previously done, we will work in consultation with the community.

The Government is committed to working closely with expert stakeholders, such as Quit Victoria, VicHealth, the Australian Medical Association Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria, on the development and implementation of any tobacco control reforms.

### **South Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Crozier  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 11 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I am sorry to hear that a McKinnon Secondary College student was recently hit by a car outside the school. I wish the student well with their recovery.

The McKinnon Secondary College is located on McKinnon Road, which is a local road managed by the Glen Eira City Council. Traffic management on McKinnon Road is therefore a matter for the Council to consider in consultation with the school. I understand that there is a 40 km speed limit restriction on McKinnon Road in the vicinity of McKinnon College, and a supervised school crossing to the west of the intersection of Osborne Avenue.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Employment  
**Asked on:** 11 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Robin Scott MP, as the matter falls under his portfolio responsibilities.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 11 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

I appreciate your concerns regarding police resources in Cardinia Shire. The government recognises that a well resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing, is critical to keeping communities safe.

Under Victorian law, I cannot direct police about the allocation or deployment of Victoria Police in accordance with Section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013. These are operational matters for the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police. The government holds regular discussions with Victoria Police to understand what resourcing needs they may have, to determine future priorities.

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 occur progressively, with 400 more police to be 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 key 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.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 11 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

As previously noted, the Level Crossing Removal Authority is currently developing a strategic plan that will outline the design and delivery process for each level crossing. This plan will identify appropriate design and consultation periods that respond to the complexity of each site, and identify potential removal windows that will minimise the disruption to our road and rail networks. This plan is expected to be completed later this year.

As part of this process the Level Crossing Removal Authority will undertake an options assessment for all sites to address the many factors involved. These factors include property access, adjoining road network, urban design, nearby infrastructure, geology and environment, construction impacts, and associated public transport services.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 11 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I am aware of, and acknowledge, the community's concerns regarding this intersection. VicRoads has begun the process of collecting traffic data at the roundabout of Gap Road and Horne Street as part of preliminary investigations into developing a proposal to reduce congestion at the site. When VicRoads' proposal is developed, it will be submitted for funding under a future program.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Young  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 23 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Chief Commissioner of Police regulates the firearm industry in Victoria and is responsible for administering the firearm licensing system. I can advise that Victoria Police is aware of some of the frustrations experienced by firearm licence holders living in rural or remote areas. I can also advise that Victoria Police has commenced the Electronic Lodgement Process (ELP) project. This project will aim to improve methods of service delivery by streamlining the lodgement of firearm licence applications and licence renewals, and facilitate the payment of application fees online. The project will also aim to reduce the necessity for applicants and licence holders to attend multiple locations as part of the lodgement process in the future.

### **South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Springle  
**Directed to:** Minister for Industry  
**Asked on:** 23 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I refer to the matter raised by Ms Nina Springle MP, Member for South Eastern Metropolitan, on 23 June 2015 regarding assistance to automotive supply chain companies in Melbourne's South Eastern suburbs and I thank Ms Springle for her question.

The Victorian Government recognises the challenges faced by automotive supply chain companies as a result of the wind down in manufacturing operations by the three major automotive manufacturers in Victoria and that these challenges are faced in areas including Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs.

The Victorian Government has a comprehensive plan to create jobs and boost investment, including in Melbourne's south-east. Our Back To Work Plan includes a number of initiatives. These include:

- The \$100 million Back to Work Scheme that will get unemployed young people, long term unemployed and retrenched workers back into the workforce. Importantly, this will include retrenched automotive workers.
- The \$508 million Premier's Jobs and Investment Panel that will bring together expertise across business, the community and industry to ensure that the Government is working with all key stakeholders on our economic growth agenda.

In addition, the \$200 million Future Industries Fund will support the development of six sectors with high growth potential. These six sectors are:

- Medical technology and pharmaceuticals
- New energy technology
- Food and fibre
- Transport, defence and construction technology
- International education
- Professional services.

The automotive supply sector is well-placed to diversify into some of these sectors and the Future Industries Fund will be a key enabler to do so.

The Victorian Government has made two submissions to the Commonwealth Government's Senate Economics References Committee Inquiry Into the Future of Australia's Automotive Industry to ensure that the Commonwealth Government understands the impact of their decisions to Victorian communities.

Commonwealth Government support for the automotive sector is predominantly administered through the Automotive Transformation Scheme. The Commonwealth Government was intent on delivering radical cuts to the scheme, which the Victorian Government strongly opposed.

The Commonwealth Government half-heartedly walked away from those cuts but the savings are still there for all to see in the 2015-16 Federal Budget. Of the \$900 million that was initially proposed to be cut, \$795 million will be achieved by stealth.

The Victorian Government has been actively assisting automotive supply chain businesses, including those from Melbourne's south eastern suburbs through business matching activities during Automotive Week 2015, which was part of the Victoria Invitation Program inbound mission in March this year. These business matching events connected automotive supply chain companies, of which around 30 were from Melbourne's south eastern suburbs, with global as well as domestic non-automotive opportunities.

I also chaired an Automotive Industry Roundtable meeting in Dandenong on 1 May 2015 and conducted similar meetings in Broadmeadows and Geelong on 15 May. These meetings were an opportunity to hear directly from stakeholders and discuss areas where Victorian Government policies could potentially be strengthened in the future.

My department has also engaged with non-automotive industry sectors to introduce automotive businesses, including those in Melbourne's south east, to other industries. These activities included leading in a delegation of automotive businesses to participate in a health industry forum on 10 June this year. Other business matching events are being planned for later this year.

As you can see, the Andrews Labor Government has not been standing still. In fact, we have actively engaged with industry and will continue to do so to ensure that the effect of the wind down of passenger car manufacturing is minimised and that Victorian businesses capitalise on growth opportunities.

Thank you.

### **Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Fitzherbert  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 23 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education and Training has been in close contact with Albert Park Primary School regarding the T intersection at Moubray Street and Bridport Street West. The Department is currently investigating possible solutions and is liaising with the City of Port Phillip to explore these options. The Department will work closely with both parties to ensure the best outcome is reached for the school and community.

It is my understanding that the need for greater outdoor space speaks to a larger issue facing the school. Albert Park Primary is clearly located in a zone experiencing high levels of school-aged population growth.

Investment in education and school infrastructure is a priority for the Andrews Labor Government. The Government has used its first Education State Budget to allocate \$730 million back to school infrastructure to build, upgrade and maintain schools across the state. This is the first step in addressing the chronic under investment in school capital under the last government.

The Government has committed to delivering both South Melbourne Park Primary School and Ferrars Street Primary School in this term of government which will ease the enrolment pressures of Albert Park Primary in years to come.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 23 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

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

In May 2010, Labor committed and funded 1,966 additional police to the front line. This led to an increase of 73 police in the Western Region Division 3 which includes the Ballarat police service area.

The Andrews Labor Government's first budget for 2015-16 delivered a record \$2.5 billion to Victoria Police to continue their important work in keeping our community safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to redeploy 400 police to our communities where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 400 custody officers to supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria.

The custody officers may also be deployed to other locations over time, depending on the resourcing needs and allocation of those resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong. The new custody officers will initially work at six police stations, including Ballarat.

This is in contrast to the first Baillieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

The residents of Ballarat receive a 24-hour police response from across the Ballarat police service area. Work is also progressing on the new Ballarat West Police Station. The tender for construction of the building closed on 17 June 2015 and, following the selection of a successful tender, the works are set for completion by mid-2016.

There has also been a decrease in overall crime in the Ballarat Local Government Area by 1.6 per cent. Over the twelve months leading up to 31 March 2015, property and deception offences decreased by 13.1 per cent. This includes decreases in property damage and theft offences. There was also a decrease in public order and security offences of 10.7 per cent. Although crimes against the person increased overall, there was a 9.4 per cent decrease in assault and related offences.

The government works closely with the 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 is providing \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new secure, encrypted digital radio network.

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 and dedicated website—[ice.vic.gov.au](http://ice.vic.gov.au) have already been 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 tests per year for the next two years, taking more alcohol and drug affected people off our roads.

Local police initiatives to tackle crime associated with illegal drugs include the "I Wish I'd Locked It" campaign, which encourages 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 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.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Hartland  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 23 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

I am advised by Public Transport Victoria that the building of an underpass or overpass at the Yarraville crossing would need to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, which would include long ramps. Such improvements are not possible at this location due to the nearby Birmingham Street to the west, and the shops in very close proximity to the east. The old underpass which was removed in 1997 had stairs and therefore did not provide disabled access.

While I recognise that extended crossing closures during peak periods cause some inconvenience, this is a result of the number of trains using this corridor. The crossing must remain closed when other trains are approaching, to avoid short opening times which may trap crossing users.

As Ms Hartland is aware, the Regional Rail Link project has recently been commissioned. This project has removed V/Line passenger services from this section of track resulting in a decrease in the total number of trains passing through this crossing. This will have the effect of reducing closure times at the crossing.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 23 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

To coincide with the commencement of RRL services Metro customers travelling to and from Sunbury will see an extra ten peak Metro services per week.

For future details on this matter please refer to previous response.

### **Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ondarchie  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 23 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Government has committed to extending the South Morang rail line to Mernda to cater for significant growth in population in Melbourne's north.

The 2015-16 Victorian State Budget allocated \$9 million to further investigate demand and capacity, site conditions, design development, economic assessment and planning approvals.

Ecological surveys have been concluded and community engagement regarding the project has commenced.

\$9 million has been provided to kick start the project, develop a business case, undertake site investigations, commence land acquisitions and other project development work. Member for Yan Yean, Danielle Green, will Chair the Taskforce that will lead community engagement on the project.

**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Multicultural Affairs  
**Asked on:** 24 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

In late 2013, the Department of Premier and Cabinet commissioned an independent review of the roles and responsibilities of OMAC and the VMC, which was completed in the same year. The review, together with the 2014 Victorian Auditor-General's report on Access to Services for Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, was also considered by the previous government.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Hartland  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 24 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

On Sunday 21 June, Geelong line trains began using the new Regional Rail Link tracks through Wyndham Vale and Tarneit stations. As a result of this, metropolitan and regional trains now run on separate tracks, improving reliability and reducing the number of Altona Loop bypasses.

The Andrews Labor Government is working with Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to capitalise on the benefits made possible through the delivery of the Regional Rail Link, however a rebuild of metropolitan train timetables is required to release the full benefits of the project. PTV has already added one extra service on the Werribee line in the weekday morning and afternoon peaks to address immediate capacity issues. Service planning and timetabling is a lengthy and complex process, and work will continue over coming months.

I have asked PTV to treat Altona Loop improvements as a high priority, and to find a solution that will see off-peak Altona Loop trains run through to Flinders Street, so that passengers will no longer need to change trains at Newport.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Training and Skills  
**Asked on:** 24 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

I thank the Member for raising this matter with me. I wish to advise the Member that the decision to not award funding to Yenbena was made under the former Liberal Government in October last year.

Nonetheless, entry to market processes are subject to rigorous probity requirements to ensure that all RTOs that apply are treated fairly and it is therefore not appropriate that I intervene in this case as you have suggested. I do however support the application of all training providers with intentions to deliver critical and productive training services in regional Victoria and welcome future applications, where relevant, from this organisation.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring organisations receive the funding they need to help Victorians receive the relevant training and skills to prepare for local jobs.

While Yenbena has not asked for a meeting I would of course consider any request to listen to the concerns of community groups in my electorate and portfolio area.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 24 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

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

In May 2010, Labor committed funding for an additional 1,966 police to the frontline. This led to an increase of 58 police in the Eastern Region Division 2, which includes the Yarra Ranges police service area.

The Andrews Labor Government's first budget in 2015-16 delivered a record \$2.5 billion to Victoria Police to continue their important work in keeping our community safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to redeploy 400 police to our communities where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 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 custody officers will initially work at six police stations.

This is in contrast to the first Baillieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

Victoria Police has introduced an operational safety policy to enhance the safety and well being 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.

I assure you that the residents of the Yarra Ranges Police Service Area (PSA) will continue to receive a 24-hour police response. 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.

The government is working with the 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 key priority focus for Victoria Police. In supporting rural and regional communities across Victoria, the government also provided \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new secure, encrypted digital radio network.

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 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.

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 especially in rural Victoria, helping to address the disproportionate impacts that ice is having on rural and regional communities. A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website—ice.vic.gov.au have already been 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 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.

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

The government understands the impact 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 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.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Premier  
**Asked on:** 24 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Liberals and the Nationals are the only parties who broke their promise, by deciding to side with the Greens and backflip on their support to lease the Port of Melbourne. In doing so, they've shown that they do not support our plan to remove Victoria's 50 worst level crossings.

Under the Legislation before the Parliament, the Port of Melbourne would be allowed to grow to its natural capacity and a second container port would be developed in response to demand. This would ensure that future container capacity is developed at the best value for money. Further, allowing the Port to grow to its natural capacity will maximise the benefits from the Port of Melbourne Lease Transaction. This will kick start the Victorian Transport Building Fund to support high priority transport projects such as the removal of Melbourne's 50 most dangerous and congested level crossings.

The Government has recently introduced legislation establishing Infrastructure Victoria to provide independent, transparent advice on infrastructure projects and priorities. Once established, Infrastructure Victoria will undertake a thorough assessment of the best location for Victoria's second container port, including Bay West.

It's time that the Liberals and Nationals stopped playing politics and support the plan that Victoria needs and Victorians voted for.

### **Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Crozier  
**Directed to:** Minister for Ports  
**Asked on:** 25 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Government has received advice that it is highly unlikely that a significant number of 'big ships' will seek to call on the Port of Melbourne within the lease term.

During the lease, any additional capital dredging beyond existing approvals, including at The Heads, would be subject to the relevant State and Commonwealth environmental approvals at the time. This is unchanged from what the Port of Melbourne Corporation is required to do currently.

The use of 'blasting' techniques (using explosives) is considered old technology and has not been used in approximately 30 years. The recent Channel Deepening Project used mechanical means which achieved the required outcome within stringent environmental conditions.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Police  
**Asked on:** 25 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

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

In May 2010, Labor committed funding for an additional 1,966 police to the frontline. This led to an increase of 50 police in the Eastern Region Division 3, which includes the Murchison.

The Andrews Labor Government's first budget in 2015-16 delivered a record

\$2.5 billion to Victoria Police to continue their important work in keeping our community safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to redeploy 400 police to our communities where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 400 custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria.

The custody officers may also be progressively deployed to other locations over time, depending on the resourcing needs and allocation of these resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong. The new custody officers will initially work at six police stations.

This is in contrast to the first Baillieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

Victoria Police has introduced an operational safety policy to enhance the safety and well being 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.

I assure you that the residents of Murchison will continue to receive a 24-hour police response. 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.

The Murchison community will continue to receive a 24 hour police response from across the Greater Shepparton police service area. I am informed that the service delivery at Murchison has not significantly altered as a result of the Operational Safety Policy. Policing across Murchison and the surrounding areas is managed in a flexible manner to ensure the best possible use of available police resources, including utilising police from Murchison, Tatura, Mooroopna and Shepparton police stations. Officers are permitted to work 'one-up' at Murchison, with the appropriate risk assessments in place, as has always been the case.

The government works closely with the 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 is providing \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new secure, encrypted digital radio network.

The upgrade will enable police working in regional areas to communicate more securely, preventing members of the public listening in on police operations.

Actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-16 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.

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 impact that ice is having on rural and regional communities. A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website—ice.vic.gov.au have already been 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 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, taking more alcohol and drug affected drivers off our roads.

I am assured by the 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 Ports  
**Asked on:** 25 June 2015

#### **ANSWER:**

The Government has received advice that it is highly unlikely that a significant number of 'big ships' will seek to call on the Port of Melbourne within the lease term.

During the lease, any additional capital dredging beyond existing approvals, including at The Heads, would be subject to the relevant State and Commonwealth environmental approvals at the time. This is unchanged from what the Port of Melbourne Corporation is required to do currently.

The use of 'blasting' techniques (using explosives) is considered old technology and has not been used in approximately 30 years. The recent Channel Deepening Project used mechanical means which achieved the required outcome within stringent environmental conditions.





**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

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

**Wednesday, 5 August 2015**

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Regional Development  
**Asked on:** 27 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The new Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund (RJIF) became operational on 1 July 2015. The RJIF is the Government's overarching regional development package, focussing on major projects, employment and communities.

The RJIF includes the \$250 million Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF), which aims to harness key regional strengths to improve the productivity and liveability of regional Victoria. The Government has committed to investing at least \$100 million from the RIF to projects located in Victoria's ten regional cities.

Specifically, projects that aim to improve Victoria's visitor economy, encourage productive and liveable cities and centres and bolster regional productivity through improved infrastructure will be given priority. The Shepparton City Council is engaged with Regional Development Victoria regarding the potential for funding support for the next stage of the CBD revitalisation project.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Hartland  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 28 May 2015

**ANSWER:**

The Western Distributor is a market-led proposal by Transurban. The proposed project has the potential to relieve pressure on the West Gate Bridge, improve truck access to the Port of Melbourne, enhance access to jobs and services, and significantly reduce truck numbers in the inner west.

The Western Distributor is under assessment in accordance with the government's new, rigorous market-led proposal guidelines released in February 2015. This five stage Market-led Proposals guideline is the most transparent and rigorous in the country and changes have been made to greatly increase its accountability and transparency.

Stage One of the West Gate Distributor project which will widen Moreland Street, signalise the intersection at Footscray Road and Moreland Street and widen and strengthen Shepherd Bridge over the Maribyrnong River is currently proceeding. The government expects to award the \$40 million contract for Stage 1 in the coming weeks, with construction to begin before the end of the year.



**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

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

**Thursday, 6 August 2015**

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Hartland  
**Directed to:** Special Minister of State  
**Asked on:** 25 June 2015

**ANSWER:**

The business case for the Western Distributor project will be released once completed, which will be before contractual close.

Should the Government enter into an in-principle agreement with Transurban, we will release information outlining the financial details of that agreement.

The Andrews Labor Government has been clear on this all along – we will be releasing the business case before we sign contracts.

We promised Victorians a more transparent government, and a more open dialogue, and we will deliver on that.