

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

9, 10 and 11 June 2015

(Extract from book 8)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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Legislative Council committees

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

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

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Dalidakis, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, 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.

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 Elasmr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mr Perera and Ms Ryall.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Ms G. TIERNEY

Acting Presidents: Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Ramsay

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Deputy Leader of the Government:
The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

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The Hon. D. K. DRUM

Leader of the Greens:
Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
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
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² Appointed 15 April 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

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ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

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

Tuesday, 9 June 2015

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 17 March 2015

ANSWER:

The Government is delivering on its commitment to make the Friday before the AFL Grand Final a public holiday.

A public holiday will allow more Victorians, especially in regional areas, to join in the excitement of the Grand Final parade and other Grand Final celebrations. It will capitalise on one of Victoria's premiere major events by boosting tourism.

As is always the case, councils will have to decide the appropriate level of staffing required to deliver the essential services that their communities need.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 14 April 2015

ANSWER:

The former government's proposal for the upgrade of the Cranbourne-Pakenham line, which included the level crossing at Clayton Road, did not go far enough to resolve congestion to Melbourne's busiest line. The project was so flawed it could not even deliver what the former government had promised it would.

Upon completion of the assessment, after the election, the former Liberal government's proposal showed several significant flaws, including:

- Insufficient detail, unresolved technical and scope issues, and significant project risk
- Lack of integration between components of the proposal
- Project costs blowouts estimated at a minimum of half a billion dollars, and
- Ongoing overcrowding on train services on the Cranbourne-Pakenham line.

All nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong are included in the first 17 to be removed.

The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with it and removing Victoria's most dangerous and congested level crossings, which frustrate motorists, hold back our train services and put lives at risk.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr D. Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 16 April 2015

ANSWER:

There has been no decision to change tram Route 8. Should any changes be made, the community and stakeholders will be consulted on those proposed changes before I make any decision.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 5 May 2015

ANSWER:

I am advised that Goulburn Valley Health currently operates two hospital based sessions six days a week and St Vincent's Hospital provides home dialysis as part of the hub and spoke model.

I am advised that Goulburn Valley Health is currently working to increase the number of sessions by adding an extra evening session three days a week. This is expected to occur by the end of May to early June 2015. This will provide a renal dialysis service to an additional six patients.

They are also working with St Vincent's Hospital for additional home dialysis where clinically appropriate.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$1 million to ensure that Goulburn Valley Health can plan for the future. I have appreciated the opportunity to work constructively with local members Suzanna Sheed MP and Upper House MP Jaclyn Symes, both determined to take this health forward on a considered and planned way.

In addition, the 2015-16 Victorian Budget also included the \$200 million for the Hospital Beds Rescue Fund to open new hospital beds and points of care. This will allow approximately 635 more patients to be treated per year.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Mulino
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 5 May 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government has removed basic camping fees in over 500 basic camping sites across Victoria to ensure families can have an affordable holiday and get a chance to experience our great national parks.

In Eastern Victoria, fees have been removed in 177 basic camping sites over 40 campgrounds in seven parks. These campgrounds allow visitors to access and enjoy the natural environment and provide economic and social benefits to all communities of Eastern Victoria.

Victoria's parks are among the most open and accessible in the world. They play a vital role in protecting the natural environment and cultural heritage. They also provide opportunities for recreation, and bringing social benefits by improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and the community.

Parks also bring economic benefits to local, regional, state and national economies.

There are around 680 campgrounds in parks and reserves across Victoria which attract about 2.2 million visitor nights each year.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

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

ANSWER:

I thank Ms Springle, Member for South East Metropolitan, for her question regarding the level crossing removal at Chandler Road, Noble Park.

Yes, I can assure the Member that the Level Crossing Removal Authority will work with the community and local government to ensure appropriate design solutions for each of the level crossings being removed under the Level Crossings Removal Project.

The Victorian Government is looking to industry to deliver an innovative design and delivery solution for the Caulfield to Dandenong package that will produce good urban design outcomes that comply with relevant legislation, including the Transport Integration Act, while also providing value for money for Victorians.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 5 May 2015

ANSWER:

I have asked the Environment Protection Authority urgently investigate odour issues reported by many members of the local community over recent weeks.

EPA Landfill and Odour Experts both conducted inspections of Pinegro and Melbourne Regional Landfill recently in April 2015. No non-compliances were detected at either premises however the issue of odours associated with this area is certainly not a new one.

EPA has issued two pollution abatement notices to local industry over the last 12 months but more action must be taken.

EPA is currently conducting a second round of odour surveillance monitoring that will run across autumn 2015, so that monitoring results can be compared with the same seasonal period in the previous year. EPA has also arranged for their landfill expert to inspect the Western landfill site to ensure the new operator has not changed operational practices.

The Andrews Labor Government remains committed to 'calling in' any new application to expand the Western Landfill. If an application is received we will appoint an independent advisory committee to consider the application, to make sure the local community gets a say.

The Andrews Government has also recently announced the public review of Victoria's Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is about to commence, with the appointment of an advisory committee led by former Secretary of the Department of Justice, Penny Armytage.

The review will examine the powers and resourcing of the state's environmental regulator and ensure the Authority is best prepared to act on community concerns and tackle modern day challenges such as pollution and contamination.

Northern Metropolitan Region

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

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of volunteer firefighters of the Northern Metropolitan Region who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) is well resourced to provide a diverse range of risk reduction, fire suppression and incident management services to minimise the impact of fires and other emergencies on Victorian communities.

CFA considers the safety and wellbeing of communities when making decisions about the allocation of operational equipment to CFA brigades.

The government has committed to a range of measures to better support firefighters, including the recruitment of 350 CFA firefighters; new CFA stations and upgrades; installation of toilet and washroom facilities for up to 100 rural CFA stations; delivery of 70 trucks comprising of 40 heavy tankers, 20 medium tankers and 10 medium pumpers and expansion of the Emergency Medical Response Program.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Dalla-Riva
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 5 May 2015

ANSWER:

VicRoads has evaluated the need for a footpath between Morack Road and the Eastlink Shared User Trail bridge over the Burwood Highway and has developed a project proposal that will be evaluated for funding in the future.

VicRoads would be pleased to present its proposal and the associated analysis to Mr Venter and to any other interested residents. Their presentation can be arranged by contacting Mr Aidan McGann, VicRoads' Regional Director, Metropolitan South East (Tel: 9881 8800).

Western Metropolitan Region

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

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that the traffic signal phasing can be modified to provide priority for pedestrians crossing Buckley Street on the east side of the intersection when the pedestrian signal button is activated. This will now activate a green pedestrian light and allow pedestrians to cross Buckley Street ahead of left turning vehicles travelling south on Victoria Street. VicRoads expects these signal changes to be completed by the end of June 2015.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

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

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering on its promise to implement truck curfews on Rosanna Road with a staged approach being considered as part of a twelve month trial.

The first stage would see the roll out of night time truck curfews on Rosanna Road, Greensborough Highway, Waiora Road and Waterdale Road from late July 2015.

Additional signs would be installed on local streets to reduce the number of trucks using the local street network as a consequence of the curfews.

Before and after traffic volume data would be collected at various locations as part of the trial to determine the effectiveness of the curfews before the next stage of the roll out.

The new curfews aim to strike a balance for the local community and truck operators by addressing community concerns around safety and traffic volumes on these roads.

As part of the trial, VicRoads is seeking stakeholder and community input and has committed to the formation of a working group for issues on Rosanna Road.

The terms of reference and stakeholder membership of this group, which is likely to include officers from Banyule Council, is currently being prepared and is expected to be completed by the end of May 2015.

Information sessions are also being planned to provide details of the curfews to the local community.

VicRoads will seek Council's views on the staged approach for the curfew roll out in the coming weeks.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 6 May 2015

ANSWER:

After four years of neglect and inaction, the Coalition released its Country Rail election commitment on 18 November 2014. This was 11 days before the State Election and more than 1,400 days since the Coalition had been elected to Government. After four years, Coalition funded none of its election promises in its Budget of only six months earlier, including the duplication of the rail line between Bunyip and Longwarry. Four years of Coalition underfunding have left regional rail lines in a dangerous state of neglect.

The Andrews Labor Government's first Budget includes \$257 million for new regional rail carriages and infrastructure. This investment will provide 21 new V/LOCITY carriages and a maintenance and stabling yard at Waurin Ponds. New carriages mean more services on more lines all across Victoria. In addition, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) has commenced work on a Network Development Plan (NDP) for regional Victoria. The regional NDP will represent PTV's assessment of how regional train and coach services should evolve to meet the needs of passengers in the short, medium and long term.

Community consultation will play an integral role in the development of the regional NDP. In the next months, the Government and PTV will liaise with local communities, councils and passengers to explore opportunities for adding and improving public transport services and infrastructure in regional and rural Victoria.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr D. Davis
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 6 May 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 based on the risk profile of each health service in question and is determined by independent actuaries using a well-established actuarial model.

The recent budget represents a significant increase in funding to health services in the Southern Metropolitan region and all of Victoria. We have invested \$1.38 billion in hospitals, ambulances and health programs over the next four years.

After \$1 billion in cuts to the health system under the former government, this added investment will start to fix some of the mess left behind.

Health services like Alfred Health, Monash Health, and Eastern Health, will all benefit from the massive boost of \$970 million to meet hospital demand, allowing them to admit more patients and treat more patients in a timely way.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 May 2015

ANSWER:

The Government is committed to removing the Werribee Street and Cherry Street level crossings as part of its Level Crossing Removal Project. This massive project will see the removal of SO of our most dangerous and congested level crossings over the next eight years, with the 2015-16 budget providing \$2.4 billion for the removal of at least 20 by the end of 2018.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) has been established, and is currently developing a strategic plan that will identify the optimal timetable to remove each of the level crossings whilst minimising disruption to our road and rail network. This will include appropriate time to undertake planning and consultation with stakeholders and the community to ensure each level crossing removal responds to local needs. The planning and engagement process for all SO level crossings will be completed by 2018.

I am aware of the strong community desire to remove these level crossings and I have been advised by LXRA that they will be undertaking a thorough planning and options assessment. This will include undertaking environmental and cultural heritage assessments for the nearby Werribee River, construction feasibility and impact assessments, and consultation with the many stakeholders that will be impacted by this project.

As you are aware, these level crossing removals are critical pieces of infrastructure for this precinct which services a large commercial and residential area. As noted, these level crossings will be removed within the next eight years and more specific timeframes will be confirmed once the above works have been completed.

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

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

Wednesday, 10 June 2015

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 26 May 2015

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

- The 2015-16- State Budget provides \$8 million capital funding to support the initial planning stage of the Tech Schools initiative, as part of the \$100 million which the Government has committed to provide over four years.
- The implementation of each Tech School will be unique, with course offerings and design driven by the needs of each community and responsive to the skills and capabilities required in the 21st Century. It is intended that each Tech School will be managed by a partnership of participating schools, TAFEs and universities, local government and industry. The Department is currently conducting local consultation briefings with potential partners to identify possible sites and partnerships.
- The ten Tech Schools are expected to open progressively, with the first wave expected to be open during 2017 and all in 2018.

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

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

Thursday, 11 June 2015

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 27 May 2015

ANSWER:

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

The Broadmeadows VICSES Unit has 78 volunteer members and is headed up by a Unit Controller. On average the unit responds to 1000 requests for assistance each year. It has one rescue truck, one four wheel drive vehicle, a storm trailer and an operational support welfare trailer. VICSES has advised that it will be replacing the unit's old Ford rescue truck with a new four wheel drive medium rescue truck in August 2015 at a cost of \$215,212.

Under the present arrangements, local government is primarily responsible for the provision of VICSES unit accommodation. I would encourage the unit to work with the Hume City Council to discuss future needs and alternative sites.

Furthermore, as part of emergency management reform, Emergency Management Victoria is developing a shared asset strategy that will establish a sector-wide framework for improved asset utilisation, interoperability and value for money. The strategy will consider current and future equipment and facility needs of emergency service organisations and identify shared procurement and co-location opportunities. The strategy will inform future investment decision making over the period 2015-2025.