

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

9 October to 22 October 2015

(Extract from book 15)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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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 — 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.

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Legislative Council select committees

Port of Melbourne Select Committee — Mr Barber, Mr Drum, Mr Mulino, Mr Ondarchie, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing and Ms Tierney.

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 Bourman, Mr Elasmarr and Mr Melhem. (*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.

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
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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
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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
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Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² Appointed 15 April 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

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ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers and received by Hansard in the period shown.

9 October to 22 October 2015**Northern Victoria Region**

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 5 August 2015

ANSWER:

As you are aware, the Andrews Labor Government is developing Victoria's first ever long term plan for public transport in regional Victoria. The Regional Network Development Plan will set out priorities for regional public transport services and freight-rail, infrastructure and investment over the next 20 years.

As part of this process this Government held consultation sessions that captured the concerns of public transport users on this corridor. We will take the needs of the Shepparton community into consideration in the development of this plan.

It is important to note that the previous coalition government gutted \$73 million from V/Line over 3 years and had a plan to cut 100 jobs which would have affected cleaning crew and station staff.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 18 August 2015

ANSWER:

Regional Rail Link (RRL) opened on 21 June 2015 after an eight week delay caused by the failure of the former Coalition government to order enough trains to run reliable services. Unfortunately, this failure appears symbolic of the Coalition's general neglect and underfunding of regional public transport, illustrated by savage cuts to V/Line's budget.

The new Regional Rail Link timetable delivers more frequent services, increasing travel options for commuters from Ballarat and in the growth areas of Bacchus Marsh and Melton. The new timetable includes an extra service each in the morning and afternoon peak from both Ballarat and Melton to Southern Cross Station. Unfortunately, with the opening of RRL some services became overcrowded and experienced delays.

To address the issues on the Ballarat line, the Andrews Labor Government is working hard to improve reliability and increase capacity. Carriages have been added to services to increase their capacity and, as more carriages come into fleet, V/Line will continue to allocate them to the Ballarat line until demand is met. To improve reliability and punctuality, V/Line has addressed areas along the line causing speed restrictions. Further, both the Premier and I have directed V/Line and Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to continue to review the timetable and improve services for Ballarat line passengers.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 18 August 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government's Homesafe trial of all night public transport on weekends is about getting people home safer and sooner.

Based on advice of Victoria Police, there will be a range of security and safety measures in place during the trial to keep passengers safe.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested in an additional 109 PSO's to be stationed at the premium stations operating during the trial.

Additional transit police will patrol all 15 train lines and non-premium stations, including Hallam, Lynbrook and Merinda Park.

Hallam, Lynbrook and Merinda Park stations, like all stations on the metropolitan network, have CCTV coverage and an emergency assistance button for passenger safety.

Victoria Police's priority is to ensure delivery of the Homesafe commitment. Victoria Police will continually assess the situation during the Homesafe trial and redeploy resources as needed.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 1 September 2015

ANSWER:

Since February, VicRoads has collected necessary data, which includes observing AM and PM peak traffic queue lengths, recording traffic volumes, and met with the Hume City Council to discuss possible improvements to the intersection. VicRoads is continuing to work closely with the Council to finalise design options for a future funding submission.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 2 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government's commitment is for the construction of the O'Herns Road/Hume Freeway diamond interchange and the duplication of O'Herns Road. VicRoads is currently preparing a business case, which will investigate options and recommend solutions for the O'Herns Road project. As part of this investigation and development work, traffic modelling for the broader road network will be undertaken and will investigate the need and relevant timing for potential improvements at nearby intersections, including the O'Herns Road/Findon Road/Epping Road intersection.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 2 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to retaining the Healesville Freeway Reservation as public open space. VicRoads advises me that it is currently working with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, to progress the surrender of the land to the Crown.

Part of this work will include the establishment of a committee of management to manage the future use of the land. The committee of management will be responsible for applying for funding and undertaking the community consultation in developing the plans for the shared bike and walking paths.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 2 September 2015

ANSWER:

Grand Final Friday was a great day and an opportunity for all Victorians to get together to celebrate Australia's national game and spend quality time with friends and family.

Regional Tourism reported a bumper weekend and many businesses enjoyed roaring trades.

The public holiday was an election commitment and we keep our promises. Next year will be even bigger and better.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 2 September 2015

ANSWER:

To help address increasing demand and growth across the regional rail network, including the Bendigo Line, the Government is moving to end confusing rules and inequity for some V/Line passengers by applying a consistent pick up and set down policy across the network. I thank the Sunbury community under the advocacy of local member for Sunbury Josh Bull for providing their feedback on this matter.

PTV encourages passengers at Sunbury and Pakenham stations to board more frequent Metro services when travelling to the city, as has long been the case for people using stations such as Sunshine, Broadmeadows and Dandenong.

In August this year, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) extended a morning and evening service from Watergardens. PTV is currently investigating extending off peak Watergardens services to Sunbury at the end of the year to provide more services.

I have also asked PTV to develop longer term options to improve Metro services to Sunbury to ensure growth at Sunbury can be accommodated through progressive improvements in peak and off peak frequencies.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Tierney
Directed to: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Asked on: 3 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Gunditjmara people, represented by the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, have pursued a World Heritage nomination for the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape for over 20 years. During this time, Gunditj Mirring have actively managed, maintained, and protected their landscape, ensuring the continuation of their unique and sophisticated eel aquaculture system.

Since 2013, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria has been liaising with the Commonwealth Department of the Environment regarding the inclusion of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape on Australia's Tentative List of World Heritage nominations; a requirement for all nominated places. Earlier this year, the Premier wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, Hon Greg Hunt, requesting that Budj Bim be included on Australia's Tentative List. I have met with Gunditj Mirring as part of my listening tour of Registered Aboriginal Parties. The development of a Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage nomination was discussed when I met with Gunditj Mirring.

The Commonwealth Department of the Environment recently requested all States and Territories nominate the places they believe should be nominated for the World Heritage list. In response, the Premier last month again confirmed that the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape is Victoria's number one priority for World Heritage listing, and announced this to the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners on country at Lake Condah. I would like to thank the member for Western Victoria for attending this event, which I understand was very much appreciated by the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners. The Commonwealth Government, in consultation with State and Territory Environment Ministers, will decide by January 2016 which places should be included on Australia's Tentative List. We will continue discussions with the Commonwealth Government to ensure the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape has the best chance of inclusion on Australia's Tentative List.

The World Heritage nomination can be lodged with the World Heritage Centre once the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape has been included on Australia's Tentative List for at least 12 months. The Victorian Government will work with Gunditj Mirring to develop a nomination which clearly illustrates Budj Bim's international heritage significance, and ensures this magnificent landscape is provided the recognition and protection it deserves.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 15 September 2015

ANSWER:

Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) targets the weed Arrowhead because it restricts the flow of irrigation water through the network and also contributes significantly to the build-up of sediment which impacts service delivery to customers. Arrowhead is an extensive and prolific aquatic weed within GMW's irrigation system and is extremely difficult to treat.

The irrigation season allows only a small window from 15 May through to 15 August each year for annual maintenance including weed spraying. GMW progressively undertook spraying from 18 May to 27 July 2015 as the channels to be sprayed were in the appropriate condition for treatment.

This year was the first time that GMW has used a herbicide with the active ingredient Imazapyr to treat Arrowhead in their channels. The proposed work program was presented and discussed with their customer representative committees prior to the commencement of maintenance works. These maintenance works were supported by the Water Services Committees, and in April 2015 GMW notified all customers along these channels in advance of applying the treatment and also updated customers again in June and July 2015.

GMW complies with rigorous environmental and health regulatory processes when it used herbicides. Application of this herbicide was done in accordance with the manufacturer's directions for use. However, GMW's testing showed the herbicide was decaying at a slower rate than specified and as a precautionary measure GMW delayed its customers from accessing water for irrigation and stock and domestic purposes beyond the traditional start of the irrigation season. GMW had not anticipated delays to the start of the irrigation season.

GMW worked with its customers to ensure that their water needs were met including carting water for stock and domestic purposes and undertaking risk assessments for customers that indicated a need to irrigate. While some customers agreed to delay irrigation, no customers were denied access where an immediate need existed.

GMW has commenced a comprehensive review of all aspects of this year's program and will continue to work with its customers via the Water Services Committees to determine the merits of future programs. Importantly the review will include developing increased knowledge on:

- the risk to crops, animals, aquatic life and the environment of various residual levels of herbicide;
- the behaviour of the chemical in GMW's channel network and how this differs from manufacturer specifications; and
- physical aspects of the treatment that can be adapted e.g. timing and application methods to ensure risks to delaying the irrigation season are managed.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Eideh
Directed to: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Asked on: 15 September 2015

ANSWER:

I would like to thank the Member for his question regarding engaging perpetrators of family violence to change their unacceptable behaviour. Family violence is the most serious law and order issue that we face as a community.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to holding perpetrators of this violence to account, while ensuring that those who want to change their behaviour have the opportunity to do so. That is why the 2015-16 Budget provides \$2.5 million over two years for more places in court-ordered men's behaviour change programs, for men who are respondents to family violence intervention orders in certain courts, and for men on Community Corrections Orders.

Men's Behaviour Change Programs are available on a voluntary and court-ordered basis, and in the Corrections context. Importantly, these programs provide support to the partners and ex-partners of men in the program, ensuring that the safety of women and children is paramount in program delivery.

In the West Division of the Department of Health and Human Services there are eight organisations funded to deliver voluntary men's behavioural change programs. These programs are also accessible to men on community corrections orders. There is one mandated men's behavioural change program delivered for men within the Ballarat court catchment area.

The Andrews Labor Government has turned to the Royal Commission into Family Violence to help fix the broken system. The Inquiry heard evidence into Men's Behaviour Change Programs and reform in this area will help to further address this harm throughout Victoria.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Melhem
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 16 September 2015

ANSWER:

I refer to the constituency question dated 16 September 2015 from Mr Melhem regarding when the upgrade works for Tarneit P-9 College and Werribee Secondary College are due to commence and when they will be completed.

I am pleased to advise that both projects have commenced the building design stage. This comprehensive planning and consultation process is undertaken to ensure the new buildings will enhance the school's educational outcomes.

The Department of Education and Training has advised me that Tarneit P-9 School Stage 2 is expected to go to tender in March 2016, with the commencement of construction scheduled in May 2016. The first phase of this project will deliver brand new classrooms which are expected to be ready for occupation in January 2017. I understand that the construction of speciality areas will occur in April 2017.

I am further advised that Werribee Secondary College is in the early stages of the design process and is expected to go to tender in August 2016. Occupation is anticipated to occur by October 2017.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Treasurer
Asked on: 16 September 2015

ANSWER:

Infrastructure Australia recently examined the cost of road congestion in major urban centres as part of the Australian Infrastructure Audit. For the Melbourne and Geelong areas the cost of congestion was estimated to be \$2.8 billion in 2011. This highlights why the Andrews Government has committed to an integrated package of transport projects over the next decade that will address Melbourne's growing congestion challenges (refer to <http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/transport>).

Recognising that level crossings are dangerous and a key cause of traffic congestion on Melbourne's roads, the Victorian Government will remove 50 level crossings across metropolitan Melbourne. This will provide more reliable and efficient road networks along Melbourne's most congested transport corridors.

The Melbourne Metro Rail project will alleviate congestion and allow for 20 000 more passengers to use the metropolitan train network in the peak hour. An improved rail network with this additional capacity will also help to address road congestion across Melbourne.

The Victorian Government has already commenced delivery of the first stage of the West Gate Distributor project that will remove 5000 trucks per day from the West Gate Bridge and significantly ease congestion in Melbourne's west. At the same time, a market-led proposal from Transurban for the Western Distributor is being assessed, particularly with reference to its integration with the broader freeway network and resulting impacts on congestion.

The CityLink-Tulla widening project will significantly increase the capacity of the corridor, allowing for future growth in business travel and tourism through Melbourne Airport. The Victorian Government is also investigating a number of innovative solutions that could be implemented to address congestion on Hoddle Street, one of Melbourne's most important arterial roads.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 16 September 2015

ANSWER:

Four sites between Timboon and Speedway Road were funded for reconstruction in the 2014-15 program. Three of these projects have been completed. The remaining section was delayed due to the onset of winter, but it will be completed by mid-December 2015.

An additional 3.3km section between Speedway Road and Patons Road is funded for rehabilitation in the current 2015-16 program of works. Works are scheduled to commence later this year.

VicRoads advises me that it will continue to monitor the condition of Timboon-Colac Road to ensure safety is the number one priority.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 17 September 2015

ANSWER:

Ormond College has taken the decision to block access to certain adult sites from their shared internet resource. I am advised that the basis of this decision is that Ormond College is a values based organisation and that the material displayed on the sites blocked is inconsistent with College's stated values, to which all members are expected to adhere.

Ormond College is the largest residential college at the University of Melbourne with over 400 student residents from a diverse range of different backgrounds, countries and cultures, who bring a broad range of outlooks and perspectives, together with equally varied interests.

The University of Melbourne, like all Victorian public universities, is an independent, self-governing institution. As such, it is inappropriate for the Minister or the Department to intervene in matters such as the one raised. Students are actively involved in the governance of Ormond College through membership of the College's governing council (two current student members), and through the Ormond College Students' Club.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 17 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is a proud supporter of men's sheds. Men's sheds provide safe, friendly and inclusive places where men can work together on projects of interest and be connected to their community.

The men's shed grant program encompasses funding for the construction of new men's sheds and for the refurbishment of existing men's sheds. These grant rounds are typically run on an alternate basis.

On 7 September 2015, I announced funding to support the construction of new men's sheds in fifteen high need communities across Victoria. Each of these projects is based on extensive community consultation and has a plan to grow the involvement of local residents and build strong partnerships with other community organisations like councils and neighbourhood houses.

I intend to call for applications for the refurbishment of men's sheds in January 2016. I know the Member for Eastern Metropolitan has been a strong supporter of the Manningham Men's Shed and I will ensure that both you and the Manningham Men's Shed are notified when this grant round is announced.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Young
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 17 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Victorian government does not routinely undertake surveys of kangaroo populations in Victoria. Kangaroo populations fluctuate in response to vegetation conditions, which are generally related to climatic variation. Although kangaroo populations have the capacity to dramatically increase in favourable conditions, they can also suffer from rapid declines in poor seasons. The Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP) has an understanding of the relative population trends of kangaroos from the numbers of authorities issued throughout the state for their control. The numbers of authorities issued can also give an indication of the population trends in specific areas of Victoria.

If kangaroo populations are impacting on members of the community through damaging fences, grazing pressure, or by posing a road hazard, Authorities to Control Wildlife (ATCWs) can be issued by DELWP to allow their control. The ATCW system is the established mechanism for land managers and land owners to control problem wildlife.

Road safety in regional Victoria is a significant concern, the department will work closely with road authorities to try to address the risk posed by wildlife on our roads.

In regards to kangaroo management on public land, while public land managers may undertake targeted kangaroo control in areas for damage mitigation, public safety or conservation reasons, they do not undertake culling of kangaroos for general population control.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 17 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Transition Auditors' Report was released on 17 September 2015.

After reviewing the situation and consulting extensively, the Hon Frank Vincent AO QC and John Watson have recommended that the Government not proceed further with the separation of Sunbury from Hume.

The Auditors expressed concern about the financial viability of a new Sunbury Council, advising that a separation would risk Sunbury residents facing significantly higher rate increases, a reduction in services and significant delays in providing much needed community facilities. They also advised that the terms of separation proposed by the previous Liberal Government were inequitable, inappropriate and gave rise to legal uncertainties.

The Government is carefully considering the recommendations contained in the report.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 6 October 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure and has allocated \$730 million to build, upgrade and maintain school facilities across the state.

Unprecedented growth in enrolments across the state has put significant pressure on the Department of Education and Training's relocatable asset base. The previous government failed Victorian students by halving the investment in school infrastructure. When the capital budget is cut by more than half, it has a devastating impact on schools.

To help alleviate these pressures relocatable buildings are used to supplement permanent school facilities across more than 1500 schools. The Department of Education and Training assesses school enrolment pressures and moves classrooms around the State to address this demand.

I have instructed the Department to work cooperatively with the school to identify options to improve its permanent classroom situation and ensure that students have access to appropriate facilities. The relocatable building will not be moved until required and agreed works including heating and cooling are completed and an outcome is reached that is fair for all.