

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

13 November to 26 November 2015

(Extract from book 17)

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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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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

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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*): Ms Bath and Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Ms Blandthorn, Mr J. Bull, Mr Dimopoulos, 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

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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Leader of the Greens:
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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
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.

13 November to 26 November 2015**Western Metropolitan Region**

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 1 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Government acknowledges that improvements to Altona Loop train services are required.

The former Government cut direct services from the Altona Loop into the city. The Andrews Government when in Opposition made an election commitment to return direct services to the city.

At a community forum held on October 14 2015 the Member for Altona Jill Hennessy outlined to local residents that the Government would deliver on this commitment.

Changes to one section of the train network cannot be made in isolation and the Government has committed to returning direct services to the city from the Altona Loop as part of the next Public Transport Victoria (PTV) timetable.

The Government wants to ensure that a new timetable will improve reliability and cut the number of Altona Loop Bypasses. With the opening of the new Regional Rail Link metropolitan and regional trains now run on separate tracks and the Government is working with PTV to capitalise on the benefits this can bring to a new timetable.

The new PTV timetable will be implemented next year when the Government is confident that it will improved reliability to Altona Loop services.

The Government and local member Jill Hennessy will continue to keep the community updated as work progresses towards a new timetable.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 1 September 2015

ANSWER:

Upon completion of Melbourne Metro, passengers using South Yarra station will benefit from improved capacity and more frequent services on the Frankston and Sandringham lines.

To include South Yarra in Melbourne Metro would cost \$1 billion and destroy 100 homes all for very little benefit.

Passengers travelling from South Yarra station to stations along the Cranbourne/Pakenham line will be able to interchange at Caulfield station and board a high-frequency Cranbourne/Pakenham service to continue their journey.

Public Transport Victoria will determine network services and stopping patterns closer to the completion of Melbourne Metro in 2026.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Industry
Asked on: 2 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is driving regional development across the State, including in the Latrobe Valley. The Government has established the \$500 million Region Jobs and Infrastructure Fund to drive regional employment growth. The Fund comprises:

- the \$250 million Regional Infrastructure Development Fund;
- the \$200 million Regional Jobs Fund; and
- the \$50 million Stronger Regional Communities Plan.

As Minister for Industry, I am responsible for the \$200 million Future Industries Fund. This Fund has been established to invest in six key sectors set that can drive Victoria's future economic growth. This Fund will grow jobs across the State including in the Latrobe Valley — an area that has great opportunities for economic growth in the coming years.

In addition, the Government has significant funds available to drive economic growth and jobs through the Back to Work plan, including the Back to Work Scheme (\$100 million) and the Premier's Job and Investment Panel (\$508 million).

This Government will continue to provide targeted support in the Latrobe Valley to create jobs which are sustainable in the longer term by focussing on opportunities across high growth sectors in which Latrobe Valley has a comparative advantage.

The integrated Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources is working with Latrobe Valley stakeholders to develop potential projects to access the available funds and drive growth through expansion of existing business operations. The Department is also actively working with firms that are interested in relocating and establishing new operations in the Latrobe Valley.

The Government has already committed \$10 million to develop the Gippsland Logistics Precinct and \$1 million towards the Latrobe Valley University Training Clinic and Dental Prosthetics Laboratory from the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund.

In addition, the Government has committed to build a new \$10 million technical school in Morwell to improve education outcomes and to better equip school aged children to learn the skills and capabilities, required to meet future workforce needs.

I am pleased to be able to say that our plans are already creating jobs in regional Victoria, including in the Latrobe Valley. Since November 2014, employment in the Latrobe Valley/Gippsland region has increased by 2,200 workers.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 2 September 2015

ANSWER:

I speak directly with a range of small and medium businesses and their representative groups on a frequent basis and I look forward to supplementing their direct advice to me with the views of Ministerial advisory bodies in the near future.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 15 September 2015

ANSWER:

Victoria has thousands of kilometres of Single Wire Earth Return (SWER) and single phase powerlines in regional locations. If one or several users on a powerline request upgrading of their power supply capacity a network business will usually require a customer contribution from those customers making the request. I recognise that the cost of upgrading of a SWER line or single phase powerline can be significant.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) has a \$250 million Regional Infrastructure Fund and a \$200 million Regional Jobs Fund, which can provide funding to eligible applicants located in rural and regional Victoria for enabling infrastructure projects such as power upgrades.

Customers considering upgrades should first enquire with the network business and then if a customer contribution is required they may contact RDV to see if they may be eligible for funding support.

I understand that there are business owners in the region working with Powercor to look at how their power needs may be accommodated and that part of this process involves developing a business case for a three phase power upgrade. I encourage businesses to continue this work and enquire with RDV to determine their eligibility for support.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 15 September 2015

ANSWER:

I speak directly with a range of small and medium businesses and their representative groups on a frequent basis and I look forward to supplementing their direct advice to me with the views of Ministerial advisory bodies in the near future.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 15 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is a government that honours its election commitments. In relation to public holidays, traders and business owners are best positioned to make decisions about whether to open or close.

The first Grand Final Friday public holiday took place on the 2nd of October, and it was highly successful. Businesses in Bentleigh and around the state experienced a roaring trade, and Victorians were able to spend well deserved leisure time with friends and loved ones.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Tierney
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 16 September 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises that there is a wide range of views, including significant concerns, within the Stawell community relating to the existing gold mine's operations.

While the Government welcomes the valuable employment and economic opportunities that resource developments provide throughout regional Victoria, communities must be able to have confidence in the way these projects are operated and regulated.

I have met with members of the Stawell community, the local Council and the mine owners on a number of occasions to discuss concerns and am confident that, along with government agencies, we can find a constructive way forward.

To assist with this process, on 28 September 2015, the Victorian Government announced an independent facilitator, Ms Nicole Hunter, to work with all parties in Stawell to address concerns with the existing gold mine's operations.

An EPA-accredited environmental expert, Dr Peter Beck, has also been engaged to review the current testing and monitoring regime at the Stawell gold mine. Dr Beck will carry out the review to ensure the mine complies with licencing requirements and regulatory standards. On 6 October 2015, Ms Hunter convened a public workshop with Dr Beck to provide local residents with an opportunity to ask questions about the mine's operations and learn more about the environmental expectations and regulation of the mine.

Dr Beck will provide the Government with an independent assessment of the mine's monitoring data by the end of 2015 and will determine if any further testing or improvements are required. Further public consultations will be held to inform the amen community about Dr Beck's findings and ensure all interested parties are able to get their questions answered.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 6 October 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring customers are paid a fair price for the energy they provide to the electricity grid. However, to change how the feed-in tariff in Victoria is set, we need to change the law.

Therefore, we have asked the Essential Services Commission to investigate and recommend changes to feed-in tariff arrangements to ensure consumers are fairly compensated for the power they provide to the grid. The recommendations of this inquiry will help inform how the feed-in tariff is structured from 2017.

We encourage Victorians to shop around for the best feed-in tariff, as electricity retailers can choose to offer customers feed-in tariffs above the minimum rate. More information about choosing different retail plans is available from the Victorian Government's independent price comparator tool 'Victorian Energy Compare', which allows Victorians to find and compare Victorian electricity, solar and gas retailer tariffs – and check if they can save money by switching to alternative offers. The Victorian Energy Compare tool is available at www.vic.gov.au/victorianenergycompare.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 6 October 2015

ANSWER:

I acknowledge your constituents' concerns regarding some difficulties in exiting Peninsula Link at Bungower Road at night and during inclement weather.

The provision of street lighting on new freeways is based on the consideration of a number of factors such as the volume of traffic, the geometric freeway design, whether there are complex weaving manoeuvres due to closely spaced exits, and cost. Based on this risk assessment, most rural freeways, including the section of Peninsula Link, south of Baxter-Tooradin Road, remain unlit.

Notwithstanding the above, VicRoads has investigated the feasibility of providing street lighting on Peninsula Link at the Bungower Road off ramp. VicRoads determined that there are many other locations where the benefits of installing street lighting are much higher as compared to this site. As such, VicRoads is not planning to install street lighting at this location.

Western Metropolitan Region

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

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is currently in the process of finalising timetables and service schedules for a metropolitan train timetable that will take place next year and expect to be in a position to make a formal announcement in the near future.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Symes
Directed to: Minister for Racing
Asked on: 8 October 2015

ANSWER:

Racing plays a vital role in the social and economic makeup of country towns and Cup Day is one of the major annual events that brings together communities right across the state.

The government is proud to have backed country cup meetings over the past month as well as providing support for future events.

Starting with the highly successful Benalla Gold Cup meeting that was held as part of the AFL Grand Final weekend, other country cup meetings that have enjoyed the support from the Victorian Racing Industry Fund's Raceday Attraction Program (RAP) include Avoca, Dunkeld, Horsham, Mortlake and Pakenham.

Local communities play a major role in supporting the racing industry and that's why the government is delighted to also support the Port Fairy Cup Community Raceday at Warrnambool and the Halls Gap Cup meeting at Stawell.

Harness Racing Victoria's 2015-16 Country Cups Carnival features 25 Cup meetings throughout the year and the government was delighted to support the Carnival with \$290,000 from the RAP. The Carnival kicked off with the Nyah Pacing Cup at Swan Hill in October and will continue through until April 2016 when the Mildura Pacing Cup brings down the curtain on what will be another great year of harness racing.

The government also showed its support for greyhounds with over \$24,000 provided from the RAP for the Traralgon Cup in September with the launch of the new renovated greyhound track and pavilion.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 8 October 2015

ANSWER:

Under the former Coalition Government, a number of \$2 million children's capital grants were announced just prior to the election without consultation with local communities. As a consequence, Chelsea Heights Kindergarten was set to close, against the wishes of the local community, and move to a site deemed unsuitable for development.

By contrast, the Andrews Labor Government and in particular, local Member for Mordialloc, Tim Richardson MP, has been working closely with the City of Kingston and the Chelsea and Chelsea Heights communities to ensure that the funding committed for new and upgraded kindergarten facilities in the area is delivered in full, but also in a way that respects the wishes of the local community.

The City of Kingston has formally communicated its wish to change the site on which the new \$2 million state funded New Early Learning Facility is to be built. Following consultation with kindergarten management committees, school leadership and councils, Kingston City Council has proposed that Chelsea kindergarten relocate to a new centre on the premises of Chelsea Primary School.

The Andrews Labor Government will also jointly fund with Council, an upgrade to Chelsea Heights Kindergarten. In addition to the Victorian Government contribution of \$2.35 million for these two projects, it is positive to see the Council has committed to providing up to \$321,000 as part of the Chelsea Heights upgrade.

These projects now meet the needs of both kindergartens and are agreed as the best way forward to improve the capacity and quality of early years provision in the Chelsea area.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Asked on: 8 October 2015

ANSWER:

I would like to thank the Member for raising this important matter with me. There is no issue of more importance to the Andrews Labor Government than addressing family violence at its core and ensuring that those impacted by this harm are safe. Family violence has the ability to affect every aspect of a victim's life — their personal safety, where they are safe to live and their ability to work. For far too long the system was left broken, resulting in many victims feeling re-traumatised when seeking help and support.

That is why the Andrews Labor Government has implemented the Royal Commission into Family Violence, to provide expert advice so that Victoria system is one of best practice. The 2015-16 State Budget provided \$81.3 million over five years to help all Victorians across the state who are experiencing, or at risk of, family violence. This included funding for an additional 15 000 nights of accommodation for those impacted by this violence, as well as more workers to support women and children seeking assistance.

A whole-of-government approach is embedded into the Victorian Labor Government's commitment to address this harm. This question therefore falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. The member may wish to direct this question to the Honourable Martin Foley MP for a further response.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Symes
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 20 October 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Government is committed to affordable energy for all Victorians, and has been taking action to help achieve this.

On 17 October 2015, the Government launched the Victorian Energy Compare independent price comparator, to help customers shop around for energy offers best suited to their needs. This tool helps customers to compare electricity, gas and solar offers from all energy retailers. It also provides support for culturally and linguistically diverse consumers. The tool is independent and easy to use. Statistics show that half of those Victorians using the tool have been able to save more than \$330 a year on their electricity bills.

Combined with the Government's SwitchOn website, Victorian Energy Compare empowers households and businesses to take charge of their bills and be informed about Victoria's energy system.

The Government has also recently introduced legislative changes to require retailers to publish standing offer tariffs in the Government Gazette on dates or in periods specified by the Minister for Energy and Resources. These changes should protect consumers by preventing retailers from engaging in price following behaviour when they gazette their tariffs.

The Government is conscious of the impacts of energy prices on the vulnerable. At my request, the Essential Services Commission is undertaking a review into best practice financial hardship programs in the Victorian energy sector. This review is considering what regulatory measures are appropriate to ensure retailers give appropriate support to customers experiencing payment difficulties, including measures to help improve energy efficiency and decrease consumption, and consequently reduce their bills.

The Government has also committed to continue the Energy Saver Incentive scheme (also known as the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target or VEET scheme), which provides discounts on energy efficiency services and products. This scheme has been successful in helping Victorians to reduce their energy usage and manage their energy costs. The Government is currently strengthening the scheme to ensure more Victorians can benefit, and legislation is currently before the Parliament proposing new VEET targets across a 5 year period, through to 2020.

In June 2015, the Government released its Energy Efficiency and Productivity Statement which outlines its priorities for improving Victoria's energy efficiency and productivity. Priority action areas include improving the energy performance of households and directly supporting vulnerable households to lower their energy bills, through energy efficiency. The Government is currently developing the Energy Efficiency and Productivity Strategy to set out its detailed plan for action.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 21 October 2015

ANSWER:

I thank the member for her question. I can confirm that I was invited by the local Member for Shepparton, Suzanne Sheed to come up to Tatura and listen to a group of irrigators, industry and food processors, business and local government representatives to talk about the social and economic impacts of the Murray-Darling Basin on the region. As the local member is responsible for initiating and facilitating this meeting, I refer this question to her.

Can I also add that I'm happy to come up to the Goulburn Valley where water security is of particular importance. There are many perspectives on water and I have shown my commitment to discussing these issues with as many

different communities and individuals as I can fit into my schedule. That is why I have taken the opportunity to discuss these issues with the local member at this time.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 22 October 2015

ANSWER:

Parks Victoria is the Committee of Management for Albert Park Reserve. Parks Victoria is responsible for litter collection in the park and engages a contractor to service public rubbish bins that are strategically placed throughout the park near high use visitor nodes and park exit and entry points. All sporting clubs are responsible for their own litter and rubbish removal.

All rubbish bins are emptied twice per week between January and September and this increases to five times per week during the park's peak visitation period from October to December. The park's rubbish bins are regularly cleaned and graffiti removed as required.

Windblown rubbish from surrounding streets enter the park, as well as rubbish via storm water drains. Rangers periodically remove the litter as time allows.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Asked on: 22 October 2015

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government is committed to working with the Bendigo community to promote social cohesion, community engagement and mutual respect. I would recommend that the Mayor and the CEO of Greater Bendigo liaise further with the Victorian Multicultural Commission or the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship to discuss initiatives that may facilitate this engagement process further.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Treasurer
Asked on: 22 October 2015

ANSWER:

The member asked a question on 16 September 2015 requesting information on the cost to the Victorian economy of traffic congestion.

The answer provided on 20 October 2015, advised that the cost was estimated to be \$2.8 billion in 2011 for the Melbourne and Geelong areas.

This was produced by Infrastructure Australia and is the most authoritative estimate available.

The answer included details about what the government was doing to reduce this congestion by investing in new projects.

The member has now repeated the question in a varied form which assumes that it is possible to derive economy wide estimates of congestion costs for individual roads.

My Department does not hold the information that the member is seeking.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 10 November 2015

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to enhancing Goulburn Valley Health and its capacity to fulfil its role as regional health services for the Hume region.

Planning for future services, by its nature, takes time to ensure that the right decisions are made.

Under the Andrews Labor Government, progress has already been made following the \$1 million investment for planning in the 2015/16 State Budget. Capital planning consultants are currently developing a robust and achievable masterplan and feasibility study for the Shepparton campus of Goulburn Valley Health.

In addition, I recently announced the membership of the Community Advisory Group which will ensure community needs are at the centre of any proposed redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health, Shepparton. Ms Suzanna Sheed MP, Member for Shepparton District is chairing the Community Advisory Group.

Registrations of interest from the Shepparton community were received from a broad cross section of the community and were considered by a panel headed by Ms Sheed.

The Committee has 13 members, including patients, carers, health professionals, and community, local government and business representatives. The members are Sam Atukorala, Abigail Booth, Trevor Currie, Karyn Ferguson, Wendy Hunt, Jamie Lea, Paul Lelliott, Patricia Moran, Nicole O'Brien, Rob Priestly, Leanne Raditsis, Rodney Schubert and Ann Maree Sexton.

I can advise that the first meeting of the Goulburn Valley Community Advisory Group was held at Goulburn Valley Health on the evening of Monday 16 November, 2015. The next scheduled meeting of the Community Advisory Group will be held in Shepparton on the evening of the 14 December, 2015 and will take the form of an open community forum. This is an opportunity for all members of the community to express their views on what they envision for a redeveloped hospital.

I thank the community of Shepparton for their interest in shaping the future of health service developments within their community.