

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

20, 21 and 22 October 2015

(Extract from book 15)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
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Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

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 — 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

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

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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The Hon. D. K. DRUM

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
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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
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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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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 20 October 2015

Kingston waste management

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 15 April 2015

REPLY:

Clause 22.18 to the Kingston Planning Scheme-Materials Recycling in the Green Wedge is an interim policy designed to protect the environment, amenity and strategic future of Kingston's portion of the South East Green Wedge and nearby residential land. The Kingston Green Wedge Management Plan is being implemented by Council into the planning scheme via various proposed planning scheme amendments. The first of these is Amendment C143 which proposes to rezone land outside of the Urban Growth Boundary north of Kingston and Heatherston Roads zoned Special Use Zone-Schedule 2 (Earth and Energy Resources Industry) to a Green Wedge A Zone.

Amendment C143 also proposes to introduce Clause 22.18 on a permanent basis. The amendment has been exhibited and was considered by an independent Panel in March 2015. The City of Kingston requested that I extend the Clause 22.18 interim policy for another 12 months while Amendment C143 is being considered. The extension of the interim policy was approved on 20 May 2015 via Amendment C146.

The Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan (SWRRIP or Statewide Plan) does not identify the Kingston Green Wedge as an existing waste hub. It describes the broader Kingston/Clayton/Dingley Precinct as an 'Existing hub of state importance'.

The Statewide Plan recognises that the Kingston City Council adopted the Kingston Green Wedge Plan in 2012 and that the position of the Council is that no part of the hub should exist in the green wedge.

Public holidays

Raised with: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 6 August 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government understands how vital it is for families across the state to enjoy well deserved leisure time with their families and friends. Public holidays provide a crucial and necessary opportunity for families and friends to join together as a community. As the Grand Final public holiday falls within school holidays, it will also help take the pressure off families juggling work and child care, giving Victorian families more time they can spend together.

The new public holidays will provide additional coordinated leisure time for people to spend with family and friends and will result in increased social and community benefits for Victorians.

The introduction of public holidays on Easter Sunday and the Friday before the AFL Grand Final is an election commitment of the Andrews Labor Government, and the Government is undertaking the correct process to deliver

on this commitment as required under the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994. Victorians work hard, and deserve these public holidays. The Andrews Labor Government is delivering our election promises.

The Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 requires that a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) be carried out prior to the introduction of the new public holidays via notice in the Victorian Government Gazette.

An independent RIS process to analyse the costs and benefits of introducing the two new public holidays was undertaken. The RIS process included a number of stakeholder consultations with businesses, business and industry associations, social service organisations, religious organisations, employee unions, and the AFL, to gauge the expected impacts of introducing the public holidays.

Stakeholder feedback has fed into the analysis contained in the RIS to provide an estimate of the costs and benefits of the new public holidays. The analysis in the RIS was verified by the then Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, and the document, including the estimated costs and benefits, has been published.

In order to implement the Government's commitment to introduce Easter Sunday 2015 as a public holiday, a Premier's exemption certificate was issued which allowed for the holiday to be gazetted prior to the completion of the RIS. This approach provided certainty for businesses and employees, and adheres to the requirements of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994.

Victoria has over 532 000 small businesses. Nearly 63% of them are micro businesses that do not employ staff. The RIS process saw 109 submissions from those 532 000 businesses.

I recently met with the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, and had a productive discussion with Bernadette Uzelac and chamber members. As Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, I look forward to continuing to continue to meet with Chambers of Commerce and industry groups across the state, to discuss how the Labor Government will help small and local business to grow and remain competitive.

Weed management

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 18 August 2015

REPLY:

The Roadside Weeds and Pests Program provides valuable support to councils to clear weeds and pests from rural roadsides. This roadside treatment is essential to protect the State's \$11.4 billion per annum agricultural production.

That is why so many Victorians were disappointed and confused as to why the previous Liberal Government did not fund the program beyond 2014-15.

I am pleased to advise that the Andrews Labor Government is providing \$5.2 million over the next two years for the continuation of the program. Under this program a number of new initiatives have been approved, including an increase in the maximum grant from \$50 000 to \$75 000 per year and an expansion of eligible weeds to include 'restricted weeds'. This increases the number of weeds that can be treated by 85 across the State.

Yarra Ranges Shire Council will receive an additional \$4732 under the new program and will receive \$30 824 in both 2015-16 and 2016-17. This will be valuable in treating the wide array of weeds that are found across Yarra Ranges' rural roads. I understand Yarra Ranges allocates the majority of funding to treat the blackberry weed, which is found on approximately 45 roadsides. The funding will also be used to treat St Peter's Wort and a range of broom weeds as well as the removal of vegetation to reduce rabbit burrows. The additional funding provided under the 2015-2017 program will be of great assistance in treating weeds and pests across the Yarra Ranges Shire.

Increasing this vital funding is just one of many ways in which the Andrews Labor Government is supporting Victorian councils and their communities. This stands in stark contrast to the Federal Government which has cut Financial Assistance Grants, costing Victorian councils over \$200 million over 3 years.

Beach Road truck curfew

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 18 August 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is working closely with the Cities of Port Phillip, Kingston and Bayside and the Victorian Transport Association to review the way trucks use Beach Road and whether the current curfews are appropriate.

As promised before the last State Election, the Government is preparing to trial camera technology to assess compliance with the existing curfew and understand truck movements. As part of the trial, the Government will be seeking community input and will welcome feedback about truck activity along the Beaconsfield Parade/Beach Road corridor. Any change to the existing curfews will only be considered in partnership with the relevant stakeholders as we work towards finding a balance that meets the needs of truck operators and the local community.

Fogartys Gap Road–Calder Highway, Ravenswood South

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 19 August 2015

REPLY:

As I have previously advised, VicRoads is working closely with the Victoria Police and the Mount Alexander Shire Council to identify appropriate safety measures by analysing past crash patterns in relation to the Fogartys Gap Road-Calder Highway intersection, Ravenswood South.

Any proposal for an improvement project following this analysis will be evaluated and if appropriate, considered for a future funding program.

In the meantime, VicRoads advises me that it has recently reduced the speed limit to 80 km/h. This will give drivers more reaction time when faced with a crossing vehicle that may have failed to give way.

VicRoads will continue to work with Victoria Police and the council to improve safety at the intersection, and to monitor the safety of it.

Public transport regional network

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 1 September 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is developing Victoria's first Regional Network Development Plan. A significant consultation program has recently concluded with over 1500 people attending workshops across regional Victoria. Each piece of feedback gathered in the workshops, through surveys and through online discussion forums, is being individually logged and analysed to feed into the plan.

Further, at the completion of workshops in each region, a Conversation Summary is released, that is published on PTV's website and sent to all workshop attendees who registered their attendance.

The Conversation Summary for the Gippsland region and Grampians region have been published, and can be accessed at getinvolved.ptv.vic.gov.au. I am advised that publication of the Hume region and Loddon-Mallee region Conversation Summary is imminent, with the Barwon South-West Conversation Summary to be published in October.

Regional and rural gas supply

Raised with: Minister for Energy and Resources

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 1 September 2015

REPLY:

To extend the natural gas pipeline network to new towns or areas, gas distributors are required to demonstrate that such investments are economic. To satisfy this test, revenue earned from the extension must cover the capital cost of the project plus a set rate of return as determined by the Australian Energy Regulator.

There are two main drivers that determine whether a town will meet this commercial test; distance from the existing network, and the expected demand for gas from residential, commercial and industrial customers. Other local and environmental factors will also impact on project economics. In the case of Bulla, local factors such as low residential density and the seasonal nature of demand will also impact on project economics.

To gain the best chance of making a gas extension project successful, residents can approach distributors as a group or work with the local council to coordinate an extension proposal.

To assist residents to reduce their heating costs, other cost effective alternatives to a gas extension may exist, as many alternative technologies have significantly improved and matured in recent years. Electric heat pumps and solar hot water, for example, are frequently cost competitive with gas alternatives at present. The Government makes information available to help households choose the best appliances for them.

Mordialloc bypass

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 2 September 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads advises me that it completed a feasibility study for the Mordialloc Bypass in 2014. The Study considered a number of options to meet current and future transport needs within the local area, as well as identifying infrastructure requirements within the existing Mordialloc Bypass Reservation.

The feasibility study, which included stakeholder and community consultation, identified a number of localised network issues within the Mordialloc Bypass Corridor. VicRoads is commencing the development of a Network Corridor Strategy, which will identify short to medium term transport solutions and priorities.

As part of this strategy, VicRoads will identify the timing of the Mordialloc Bypass to ensure funding is sought at an appropriate time.

Greater Shepparton airfreight port

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 3 September 2015

REPLY:

I met with the City of Greater Shepparton and the Committee for Shepparton on Friday 18 September 2015 to discuss the lease of the Port of Melbourne.

The Coalition also took the port lease to the Election in 2014, and I note that the Coalition at the time did not earmark any of the proceeds to regional Victoria.

Alternative sources of funding for feasibility study work could be the Agriculture Infrastructure and Jobs Fund recently announced by the government or the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund. The aim of both of these funds is to support development and job creation in regional areas.

I note that Regional Development Victoria is currently co-funding a Shepparton Aerodrome Relocation Feasibility Study with the City of Greater Shepparton. The Study is well under way with a consultant having been appointed to undertake the study.

Inland port rail is a matter for the Minister for Ports.

Glenroy level crossing

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Ondarchie

Raised on: 3 September 2015

REPLY:

The Government is committed to removing 50 dangerous and congested level crossings across Melbourne, including Glenroy Road. We have made great progress so far and are well on track to remove 20 level crossings by the end of 2018 and all 50 by 2022.

The level crossing at Glenroy Road is a complex intersection and requires a well-considered solution that provides the best outcomes for the community, road users, rail passengers and pedestrians.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) is currently undertaking detailed investigations of all level crossing sites to determine a removal schedule that minimises disruption to our road and rail networks, responds to the risks, opportunities and complexities of each site, and allows sufficient time for meaningful consultation with community and stakeholders.

Government is awaiting the recommendation of the LXRA on the schedule for removing all level crossings, including the Glenroy Road site.

The Andrews Labor Government has always identified the lease of the Port of Melbourne as the funding source for the removal of level crossings. When in government the Coalition supported the lease but have since decided to oppose the funding for the Level Crossings Removal Program.

Goulburn Valley Health

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to providing the Goulburn Valley community with the most appropriate health service facilities. The State Budget announcement of \$1.0 million for planning and development work for Goulburn Valley Health's Shepparton campus will enable the progression of planning for the Shepparton campus of Goulburn Valley Health (including detailed capital planning and costings).

However, after four years of cuts inflicted upon our health system by the former government, it will take time to address all the pressing service needs faced by health services across Victoria.

For Goulburn Valley Health service planning to identify the future health service requirements for its primary and extended catchment areas was completed earlier this year.

The service plan has provided a 'road map' for the future development of the health service over the next 5-10 years and specifies the major areas of service development and changes to models of care required to address future needs.

This planning was essential to inform the subsequent masterplan and feasibility studies for the Shepparton campus of Goulburn Valley Health and to ensure that the funding requirements for the redevelopment are properly understood. These key tasks are being undertaken with the support and involvement of the Board and Executive of Goulburn Valley Health.

The masterplan and feasibility studies will further refine the recommendations of the service plan and will underpin the next stages of the planning and development work for the Shepparton campus of Goulburn Valley Health.

This work will be informed by input from the new Community Advisory Group, being chaired by the Member for Shepparton District, Suzanna Sheed MP, which will ensure the community needs are at the centre of the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health.

I look forward to progressing this work with Shepparton's new local member.

Justice impact assessments

Raised with: Attorney-General

Raised by: Ms Pennicuk

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

In its 2014 "Call to the Parties" document, the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) called for the

"Introduction of a Victorian framework for Justice Impact Assessments to be undertaken for regulatory proposals, similar to the current United Kingdom (UK) model which may be administered by an independent body."

None of the responses provided by the parties, including that from the Greens, specifically addressed the proposal.

I note that in the UK, the "Justice Impact Test" is a mandatory part of its Impact Assessment process, which appears to be broadly similar to Victoria's regulatory impact statement (RIS) process. It aims to assist policymakers to minimise the impact of policy decisions on justice systems. For all policy proposals, policy officers must determine whether the proposal affects the justice system and, if it does, must quantify the impact and consider alternatives. It appears that the assessment is carried out by the home department, with support from the Ministry of Justice.

The impacts considered through the process include criminal and civil justice system impacts, such as the effects on: applications for legal aid, court workloads, costs of enforcing civil penalties, demand for prison places, caseloads of prosecutors and probation officers, training needs of investigators, prosecutors and others, and volumes of litigation. These impacts commonly arise where policies involve the creation of new offences, increasing the penalty for an offence, inserting appeal rights or changing the grounds on which civil applications can be made.

Existing consideration of justice system impacts

In Victoria we do already have some formal mechanisms for considering the impact of legislation.

Where primary legislation or new regulations are proposed that will have a significant economic or social burden on a sector of the public (generally, involving an estimated cost of \$2m or more), including a sector in the justice area, such a proposal will typically require the preparation of a Legislative Impact Assessment (in the case of legislation) or a RIS (in the case of regulations) to comprehensively evaluate the costs and benefits of the proposal.

A RIS is required to contain an assessment of the social impact of the proposal, plus an assessment of likely administration and compliance costs including resource allocation costs. The focus of the process is on the regulatory and compliance burden imposed by the policy.

All bills are also accompanied by a statement of compatibility with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. These statements consider the impact of each bill on the rights protected in that Act, and explain how any impacts are justified. These statements are then scrutinised by the Scrutiny of Acts and

Regulations Committee (SARC). SARC regularly poses questions to Ministers about statements of compatibility and Ministers' answers are made public.

It does not take a new formal process to ensure that government considers the impacts of new legislation on the justice system.

The government will always consider the impact of legal reforms to the criminal justice system on the courts, prisons, legal aid funding and prosecutions. In preparing any proposal that will have an impact on the civil justice system, the government will consider the scale of those impacts, and will attempt to quantify costs wherever possible.

This is part of the job of preparing legislation. Evaluating impacts always involves comprehensive consultation with affected stakeholders in the justice system, including the courts, the corrections system, police, and the legal profession. Different bills require different approaches to this task. Some bills will have a minor impact-perhaps on only one part of the system, while others will bring change across the system. One mandatory statement will not suit every project.

I also note that the effectiveness of impact assessments in shaping government policy is unclear. One UK review suggests that impact assessments generally are often not an integral part of policy decision making, and are frequently conducted after policy decisions have already been made.

This government would prefer to continue to consider the impact of any justice system reform in a meaningful way, tailored to each proposal, as part of the policy development process.

Warrnambool Base Hospital

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to the delivery of appropriate health services in the most suitable settings.

Following four years of cuts and significant underinvestment in capital inflicted upon our health system by the former government, the needs right across our state are great, and addressing them will require significant funding and appropriate sequencing.

That's why in the recent State Budget we committed \$560 million to build and expand hospitals right across Victoria.

The Department of Health and Human Services will continue to work together with local health organisations in strengthening and building upon the existing health system and infrastructure to ensure access to quality, contemporary and sustainable health services are provided to Victorian residents.

The current masterplan for the Warrnambool campus of South West Healthcare will form the basis of future capital funding consideration by the Department of Health and Human Services and the government.

I am passionate about improving the health and wellbeing of Victorians and will continue to work with local communities and health services on developing their priorities.

Benalla Gold Cup

Raised with: Minister for Racing

Raised by: Ms Symes

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

The Australian Football League (AFL) Grand Final public holiday was fitting recognition for one of the biggest events on the Australian sporting calendar, giving families a day to enjoy everything Victoria has to offer before the focus shifted to the big game at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

I was delighted to accept the kind invitation from the Benalla Racing Club and, along with the member for Northern Victoria, the member for Euroa and the Member of Gippsland East, attended what was a great day for Benalla and country racing.

The Benalla Gold Cup was run on the Grand Final public holiday and proved to be an outstanding success. The crowd was up to 4352 from last year's figure of 1896 — an increase of 2456. Gate takings were up 135%, on-course wagering was up 80%, dining and hospitality packages were up 350% and the club added 800 new names to its contact list.

The day proved an enormous success for Benalla with people flocking to the region for a fantastic race meeting and to sample the town's hospitality.

The government is proud to have backed the Benalla Gold Cup with \$66 000 from the Victorian Racing Industry Fund's Raceday Attraction Program. The funding provided an array of entertainment including live music, kids activities and an AFL themed marquee featuring Nathan Brown, Danny 'Spud' Frawley and Cam Mooney.

Racing plays a vital role in the social and economic makeup of country towns and Benalla Gold Cup Day is one of the major annual events that brings together the local community.

As long as the day remains a public holiday, Country Racing Victoria (CRV) will back the Benalla Gold Cup meeting and the government will continue to support CRV.

Holi festival

Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

Prior to the member raising the issue in Parliament, on 7 September 2015, I wrote to the President of Australian Indian Innovations, Mr Vernon Da Gama, confirming the Government's commitment to provide \$30 000 per annum from the 2015 Budget, over the next four years for the Holi Festival in the South East.

I understand that the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship followed up my letter with the Australian Indian Innovations and is presently working with the organisation to finalise a funding agreement and grant payment as soon as possible.

Bulla landfill

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Western Metropolitan for raising this matter. There is no doubt that the management of the Bulla Tip and Quarry has caused concern among local residents and I would like to assure you that I take the issue very seriously. Management of this site must be rigorous and put public safety first.

The Bulla Tip and Quarry has an EPA licence to accept solid inert waste and asbestos waste. EPA has been monitoring and investigating management at the site since 2014, in addition to normal inspections. EPA inspected the site 18 times since 2013, most recently on 18 September 2015.

In the last year and a half, EPA has served five pollution abatement notices in relation to the site. Three of these have resulted in remedial works and the remaining two continue to be in force. On 4 August 2015, EPA served a new notice to improve litter controls which included the installation of fencing currently being constructed at the premises. In the last 12 months, EPA has issued two penalty infringement notices in connection with the site.

As a result of community reports, EPA has investigated and identified that the most recent licence amendment to allow Bulla Tip and Quarry to have a separate asbestos disposal area did not follow EPA's usual stringent approval processes. EPA is taking action to amend the site licence to include additional asbestos management requirements. EPA also served a direction in writing to Bulla Tip and Quarry to immediately cover asbestos at the landfill until the licence amendment is issued. The amended licence will be accompanied by a notice requiring environmental auditor verification of cell design for EPA approval.

The EPA ordered an independent review into all its landfill licences following the investigation into community concerns over the BTQ Bulla landfill site. This review has been completed and the EPA has accepted all recommendations from the review to strengthen its processes for the licensing of landfills. The EPA will continue to monitor compliance undertaken to ensure all tips are operating within environmental frameworks.

In relation to Bulla Tip and Quarry I have asked EPA to work much more closely with the local community. EPA is briefing local community groups and individuals, and has also allocated its Regional Manager to follow up on all community concerns raised about the site. EPA CEO Nial Finegan has met with BTQ, local community members and the Member for Sunbury to ensure their concerns are being heard and all stakeholders are aware of actions EPA is taking.

Orchard Grove Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 16 September 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to investing in school facilities and has allocated \$730 million in the 2015-16 Budget to build, upgrade and maintain school assets. This funding represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State and repairing the damage done by four years of under-investment by the former government.

I understand that Orchard Grove Primary School's plumbing issues present a significant challenge to the school.

I am advised that the Department visited the school on 13 July to investigate reports of a blocked staff toilet, and that works have since been completed to replace the damaged drain. A Department representative attended the school on 17 September to assess concerns regarding more extensive plumbing maintenance works. As a result of this meeting, qualified consultants will now complete a full audit of the school sewage network.

I have asked the Department to continue to work closely with Orchard Grove to ensure that its premises are safe and well maintained.

John Fawkner Private Hospital

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 16 September 2015

REPLY:

The permit application for the redevelopment of the John Fawkner Hospital in Coburg was called in by the Acting Minister for Planning on 12 January 2015. I appointed an Advisory Committee in March 2015 to consider the application. The Advisory Committee finalised its report and submitted it to me on 28 August 2015. I am currently considering the report and will make a recommendation to the Governor in Council in due course.

Waranga Memorial Hospital

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 16 September 2015

REPLY:

Following four years of cuts and crisis inflicted upon our health system by the former government, the needs right across our state are great, and the Andrews Labor Government is committed to undertaking the work required to ensure Victorians have access to high quality health services close to home.

Service planning to identify the future health service requirements for the primary and extended catchment area of Goulburn Valley Health was completed earlier this year. The Service Plan recommended the two facilities in Rushworth be co-located and consolidated, along with an increase in ambulatory care services.

The recommendations of the Service Plan have been incorporated into the subsequent Masterplan and feasibility study for the Waranga campus of Goulburn Valley Health that has recently been completed by Billard Leece Partnership (Architects).

This work will form the basis for further planning and development work for the Waranga campus of Goulburn Valley Health and is a necessary pre-cursor to any future funding consideration for the redevelopment of the health service.

Victorian Multicultural Commission

Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 16 September 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) is a critical entity in promoting participation, understanding, cohesion and harmony. It is an important conduit of information and communication between Government, culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities and the broader community.

As the member would be aware, the quorum requirements for the VMC are set out in section 19 of the Multicultural Victoria Act 2011.

Family violence

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 16 September 2015

REPLY:

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 tackling family violence. The 2015-16 Budget provides \$81.3 million to address and respond to family violence across Victoria.

Royal Commissions shine light on an issue unlike anything else and this budget has been designed to ensure that those impacted by this harm and frontline services are supported. That's why the budget included a \$16 million Family Violence Fund to respond to critical or unforeseen demand on services.

The Andrews Labor Government has already hit the ground running to ensure that all Victorians feel safe, no matter where they live, go to school or work. As a government our policies are being driven with an understanding of the intrinsic link between gender inequality and family violence. That is why we are implementing family violence leave across the public sector, committed to having 50% of women on our boards and courts by 2018, and establishing a respectful relationships program across the Victorian Curriculum.

I recently met with the Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault to discuss their work. Ballarat CASA was provided funding from the budget to allow for an additional 75 episodes of support each year over four years to victims and survivors of sexual assault. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at Ballarat CASA for their unwavering dedication to tackling violence in this region.

In regards to the Personal Safety Initiative funded in the budget, the Minister for Families and Children recently announced an expression of interest process and that the pilot is scheduled to commence this year. This initiative will help more women and children to remain safe in their homes and will hold more perpetrators accountable for their actions.

While significant progress has been made, we don't have all the answers. That's why we have turned to the Royal Commission into Family Violence for expert advice to help fix this system that for far too long has been broken. I look forward to the Inquiry's findings that will help determine longer term policy in this area and enable best practice to be implemented across Victoria.

Myamyn-Macarthur Road

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 17 September 2015

REPLY:

At the end of March 2015, VicRoads installed temporary 80 km/h speed limit signs for 6 km of the eastern end of Myamyn-Macarthur Road. VicRoads advises me that this speed limit will remain until more significant repairs are completed.

VicRoads will continue to inspect and monitor Myamyn-Macarthur Road, and will perform routine maintenance activities to keep the road in a safe condition. These works will include grading of gravel shoulders to minimise edge drop offs and vegetation trimming to ensure sight distances are maintained.

Waverley Park powerlines

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 17 September 2015

REPLY:

I fully understand the variety of differing views expressed by the Waverley Park residents. In appointing the Waverley Park Transmission Lines Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), the former Minister for Planning required the Advisory Committee to consider a range of complex issues in regard to health, safety, visual impacts, technical electrical requirements, costs and timing between the undergrounding and not undergrounding the overhead power lines and planning law.

In addition, the main non-planning ground put forward by some residents opposing the request by Mirvac to amend the planning permit, is an alleged breach of their contractual agreement to underground the transmission lines.

My department are in the process of briefing me on this matter and as it is still under consideration I don't consider it appropriate to meet with the Waverley Park Residents Action Group, who I understand have just five members.

Sunbury municipality

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 17 September 2015

REPLY:

Since being appointed, the Transition Auditors have carried out a comprehensive consultation process that saw them provide easily accessible information to the community, receive over 100 written submissions and meet directly with many community members in Sunbury and across the Hume municipality.

Having considered all of the evidence, the Auditors concluded that, if a separate Sunbury council is established, Sunbury residents will be disadvantaged due to significant rate increases and/or a reduction in services and capital works. The Transition Auditors also found that arrangements for separation contained in the Order in Council made by the previous Government were not equitable or appropriate to guarantee the continuing delivery of services in the transition to a new council and possibly beyond.

The Auditors' report has now been released and the Government is carefully considering the recommendations contained in the report.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of Hon Frank Vincent AO QC and Mr John Watson's work as Transition Auditors. This is a highly emotive issue in the community and they have both performed their role with diligence, integrity and distinction.

Kindergarten funding

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 17 September 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The new educator to child ratios are a vital part of the National Quality Framework and an important reform that will deliver a higher standard of early childhood education and care. The improved ratios will allow staff to increase individual attention to each child and support better learning outcomes.

The former Coalition government had four years to assist the early childhood sector to prepare for the new ratios, but failed to act.

They let the industrial dispute for kinder teachers and educators drag on for two years without any action, which compounded uncertainty for the sector in the year that they are planning to transition to the new ratios.

They also failed to secure funding certainty from the Federal Government regarding the future of 15 hours of kindergarten. As a result, the announcement of 2016 kindergarten funding rates was delayed due to the negotiation of the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education for 2016 and 2017.

By contrast, the Andrews Labor Government has taken swift action to support the sector to prepare for the new ratios, to support the parties to reach industrial agreement, and to secure funding certainty for 15 hours from the Commonwealth Government.

On ratios, implementation requires a shared commitment from Government, service providers and families, which is why the Andrews Labor Government is investing up to \$83.7 million over four years to support kindergarten services to transition to the new requirements. This significant investment will provide additional per child funding supplements for all sessional kindergarten groups with 23 or more enrolments as a significant contribution to the cost of employing an additional educator.

The Government has also ensured that capital funding has been available to expand the licensed capacity of kindergarten facilities through a new grant category within the \$50 million commitment to build and upgrade kindergartens.

A range of additional supports are available through the Department of Education and Training to support services with the transition to the improved ratios. The Department has also engaged the Early Learning Association of Australia to provide tailored advice to services.

On 5 October, I advised the sector of provisional 2016 kindergarten funding rates, noting that these are contingent on finalisation of the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education for 2016 and 2017 with the Commonwealth. This includes an increase to the ratio supplement.

Victoria has a long history of providing contributory funding for kindergarten-where parents share the costs with government. Under the historical funding formula for kindergarten services, government contributes 65 per cent of costs, and parent fees, fundraising and other sources contribute 35 per cent.

All children with a health care concession will continue to receive 15 hours a week of free kindergarten in the year before school as part of the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy program.

Morwell tech school

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 7 October 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Tech Schools initiative is an integral part of the Andrews Labor Government's vision to make Victoria the Education State. We are investing \$125 million to establish ten Tech Schools across metropolitan and regional Victoria, including one in Gippsland. We have started by committing \$8 million in this budget to commence planning and building local partnerships.

The Gippsland Tech School will be shaped by a local partnership comprising schools, TAFE, university, local government, industry body representatives, individuals and community organisations. It will be a centre of excellence which will use leading edge technology, discovery and innovation to deliver education and training to secondary students from government and non-government schools.

This is a really exciting initiative that will provide new opportunities for young Victorians to discover and develop the skills they need for lifelong learning and future careers.

The commitment of \$125 million provides for the establishment of ten centres of learning excellence. Each Tech School will have a Director to provide educational leadership and oversee the development of educational programs. These educational programs will inspire and engage students in an interactive learning environment equipped with leading edge technology and teaching programs focused on discovery and learning by inquiry.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 21 October 2015

University Hospital Geelong funding

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Wooldridge

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is providing hospitals with extra funding to ensure Victorians can get the care they need when they need it. The recent state budget provided an additional \$970 million in funding for hospital to manage additional demand.

In 2015-16 Barwon Health will received \$440.9 million in funding, an increase of \$20.2 million on the previous year.

The Andrews Labor Government is also establishing Better Care Victoria, a body made up of experts from across the health sector focused on improving the health system's approach to innovation in order to increase service capacity.

Decisions around service delivery and allocation of resources are a matter for health service management and their board. However, new facilities are often built with additional capacity in order to respond to future demand through phased opening of new facilities.

After four years of cuts to the health system by the former Liberal Government, the Andrews Labor Government is working hard to improve the health system to ensure families right across Victoria and in Geelong can access the health services they need and deserve.

Women's participation in sport

Raised with: Minister for Sport

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is leading the way in our strategy to provide opportunities for more women and girls to get and stay active. Earlier this year I announced an Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation and appointed an expert Advisory Panel to undertake the Inquiry. The Advisory Panel has been investigating how to enhance participation by women and girls in sport and active recreation and to identify ways to increase their engagement in leadership and governance roles. To help inform the Inquiry a series of community consultations have been held in regional centres and in Melbourne to better understand the case for change and to identify practical ideas and actions that could influence change.

The Advisory Panel is expected to deliver their final report, including recommendations and a practical action plan, to me in the coming months. This report will be one of a number of inputs which will help inform and guide Victoria's future investment into women and girls in sport and active recreation.

This year Victoria has invested approximately \$450 000 towards the development and delivery of program initiatives to support greater inclusion and engagement of females in sport and active recreation in Victoria.

In June this year I announced the \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund that includes a \$10 million Female Friendly Facilities Fund which supports facility development to encourage greater participation by women and girls in sporting and recreational activities. In addition the Government has made a commitment of \$9.6 million over four years for the development of 64 competition-ready netball courts in four inner Melbourne municipalities and support for the continuation of the Country Football and Netball Program.

In response to a paper led by Victoria the Meeting of Sport and Recreation Ministers has agreed to ask the Committee of Australian Sport and Recreation Officials to develop an options paper on approaches to improve women's participation in sport and leadership roles and the profile of women's sport.

Victoria's ongoing investment in sport and recreation actively seeks to ensure that both program and facility design provides benefits to all Victorians, and I am particularly proud of the focus that we have placed on providing more opportunities for women and girls.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 22 October 2015

Gunaikurnai community, Gippsland

Raised with: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 15 September 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to improving access to services and outcomes in relation to health, employment opportunities, and education and training for all Aboriginal people, including the Gunaikurnai people.

The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-2018 (VAAF) commits to an ambitious but achievable set of targets to close the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians across a number of the close the gap measures. We have also committed to releasing an annual Aboriginal affairs report that outlines our progress.

Gippsland is rich with examples of Aboriginal cultural heritage, such as the remains of the twenty thousand year occupation of the limestone caves at Buchan by Gunaikurnai people. It is important that this cultural heritage is managed and protected for future generations. It is well known that fostering strong cultural connections also improves social outcomes.

Earlier this year I met with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLWAC), the Registered Aboriginal Party across a large section of Eastern Victoria. GLWAC, along with other Registered Aboriginal Parties across the state, carries out important work protecting and managing Aboriginal cultural heritage on behalf of all Victorians. It is critical that Traditional Owners are appropriately empowered and resourced to carry out this important work.

In this year's State Budget we provided \$20.9 million dollars for the Victorian Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Strategy, to strengthen the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage. This includes providing sustainable funding for Registered Aboriginal Parties, including GLWAC.

A range of other initiatives funded in the 2015-16 State Budget will also provide opportunities for the Gunaikurnai people.

These includes:

- The \$1.3 million Reducing Aboriginal Family Violence initiative, as part of the, broader whole of government family violence package.
- The \$3.5 million Aboriginal Leadership and Self-Determination initiative, which is supporting Aboriginal inclusion and reconciliation as well as opportunities for leadership training.
- \$4.5 million allocated to implement the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy that will build meaningful job and economic development opportunities across the state.

I would also encourage Gunaikurnai people not already involved in their Local indigenous Network to make contact with their local Aboriginal Community Development Broker. Contact details are available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website.

I look forward to my next visit to the Gippsland region.