

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

23, 24 and 25 June 2015

(Extract from book 9)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Lieutenant-Governor

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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 — Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Dalidakis, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

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, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — Ms Fitzherbert, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

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Joint committees

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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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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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, 23 June 2015

Clyde Road, Berwick

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 24 February 2015

REPLY:

I appreciate that the concerns you raise about the Clyde Road intersection with the Pakenham rail line are a source of frustration for local residents. I would appreciate the opportunity to see first-hand the peak hour congestion that people are experiencing, and look forward to making a mutually convenient time to meet with you.

Renewable energy

Raised with: Minister for Energy and Resources

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 24 February 2015

REPLY:

Over the previous 12 months, the federal Renewable Energy Target's (RET) scheme was surrounded by uncertainty. This halted investment and cost jobs in renewable energy across Australia. As the Representative for Western Victoria has noted, the job losses at Keppel Prince Engineering last year are one example of the impact of this uncertainty on Victoria.

Uncertainty is now being replaced with mediocrity, with the Federal Government proposing to reduce the size of the large scale component of RET from 41 000GWh in 2020 to 33 000GWh.

Although this change is the result of a compromise between the Federal Government and Opposition, it should be remembered the bipartisan deal to create the current RET in 2009 was negotiated in partnership with the States and Territories. This deal involved States and Territories shutting down their own RET-style schemes and merging them into the expanded national target. This was formalised through legislation, which prohibited States and Territories from maintaining their own schemes in addition to the RET. Since the 2009 deal is now effectively broken, the Victorian Government is calling on the Federal Government to once again enable States and Territories to operate their own RET-style schemes.

Beyond the RET, the Victorian Government will focus on opportunities that take advantage of Victoria's renewable resources to build a strong sustainable energy industry, contribute to our economy, generate employment, deliver health and social benefits and reduce our environment impact.

For example, the Victorian Government has reduced the exclusion zone around wind farms from two kilometres (km) to one km and returned primary responsibility for wind farm planning decisions to the Minister for Planning. These policies promote investment in wind farms, through improving the planning approval process and by making it easier to build wind farms near local townships.

We are supporting local community renewable energy projects. The Victorian Government is providing \$200 000 to the Newstead 2021 community group to develop a master plan for transitioning the town to 100 per cent

renewable energy by 2017. The Victorian Government is also providing \$100 000 from the Fund to help the Macedon Ranges Sustainability Group convert the Black Forest Timber Mill in Woodend to solar power.

Finally, the Victorian Government will also establish a \$20 million New Energy Jobs Fund and a Renewable Energy Action Plan. The New Energy Jobs Fund will offer support to community groups and businesses specialising in developing renewable energy projects. The Renewable Energy Action Plan will set out a series of initiatives aimed at growing Victorian's renewable energy industry.

LGBTI community

Raised with: Minister for Equality

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 16 April 2015

REPLY:

I would like to thank the Member for Eastern Victoria for raising this important issue, and I would also like to acknowledge the parliamentary friends of LGBTI Victorians group, it is heartening to know that support for LGBTI Victorians extends across the house.

The Victorian Government is fulfilling its commitment to equality, with the 2015-16 Victorian Budget committing \$10 million in initiatives towards ensuring LGBTI Victorians have the respect, inclusion, health and happiness to which all Victorians are entitled.

This budget invests \$3.2 million to establish and resource Australia's first dedicated Equality portfolio within the Department of Premier and Cabinet. This includes the creation of a Gender and Sexuality Commissioner, an LGBTI Taskforce and a program of reform to remove discrimination from our laws and services.

Victoria's new Gender and Sexuality Commissioner will promote the rights of LGBTI people and champion LGBTI-inclusive practices across government and the community.

The LGBTI Taskforce—with a Health and Human Services Working Group and a Justice Working Group—will be a whole of government advisory group ensuring that all the Government's equality initiatives are driven by genuine community consultation.

The Budget also includes \$5.9 million to fund programs that promote the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI Victorians. This includes funding for Minus18, Australia's largest youth-led LGBTI organisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work of Minus18, and say what a great pleasure it was to attend their Same Sex and Gender Diverse Formal with the Member for Eastern Victoria. Seeing so many young people looking forward to their futures was a happy reminder of the importance of my work as Minister for Equality.

In addition to this, the Safe Schools Coalition will receive an extra \$1 million so all Victorian government secondary schools can access teacher training and resources to support LGBTI students.

The government has also moved to repeal section 19A of the Crimes Act, which specifically criminalises the transmission of HIV. Section 19A only added to the burden of stigma faced by people living with HIV, while doing nothing to protect the health and safety of all Victorians. Stigma has repeatedly been demonstrated to do damage to mental and physical health and overall wellbeing. The promotion of good mental health and wellbeing requires its removal.

The Government has also commenced a review of adoption laws to remove discrimination against same-sex couples and, in a landmark gesture for equality and respect, Daniel Andrews became the first Premier to lead Melbourne's annual Pride March in February for its 20th anniversary.

Government contracts

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins

Raised on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to transparent and accountable government, and putting the interests of Victorians first.

On 15 April 2015, the Government signed a Heads of Agreement with the East West Link consortium, honouring its election commitment to not proceed with East West Link and pay no compensation to the East West Link consortium.

The consortium was awarded \$339 million for costs incurred during the bid process, design and pre-construction phase.

The Government has also delivered on its commitment to publicly release the East West Link Business Case and the contract.

The contract has been provided to Parliament and is available on the Premier's website. Consistent with Partnerships Victoria's guidelines for public private partnerships, some confidential information, including personal and commercially sensitive information, has been redacted. This is to ensure that the State and East West Connect are not disadvantaged in future commercial negotiations.

The Government agrees that transparency surrounding infrastructure projects is important. To support this, the Government is establishing Infrastructure Victoria.

Infrastructure Victoria will identify Victoria's infrastructure needs and provide independent advice on infrastructure priorities and investment options. The Government has committed to making this advice public and responding to it in a timely manner.

Work to establish Infrastructure Victoria is being led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet and is progressing well. Legislation equipping Infrastructure Victoria to undertake its functions will be brought before Parliament in the coming months.

On 20 February 2015, the Government released the revised Market Proposal Interim Guideline. Under this Guideline, market-led proposals will be subject to a five-stage assessment process ensuring they demonstrate benefits to the community, align with Victoria's priorities and offer value-for-money for Victorians.

Key changes in the revised Guideline include a more comprehensive assessment of proposals, including both quantitative and qualitative analysis, provision for third-party verification and greater transparency in relation to proposals being assessed by government.

The Government will uphold the highest level of integrity, probity and transparency in assessing all market-led proposals.

Vaughan-Tarilta bridge

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

The Federal Government provides direct funding to local Councils for the maintenance of local roads and bridges such as the Vaughan-Tarilta Bridge. These programs include the Roads to Recovery Program and the Bridge Renewal Program. The Federal Government also provides Financial Assistance Grants to local Councils that can be used for roads and general purposes.

The Victorian Government recognises that bridges play an important role in the connection and prosperity of rural towns and communities, and has guaranteed funding of at least \$1 billion over eight years for the upgrade and repair of unsafe and congested roads and level crossings across regional Victoria.

As part of this commitment, the Victorian Government recently announced funding of \$42.8 million, which in partnership with the Federal Government will enable strengthening of 52 bridges on major regional freight corridors around the State.

Midfield Group

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

In the case of the Midfield Group's proposals to develop a \$50 million milk processing facility and a \$13.1 million freezing and cold storage facility in the West Warrnambool Industrial Precinct, I used my ministerial power of intervention, available under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, to implement the recommendations of an independent planning panel and expedite approval of these developments.

The former Minister for Planning declined a request from Warrnambool City Council to act as planning authority for amendments for these developments advising council that they could be assessed through a council administered planning scheme amendment process.

Council acted on this advice and exhibited Warrnambool Planning Scheme Amendments C94 and C96 for the Midfield projects in August-September 2014. The independent planning panel's report, that assessed the submissions received on the amendments and the planning merits of the development proposals, was publicly released by council on 21 April 2015.

My intervention in these matters, through my approval of Amendment C199 to the Warrnambool Planning Scheme, was necessary to provide certainty in planning process and secure a major investment for Warrnambool and the Great South Coast Region.

These developments are of critical importance to the dairy and meat processing industries of south west Victoria and will contribute to State Labor's plan to create 100 000 jobs, encourage investment and retain local production and labour.

I acted quickly to put the necessary approvals in place once I received correspondence from the Warrnambool City Council on 30 April 2015 confirming it had not changed its earlier resolution for the Minister for Planning to lead the decision making process for these projects.

My decision on 4 May 2015 to approve the Amendment C199 was informed by the independent expert advice of the planning panel.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 also provides ministerial powers of expedition of the planning scheme amendment process. Should a planning authority fail to administer the amendment process in a timely manner, the minister can by notice in writing direct a planning authority to take certain steps within a specified timeframe. If the planning authority fails to take a required step, the minister may then become the planning authority and progress the amendment to a conclusion.

Existing planning processes need to be more consistent, avoid duplication and provide greater certainty over timelines and accountabilities.

We also need improve the capacity to tailor assessment requirements to the type of proposal and scale of associated risks. Based on full disclosure and transparent processes, this would allow a focus on the quality of risk based assessment, not process for process sake.

Doncaster rail line

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Dunn

Raised on: 7 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving public transport for all Victorians. The recent State Budget included the biggest investment in public transport in Victoria's history, with almost \$20 billion worth of major transport investment to get people home to their families safer and sooner.

The Andrews Labor Government has committed to removing 50 of Melbourne's most dangerous and congested level crossings and commences construction of Melbourne Metro Rail project. The Andrews Labor Government took both of those commitments to the election and both are essential in order to relieve congestion in Melbourne. Respectively, the RACV and Infrastructure Australia deem these to be of the highest priority. Therefore, the Andrews Labor Government will be delivering these essential projects and work has commences on both.

Administering a transit network on road and rail requires careful assessment of which projects must be completed first.

The biggest barrier to congestion alleviation across the public transport network is the capacity of trains to enter the city. The existing city loop is at full capacity. The Melbourne Metro Rail Project is required to unlock this capacity before further network expansions, including rail to Doncaster, can be considered.

Gatwick Private Hotel

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 7 May 2015

REPLY:

I thank Ms Fitzherbert for the matter raised regarding the well-being of tenants at the Gatwick Hotel.

The Andrews Labour Government has identified that the Gatwick Private Hotel has a significant number of people presenting at the hotel with complex needs.

Without a co-ordinated housing and support pathway, residents' welfare cannot be effectively addressed.

While recognising that the Gatwick is a privately run business, the Victorian Government is keen to improve access for tenants to relevant health and housing support services.

The Government's election commitment recognises that a co-ordination of health and housing support services is required to better address individual tenant needs.

Improved coordination of services will involve:

- ensuring ongoing health supports are available for people residing at the Gatwick including the regular inter-agency provision of General Practitioner and nursing services, mental health, dental, podiatry, Needle and Syringe programs and other alcohol and drugs support services;
- referral to specialist and secondary health and wellbeing services;
- assistance to apply for social housing;
- providing secondary consultations for housing and support agencies; and
- providing practical support for residents to move from the Gatwick to long-term, affordable accommodation.

Discussions are ongoing between the owners and St Kilda Community Housing and the department has encouraged the owners to meet and discuss a way forward.

The Government's funding commitment will also enable St Kilda Community Housing to improve shared facilities and rooms at Gatwick hotel that impact on tenant well-being (including improved security, upgraded bathrooms, new heating etc.)

Retail tenancies legislation

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 7 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government acknowledges the difficulties facing Mr and Mrs Heller.

I understand that Mr and Mrs Heller have previously corresponded with the Victorian government that they recently wrote to the Attorney-General raising the issue of an ex-gratia payment with him. I do not wish to pre-empt the Attorney-General's response to the Heller's correspondence.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting small business by removing red tape, supporting local jobs, and giving small business a voice at the heart of Government. We are also protecting small businesses that lease commercial property by repealing sections of the Estate Agents (Exemption) Regulations 2014 that put tenants at an unfair disadvantage in property negotiations.

Werribee Mercy Hospital

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government provided a significant investment of \$85 million in the 2015-16 state budget to expand the acute services at the Werribee Mercy Hospital in Werribee.

The Department of Health & Human Services is working with Mercy Health on significant planning and is currently assembling the management and capital consultant teams to deliver this project.

The expanded acute facilities will provide 64 additional inpatient beds, eight new critical care beds, six new operating theatres together with a new central sterilisation supply department, staff support and associated plant areas.

The new four-level expansion will be located on top of the Catherine McAuley sub-acute facility (two levels) recently completed in February 2014 resulting in an integrated six-level facility.

Construction will commence in mid-2016, with the expanded services targeted to be available from mid-2018.

This will ensure that local residents in the rapidly growing Werribee area can receive high-quality care closer to home.

Avondale Heights development

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

On 26 May, Moonee Valley City Council, as the responsible planning authority, issued a Notice of Decision to grant a planning permit, subject to conditions, for 135 townhouses on the Kangan TAFE Site.

This decision was made following a thorough consultation process and the approved number of dwellings and storeys are consistent with the November 2011 commitment made by the former Minister for Planning, Matthew Guy.

Australand and Places Victoria responded to community concerns about the original proposal for the site and the current design halves the original number of homes and caps development at two storeys.

The design provides appropriate public open space that connects to existing community facilities and addresses concerns about traffic congestion and parking.

Significant consultation with Moonee Valley City Council and the community and residents was undertaken to inform the approved plan with information sessions held in July 2014 and February 2015.

I am satisfied that there is no need to intervene in this matter, however if any party disagrees with the council decision, then VCAT is the appropriate forum to consider the matter further.

East Beach, Port Fairy

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has briefed me on this matter and staff will continue to work closely with Moyne Shire Council officers on the long term protection of the coastal area at Port Fairy including the tip site that you referred to.

The Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water commits to visit Port Fairy and meet with representatives of Moyne Shire Council to discuss options for the protection of the tip site. You would be welcome to join that meeting.

I understand that Moyne Shire Council will be inviting the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water to a Summit that it intends to hold in August this year to focus on the management of coastal erosion at locations such as Port Fairy.

Ice rehabilitation facilities

Raised with: Minister for Mental Health

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

As Chair of the Parliamentary Inquiry, Mr Ramsay would well know the dramatic increase in methamphetamine use across the state over the past 4 years, and the lack of action that was taken to address this scourge by the previous Government.

It is important to have a drug treatment system that can support people recovering from a wide range of substance and/or poly drug use.

The Victorian Government recognises that the complex and wide-ranging issues associated with ice require a special focus. This is why, based on the recommendations of the very Inquiry Mr Ramsay chaired, we convened the Ice Action Taskforce and subsequently released our Ice Action Plan in our first 100 days of government. We did in 100 days, what the previous Government could not do in 4 years.

We are particularly heartened to see the Federal Government follow the Andrews Labor Government's lead, acting on this issue. We look forward to the Federal Government committing more funds to treatment services in Victoria.

We do note, however, that the only formal National Ice Taskforce forum in Victoria happened in Mildura. It is with concern that we note there was no formal consultation in areas of concern like Melton, Bacchus Marsh, Gippsland, Goulburn Valley, or Geelong.

The Andrews Labor Government Ice Action Plan included \$45.5 million of new investments with an emphasis on supporting families living with the impacts of ice misuse.

The Ice Action Plan includes \$18 million to expand drug services allowing more people to get the help they need. It is expected that this funding will deliver services for at least 500 clients per annum when fully operational.

This investment will focus on establishing innovative community rehabilitation services in rural and regional communities. Greater Geelong has been identified as a potential priority area for investment. Suitably qualified

providers of funded alcohol develop and deliver programs, and relevant services providers in the Geelong area are among those who have been invited to submit a proposal.

Community based rehabilitation programs enable participants to maintain connections with family, friends and community throughout the rehabilitation period. Emerging international and local evidence is showing that intensive non-residential rehabilitation models are demonstrating effective outcomes for some alcohol and drug clients, including those for whom methamphetamine is their primary drug of concern.

The Government will continue to support those affected by this and other drugs, and is working with affected communities on further solutions that can help fight this scourge of ice.

Port of Geelong

Raised with: Minister for Ports

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

The Port of Geelong is Victoria's largest bulk cargo port and plays an important role in the Geelong regional economy and in meeting the supply chain needs of producers and exporters in the North and West of Victoria. The Victorian Government values the strong and diverse commercial port network in Victoria.

Key features of the transaction to lease the Port of Melbourne should provide assurance to the Geelong community that their interests will be protected. These are:

- the Vessel Traffic Service which manages access through the shared channel in Port Phillip Bay will remain the responsibility of the Victorian Government;
- the proposed price monitoring framework will expand and strengthen the current regulatory framework, and will be administered by the independent Essential Services Commission;
- the regulatory framework will not allow the Lessee to discriminate between users of the shared channel on the basis of port or berth; and
- a CPI price cap will be in place for a minimum of 15 years.

In addition to this, the Government has recently indicated its commitment to the Murray Basin Rail Project, which will standardise key freight routes from the Murray Basin region to the Port of Geelong. This project will support more efficient supply chains and contribute to the thriving business of the Port of Geelong.

Sports funding

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

The Government is committed to improving sports and recreation facilities for all Victorians. The 2015-16 Budget provides \$76.4 million for the Sport and Recreation output in 2015-16 (Budget Paper No. 3, page 265). Funding for the Country Football Netball Program, Shooting Sports Facilities Program and for projects committed under the Strategic sporting infrastructure program (whilst not separately itemised in the 2015-16 Budget) is contained within the Sport and Recreation total output cost.

The 2015-16 Budget establishes a new Community Sports Infrastructure Fund. The Community Sports Infrastructure Fund provides a four year commitment totalling \$100 million to councils and community sports clubs, and includes upgrade of buildings, change rooms and training facilities to increase sporting participation in the community.

Challenge Family Violence

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has embarked on Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence and allocated \$81.3 million in new funding in the 2015-16 State Budget to support its work and address the tragedy of family violence.

The Royal Commission's terms of reference include a specific focus on strategies to prevent family violence. It has consulted with stakeholders and received many submissions about strategies to prevent family violence in our community, including from those organisations that have received funding under the Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children grants program.

The government has committed to implement the Royal Commission's recommendations, and further investment in prevention initiatives will be guided by the Commission's findings.

A key objective of the grants program was to provide funding over three years to pilot specific projects to help build the evidence base for primary prevention and early intervention initiatives. Under the terms of funding, grant funds were allocated to an independent evaluation of each project. I am pleased that the early learnings from the projects are being shared with the Royal Commission, and expect that the final evaluation reports will provide a valuable resource to the Government in implementing the Royal Commission's recommendations.

In the interim, the existing programs continue to be funded through to the end of December 2015 and each organisation has developed plans to ensure the sustainability of key aspects of the work following the conclusion of the funding period.

Victorian Racing Industry Fund

Raised with: Minister for Racing

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

The Government recognises the importance of a vibrant and strong racing industry that contributes over \$2.8 billion annually in economic activity to Victoria and has more than 114 000 people directly involved as employees and participants.

The Government's Plan to Keep Victorian Racing Strong outlined a number of key initiatives to further grow and strengthen all three Victorian racing codes, including the renewal of the Victorian Racing Industry Fund (VRIF) for a further four years.

The VRIF will continue to support the racing industry to improve racing and training infrastructure and customer facilities at thoroughbred, harness and greyhound venues, particularly in regional Victoria, for projects and initiatives that further stimulate and grow Victoria's racing industry.

The Government has demonstrated its commitment to country clubs by providing \$5 million to Racing Victoria and the Pakenham Racing Club to install track lighting for night racing at the new Pakenham racecourse (Racing.com Park), recently opened at Tynong.

The VRIF has also provided vital funding support to smaller country clubs at Camperdown and Mortlake by upgrading their judges towers and broadcast facilities.

Country racing is the lifeblood of the industry and attracting patrons to racing events, such as Warrnambool Greyhound Racing Club's 'Rock n Race' Night, Bendigo Harness Racing Club's Horse Extravaganza and Community Night and the Snow Day at Ballarat, have been supported through the VRIF Raceday Attraction Program (RAP).

The RAP helps support racing clubs engage with their local communities and to attract tourists to showcase their region. These events play a vital role in generating an economic stimulus for local communities and their hospitality and tourism industries.

Family violence

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

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In the interim, the existing programs continue to be funded through to the end of December 2015 and each organisation has developed plans to ensure the sustainability of key aspects of the work following the conclusion of the funding period.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 24 June 2015

Emerald Secondary College

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure, and this has been demonstrated through the allocation of \$730 million to school facilities in the 2015-16 State Budget.

Providing an inclusive education system that supports the learning of all Victorian students is a priority for the Labor Government. This is why we announced, in the Budget, a \$10 million “inclusive schools package” that will increase infrastructure and equipment support to students with disabilities. The initiatives contained within this package will ensure that students with special needs are able to access educational opportunities on the same basis as their non-disabled peers.

I am also pleased to hear of the positive feedback concerning Emerald Secondary College’s capital works project. The school’s \$1.5 million Budget allocation for upgrades and modernisations will include the replacement of portable classrooms used by special needs students with purpose-built facilities.

The funding provided through the State Budget represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State, and we will continue to invest in education infrastructure throughout this term of government. I look forward to visiting Emerald Secondary College shortly to meet with school leaders to discuss these exciting upgrades.

Victorian Managed Insurance Authority

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

VMIA provides insurance and risk management services to a wide range of Victorian public sector entities. It also manages domestic building insurance within Victoria. VMIA collects premiums from its clients to meet the cost of claims on insurance policies and cover its operating expenses. The vast majority of its premiums come from Government departments and agencies which are funded out of the State Budget.

VMIA prices its premiums at “break-even” plus a small capital charge. In calculating “break-even” VMIA assesses a range of factors including the risk exposure and expected claims for the risk being insured and expected investment earnings on the premium. The payment of a dividend by the VMIA will have no impact on premiums charged.

Recently, a combination of good claims management, benign weather, and risk improvements have resulted in lower than expected claims. These factors, together with higher than expected investment earnings, have created a substantial surplus.

As noted above, the ultimate source of the vast majority of VMIA's premium income is the State as Parliament allocates funds to departments by way of Appropriation. It is thus for government to decide how any VMIA surplus is distributed. VMIA will be in a position to meet the dividend commitments and still stay within its preferred accounting funding ratio range.

Crime prevention

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Parliamentary Secretary for Justice is currently leading a review of the Victorian Government's approach to crime prevention. This includes meeting with a range of organisations to discuss crime prevention programs to help inform options for future evidence-based strategies and initiatives within the Justice & Regulation portfolio.

In the interim the Andrews Labor Government has delivered a fresh injection of \$5.8 million to the Community Crime Prevention Program while the review takes place.

This money is supporting the following funding streams:

- Public Safety Infrastructure Fund—larger grants for councils of up to \$250 000 that use urban design and technology such as CCTV and lighting to improve safety in public places.
- Graffiti prevention and removal, continuing a program begun by Labor in 2005.
- The Community Safety Fund—grants of up to \$10 000 for councils and community groups to implement locally based crime prevention projects.
- Place-based grants for crime hotspots—piloting new grants for places of high crime and disadvantage, with an emphasis on evidence-based projects involving youth, Koori and culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

There is a very broad opportunity for community organisations to access grant funding under these programs.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 25 June 2015

Box Hill Institute

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support for local TAFEs.

As you know, the former Liberal Government's savage cuts to TAFE funding compounded Victoria's skyrocketing unemployment rates which had a devastating impact on training in Victoria.

Constant and repeated changes to subsidy rates left TAFE institutes in financial turmoil. Under the former Liberal Government, TAFEs were forced into mergers out of financial desperation. Campuses were closed. Courses were cut. Fees skyrocketed. Thousands of jobs were lost in TAFE institutes.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to repairing the damage of the former Liberal Government by focussing on growing jobs, increasing productivity and rebuilding TAFEs.

In this year's budget, I was pleased to provide a \$350 million investment in TAFE and training throughout Victoria. Through the \$300 million TAFE Rescue Fund we are providing \$100 million in capital funding and \$200 million to assist TAFEs meet their Community Service Obligations.

The budget also provides a further \$50 million through the TAFE Back to Work Fund. This fund will support TAFEs to build capability and industry partnerships in the six growth sectors of the economy identified by the Government's Back to Work Plan.

I was delighted to recently visit Box Hill Institute and announce that they were successful in their application for \$4.7 million to deliver the Jobs Engagement Team-3D Manufacturing and Cyber Security Initiative.

This initiative will support strategic collaboration and partnerships with industry groups and employers and will address the shortage of skilled workers in the growing 3D manufacturing industry and the demand for workforce skills within the expanding field of cyber-security.

Whilst the \$50 million TAFE Back to Work Fund will immediately inject \$4.7 million into Box Hill Institute, I am pleased to advise you that over the life of this project, my department advises Box Hill Institute will receive further funding under VTG for this project.

Autism services**Raised with: Minister for Education****Raised by: Ms Bath****Raised on: 28 May 2015****REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian Government's Special Needs Plan for Victorian Schools (the Special Needs Plan) was announced in November 2014. The Plan is a comprehensive suite of initiatives that will increase the capacity of schools to support students with special needs, including children and young people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Under the Special Needs Plan, it will be a condition of teacher registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching that all new teachers are to have completed a special needs component as part of their tertiary studies. Existing teachers will also be required to undertake special needs training as part of their ongoing professional development.

In addition, online professional learning modules that focus on supporting students with specific disabilities and learning difficulties, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are available to all teachers and schools. Take up of this training has been strong and it is free for all schools. Each course provides knowledge and skills that teachers require and has four main elements: understanding, assessment for learning, interventions and case studies. Teachers are supported by an online tutor to participate in the course.

The Department also provides scholarships in the Graduate Diploma of Teaching students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and support and advice for teachers from the Department's allied health professionals.