

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

4, 5 and 6 August 2015

(Extract from book 10)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Employment	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Industry, and Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. L. D’Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. J. F. Garrett, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills	The Hon. S. R. Herbert, MLC
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
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 — Dr Carling-Jenkins, 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

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 Elasmarr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Ms G. TIERNEY

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

Leader of the Government:
The Hon. G. JENNINGS

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

Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

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

Leader of The Nationals:
The Hon. D. K. DRUM

Leader of the Greens:
Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	V1LJ
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² Appointed 15 April 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

CONTENTS

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

TUESDAY, 4 AUGUST 2015

<i>Puffing Billy</i>	2383
<i>Anzac centenary</i>	2383
<i>Seddon land</i>	2384
<i>Ballarat sports and events centre</i>	2384
<i>Government tendering system</i>	2385
<i>Furlong Road, St Albans, level crossing</i>	2386
<i>Retirement housing sector</i>	2386
<i>Geelong planning authority</i>	2387
<i>Autism services</i>	2388
<i>Southland railway station</i>	2388
<i>City of Stonnington public transport</i>	2389
<i>Western suburbs roads</i>	2389
<i>Royal Commission into Family Violence</i>	2390
<i>Family violence</i>	2391
<i>Local government rates</i>	2391
<i>South Morang railway station car parking</i>	2392
<i>Regional and rural events</i>	2392
<i>Discovery Science & Technology Centre</i>	2393
<i>Pacific National job losses</i>	2393
<i>Dowry ban</i>	2394
<i>Anglesea power station</i>	2394
<i>Ice rehabilitation facilities</i>	2395
<i>Aged-care facilities</i>	2395
<i>South Eastern Metropolitan Region roads</i>	2396
<i>Respite and emergency accommodation</i>	2396
<i>Sunbury rail services</i>	2397
<i>Healthy Together Victoria</i>	2397
<i>Fogartys Gap Road–Calder Highway, Ravenswood South</i>	2398
<i>Swinburne University of Technology former Lilydale campus</i>	2398, 2405
<i>Wind farms</i>	2399
<i>Western Highway</i>	2399
<i>Sunshine Hospital perinatal program</i>	2401
<i>City of Casey police resources</i>	2401
<i>Northern Victoria Region schools</i>	2402
<i>Gippsland tourism</i>	2403
<i>Multicultural affairs grants</i>	2403
<i>Refugees and asylum seekers</i>	2404
<i>Teacher travel policy</i>	2404
<i>Homesafe</i>	2405
<i>O’Herns Road, Epping</i>	2406
<i>Western Metropolitan Region schools</i>	2406
<i>Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund</i>	2406
<i>Greater Shepparton Work and Learning Centre</i>	2407
<i>Crime prevention</i>	2407
<i>Bhangra Down Under</i>	2408
<i>Chisholm Institute</i>	2409
<i>Kindergartens</i>	2409
<i>Gippsland health services</i>	2410
<i>Women’s Information and Referral Exchange</i>	2411
<i>Melbourne Wholesale Fruit Vegetable and Flower Market</i>	2411

<i>Police numbers</i>	2412
<i>Jumps racing</i>	2413
<i>Mooroopna Football Netball Club</i>	2414
<i>Gippsland public transport</i>	2414
<i>Kew ambulance station</i>	2414
<i>Darebin City Council</i>	2415
<i>Ararat and Stawell police stations</i>	2415
<i>Community correction orders</i>	2416
<i>Port Melbourne Primary School</i>	2417
<i>Centre–Mackie roads, Bentleigh East</i>	2417

WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST 2015

<i>Shepparton Art Museum</i>	2419
<i>Funeral services</i>	2419
<i>VicForests</i>	2420
<i>Mobile Black Spot program</i>	2420

THURSDAY, 6 AUGUST 2015

<i>Health funding</i>	2423
-----------------------------	------

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 4 August 2015

Puffing Billy

Raised with: Minister for Tourism and Major Events

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 25 February 2015

REPLY:

Puffing Billy Railway is managed by the Emerald Tourist Railway Board and is one of Victoria's iconic tourism attractions.

The Railway receives over 300 000 visitors per year and is a significant destination for both international and domestic visitors to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region.

The Government has had a long association with the Railway and through Tourism Victoria, provides on-going assistance with its marketing activities and securing new business opportunities.

The Government will continue to work with the Board to ensure Puffing Billy contributes to regional visitation as well as the preservation of steam railway history in Australia.

This support to Puffing Billy assists with delivering improvements to the quality of the State's key tourism infrastructure to grow the \$20.6 billion tourism industry.

Anzac centenary

Raised with: Minister for Veterans

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 19 March 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

As the Member for Eastern Victoria correctly notes, Victoria has more avenues of honour than any other state or territory with approximately 50 avenues of honour remaining from an estimated 325 planted in Victoria. They are fitting memorials to the men—the fathers, brothers, uncles and sons—who never came home. The avenues give families a dignified and long lasting way of commemorating their loved ones. Formed along major thoroughfares, communities are reminded every day of the sacrifice made by our soldiers, sailors and airmen.

The Victorian Government recognises the importance of the avenues through the Restoring Community War Memorials Program which supports communities to ensure local war memorials, avenues of honour and honour rolls are restored to their original condition or improved to reflect the service history of the local community. This includes the replanting of trees and restoration of an avenue's commemorative plaques. In the last 12 months the Government has provided funding of \$670 141 to Local Councils, RSLs or community organisations, which includes funding for the replanting and improvement of sixteen avenues of honour.

Furthermore, the Government invested \$20 000 for the preparation of specialist historical assessments that allowed four regional avenues of honour—at Macedon, Mortlake, Kingston and Cranbourne—to be included on the Victorian

Heritage Register. Their inclusion on the Register is recognition of the special cultural significance of these avenues to the State of Victoria and affords them legal protection to help ensure that we never forget.

Seddon land

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 7 May 2015

REPLY:

The Member for Western Metropolitan Region has raised with me the issue of land acquired in Seddon that was compulsorily acquired by the former Department of Transport for the construction of the Regional Rail Link (RRL) project.

I can assure the Member that we have every intention of meeting the needs of the Victorian community in deciding the future use of the land.

Landowners affected by the RRL project, including Seddon landowners and the former Footscray Senior Citizens Centre, were notified that they would have to give up their land for the purposes of this major rail project.

At the time, in accordance with the provisions of the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act (1986), the former Department of Transport acquired the land and the dispossessed owners were compensated. In some cases, additional compensation was paid by the Department for loss attributed to non-financial disadvantage for having to move from their primary place of residence, severance and disturbance.

One of the issues that needs to be considered in determining the future of any land acquired for the RRL project is future public transport service requirements. The Regional Rail Link Authority is determining what land acquired for the RRL project is now surplus. Some land will be retained for rail operational requirements.

Should the land be determined surplus, it will be disposed of in accordance with the agreement with the Federal Government in respect of funding for the RRL project, and Victorian Government Land Holding and Land Transaction Policies.

Other state departments, as well as local government have the opportunity to purchase the land before it is listed for public sale, for no less than the value established by the Valuer-General Victoria.

Ballarat sports and events centre

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government has pledged \$31.5 million towards the Ballarat Eureka Sports Precinct, which includes the Eureka Stadium Redevelopment, the Ballarat Showgrounds Upgrade, the C.E. Brown Reserve Redevelopment and a \$9 million commitment to the Ballarat Sports and Events Centre.

This commitment to the Ballarat Sports and Events (Wendouree Sports Centre) will assist in the delivery of new and refurbished netball and basketball courts in Wendouree. The Project also includes a \$5 million contribution from the City of Ballarat. The key Project stakeholders have agreed that a functional brief will be prepared together with a Business Case for the delivery of the \$14 million project, including an assessment of the potential for its staged implementation. As part of this process, consideration will be given towards obtaining additional funding from alternative sources, including future rounds of the Federal Government's National Stronger Regions Fund.

Thank you for raising the matter with me.

Government tendering system

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

I refer to the adjournment matter you raised on 26 May in the Legislative Council.

A vibrant, prosperous and responsible building and construction industry in Victoria is integral to a healthy and growing economy, and to generate economic growth and wealth for Victorians.

The Government considers a transparent and equitable tendering process critical, and is committed to maintaining the highest standards of probity in Victoria to deliver accountability and transparency to tenderers to drive fair and equitable outcomes.

Under existing policies and procedures, tender price is not the sole determinant of value for money. In determining value for money, public agencies are already required to take account of a broad range of considerations beyond price such as capability, financial viability and sustainability and local skills and content.

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to the Victorian Industry Participation Policy (VIPPP). The VIPPP requires government departments and agencies to consider competitive Victorian local suppliers, including small-medium sized enterprises when awarding contracts valued at \$1 million or more in regional Victoria, or \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne or for state-wide activities.

The Project Development and Construction Management Act 1994 facilitates development of government projects in Victoria and provides for the Minister for Finance to set standards and issue written directions in relation to public construction. The Government is currently reviewing the Ministerial Directions.

The Government also takes a serious view to unconscionable conduct in the Victorian building and construction industry, particularly as it relates to the treatment of sub-contractors. The general conditions of contract approved and recommended for public construction in Victoria are specified in the Guide to Ministerial Direction No. 2.

The general conditions of contract for public construction must provide for a range of things, including prompt and fair entitlement to payment, and requirement that the head contractor must provide the contract principal with proof of payment to subcontractors and suppliers.

Further, under the Victorian Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 2002 contracts recommended or approved for public construction must not include:

- ‘pay when paid’ or ‘pay if paid’ clauses in subcontracts; or
- amendment of clauses relating to payment timing in standard subcontracts.

The Government will continue to review its policies and practices to ensure that Victoria’s tendering framework for public construction and building remains strong and effective in delivering outcomes for Victorians.

I have requested the Department of Treasury and Finance to consider the issues you have raised, to ensure they are taken into account in reviewing construction tendering policies and procedures. This includes considering options to streamline tendering processes to reduce costs for both Government and business and to ensure level playing fields for tenderers and appropriate protection for sub-contractors.

Furlong Road, St Albans, level crossing

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to removing the level crossings at Main and Furlong roads in St Albans, with Furlong Road fast-tracked to be delivered with the project at Main Road.

Leighton Contractors, Aurecon, and Hyder Group have been selected as the preferred contractors to remove the level crossings at Main Road and Furlong Road in St Albans. The contract is expected to be awarded in the coming months. The successful contractor will then form an Alliance with VicRoads, Public Transport Victoria and Metro Trains Melbourne to deliver the works.

Work will start this year with construction on both projects and will take approximately 12-18 months to complete.

Delivering these level crossing removals together will accelerate the delivery of the overall level crossing project for the community, minimise disruption to residents and road users, and reduce the number of closures required on the Sunbury rail line.

We have been working with the community, stakeholders and Brimbank Council to deliver the best solution for the St Albans community. Both projects include lowering the train line below the road, and constructing new stations with access to the lowered platforms via stairs, ramps and lifts. Ginifer Station will be relocated closer to the Furlong Road intersection, with access via Furlong Road and Bond Street. Both station carparks will be optimised to provide at least the same number of spaces.

Early works have been underway at Main Road since the start of the year including service relocation, to prepare the site for major construction. These will continue and early works will commence at Furlong Road over the coming months.

We are currently reviewing the preferred contractor's submission including refining the planned schedule of works.

I am proud to be delivering these level crossing removal projects for the community to reduce congestion in the area and create a safer, more connected community.

Retirement housing sector

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

I refer to your contribution to the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 27 May 2015 regarding the various choices of housing for retirees, such as caravan parks, independent living units, residential parks and retirement villages, and the relevant legislative protections for such retirees.

Retirees living in 'retirement villages', as defined in the Retirement Villages Act 1986, are protected by the provisions of that Act.

The Retirement Villages Act seeks to address any complications of retirement village contracts through requiring village operators to:

- provide a standardised factsheet of important generic information about the village to interested retirees, which enables them, for instance, to see what sort of ongoing contribution and deferred management fee will be required for the various types of units available in the village.
- provide a standardised disclosure statement to those about to sign a contract, which sets out the exact costs of entering, living in and leaving the village, including an estimate of their refunds after 1, 2, 5 and 10 years residence, and
- conform their contracts to a standard layout, including a set of standard prescribed terms.

Disputes in retirement villages are required to be dealt with according to the dispute resolution procedures specified in the Retirement Villages Act, and residents and operators can access the mediation facilities provided by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

Retirees living in caravan parks are protected by the provisions of Part 4 of the Residential Tenancies Act 1996; those living in residential parks are protected by Part 4A of that Act; and those leasing independent living units not in a 'retirement village' are protected by the general provisions of that Act.

All such retirees benefit from the provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act that empower Consumer Affairs Victoria to investigate complaints about excessive rent or breaches of the duty to maintain rented premises in good repair, and to conciliate settlements of such complaints.

The government has committed to fairer and safer housing for all Victorians, including retirees, and a key component of this commitment is a review of the Residential Tenancies Act. Information about the review of that Act, including opportunities for community input, will shortly be released. In the meantime, you can visit Consumer Affairs Victoria's website (www.consumer.vic.gov.au) for news and updates.

Thank you for raising these important issues with me.

Geelong planning authority

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for your question Mr Simon Ramsey MP, Member for Western Victoria.

You asked that I inform you and the Geelong community of the current status of the proposed model for a Geelong planning authority, the process of consultation with local partners on its design and the current discussion with the City of Greater Geelong.

Firstly, the Andrews Government supports the implementation of Vision 2 and the revitalisation of the Geelong CBD.

The government is committed to creating a new Geelong authority vested with powers required to co-ordinate the implementation of Vision 2 (Victorian Labor's Plan for Jobs and Growth—A focus on Geelong, pg 23). It intended that this commitment be honoured.

I have met with the council recently to be briefed on key projects and opportunities for central Geelong. The City of Greater Geelong has developed an Action Plan to implement Vision 2 including improving planning permit application turn around times, a parking strategy, shop top living facilitation and central Geelong marketing.

The council has also appointed a new Central Geelong Task Force and dedicated Central Geelong Team within council to drive implementation of the plan. I applaud the council's initiative and look forward to a positive working relationship with the council and local partners in the region to make Vision 2 a reality.

Any actions by the State Government will complement the council's activities and focus on necessary State actions to implement the Action Plan.

Work is progressing on the development of the best governance model for Geelong and I expect to make an announcement soon on this matter.

Autism services

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

North Western Victoria Region provides a range of high quality educational options for children and young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Mainstream schools in the region provide tailored education and support to a diverse range of students.

There are two specialist schools within the region that cater specifically for children and young people with ASD, including Northern School for Autism and Jacana School for Autism.

Student Support Services, including speech pathology, psychology and social work, are available to provide targeted support for students with ASD and assist the school to provide an individualised learning program.

The Region provides specialist support through provision of the Autism Connect Program, which targets building the capacity of teachers to support students with ASD. The Region has employed an ASD Coach and Visiting Teacher for Autism who work closely with schools under the Autism Connect Program.

Schools throughout the region access a range of professional learning opportunities relevant to supporting children and young people with ASD. Since 2012 over 600 teachers in the Region have completed the Inclusion Online Autism Spectrum Disorder Course through an online learning initiative.

Southland railway station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Dalidakis

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

Southland station is designed to be accessed via Southland Shopping Centre's carpark. Passengers also can access the station via foot from Bay Road. Community consultation on the design and the location of the new station closed on 1 May 2015. The feedback is being considered and a report back to the community is expected in June 2015. Meanwhile, PTV has called for expressions of interest to finalise the design, and construct the station, which is expected to be completed in 2017.

There are no current plans to use Sir William Fry Reserve as a car park for Southland station.

The station is proposed to be open for the duration of normal train services on the Frankston line.

City of Stonnington public transport**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mr Davis****Raised on: 27 May 2015****REPLY:**

The rail corridor near South Yarra station is a complex and constrained urban environment, making it a challenging place to build new platforms.

A key difference between the former Government's flawed Melbourne Rail Link project and Melbourne Metro is that Melbourne Rail Link only allowed for 164m long trains, while Melbourne Metro allows for longer, high capacity trains. Longer trains need longer platforms, and it is difficult to accommodate lengthy platforms in South Yarra without causing significant impacts to the surrounding area during construction, including increased land acquisition.

Passengers using South Yarra Station will be among the biggest winners when the Melbourne Metro Project is complete. Upon completion of Melbourne Metro, passengers using South Yarra station will benefit from improved capacity and more frequent services on the Frankston and Sandringham lines. Melbourne Metro will remove the busiest line of the network—the Cranbourne/Pakenham line—from South Yarra Station. South Yarra passengers will also have a “turn up and go” connection directly to the city.

With regard to Route 8 tram services, these services are not being cancelled. Any future changes to the tram network will be undertaken in consultation with the community, and it is inappropriate for me—or the Hon. David Davis—to pre-empt those outcomes.

Western suburbs roads**Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety****Raised by: Mr Finn****Raised on: 28 May 2015****REPLY:**

I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised:

Reducing the speed on a road is generally a direct response to road safety concerns raised by the community and other key stakeholders, with each location considered by VicRoads on a case-by-case basis. The speed limit assessment is based on the condition of the road, crash data, volume and type of traffic, as well as feedback from VicRoads' road safety partners and the community.

The Andrews Labor Government acknowledges the impacts of population growth on the transport network and is working closely with the outer metropolitan councils and other key stakeholders on various transport priorities.

The Government is committed to improving the transport network in Melbourne's west. This includes the delivery of the West Gate Distributor Project, which will improve truck access to the Port of Melbourne from the west, remove trucks from residential streets in Melbourne's inner west and provide additional capacity on the West Gate Freeway. On 21 January 2015, the Government announced an Expressions of Interest process to commence the West Gate Distributor Project. This process is for construction of the first stage of the project, which is expected to commence in late 2015 and take approximately 18 months to complete. The Government is also considering a market-let proposal for the Western Distributor, which aims to deliver similar outcomes to the West Gate Distributor Project.

In addition, the Government is also committed to the removal of 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings on the metropolitan rail network. This will include the removal of the Cherry Street and Werribee Street level crossings in Werribee and the Melton Highway level crossing in Sydenham. In the coming months, works will commence for the removal of level crossings at Main Road and Furlong Road in St Albans.

VicRoads is in the process of delivering \$72 million in transport and planning infrastructure improvements in the East Werribee Employment Precinct. The precinct will accommodate 58 000 local jobs and 7100 new homes. As part of these improvements, I am pleased to advise that VicRoads is undertaking improvement works on the Princes Highway at the Old Geelong Road and Sneydes Road intersections. Works on these intersections have now commenced.

Furthermore, the transport infrastructure improvements also include a new interchange on the Princes Freeway at Sneydes Road. This interchange will improve traffic flow in and around Point Cook by providing direct access to the Princes Freeway, and will provide a direct link from East Werribee to Point Cook West. VicRoads expects the interchange to reduce traffic pressure on other routes, such as Palmers Road, Forsyth Road and Point Cook Road. Construction of the interchange is expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

Royal Commission into Family Violence

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for raising this important issue relating to support for victims while the Royal Commission into Family Violence is underway. I would also like to acknowledge the unique challenges facing those who are impacted by family violence in regional and rural areas.

As you are aware, the Royal Commission is well underway and has concluded a series of consultations across Victoria, including the Gippsland region. It is expected that the Royal Commission will begin its public hearings on Monday, July 13 and will run until Friday, August 14. The Commission will conduct a root and branch investigation of the entire system, with hearings being open to the public as well as web-streamed.

For anyone requiring further information about the Royal Commission or the public hearings I would encourage them to get in contact directly on 1800 365 100 or www.rcfv.com.au.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring that those who are impacted by family violence receive the support that they need. The 2015-16 State Budget provides a \$81.3 million family violence funding package. This package directs funding to frontline support services, while ensuring that those who wish to engage with the Royal Commission are supported to do so. As an independent body, the Royal Commission is best placed to determine the allocation of funding, including appropriate support for victims.

As part of the family violence funding package, a \$16 million Family Violence Fund has been created to respond to urgent or unforeseen demand arising from the Royal Commission. The Budget allocates \$10 million of this funding, with the remaining \$6 million to be allocated during the life of the Royal Commission.

The Government will continue to monitor demand for services to ensure that those who are impacted by family violence and the sector are supported.

Family violence

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

Raised by: Ms Springle

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for raising this important initiative that focuses on ensuring the safety of women and children at the highest risk of family violence.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to protecting those impacted by this harm, while ensuring that perpetrators are held to account. For too long has the system failed those who need help the most.

The 2015-16 State Budget provides a \$81.3 million family violence funding package and delivers on all of Labor's election commitments. I am proud that this budget provides \$900 000 for a personal safety pilot that will help more women and children to stay safe in their own homes. The 2015-16 Budget also responds to the increasing demand on family violence support services, through the creation of the \$16 million Family Violence Fund. The 2014-15 Budget includes \$1 million for crisis support and \$1 million to counselling services for women and children, that has been made available to services immediately.

Many initiatives are funded for one year with the expectation that the 2016-17 Budget will respond to the Royal Commission's recommendations. The Royal Commission is now well underway and its recommendations will help us enhance the safety of all women and children in the community.

Further details about the Improving Safety in the Home project can be sought from Minister Mikakos in her capacity as the Minister for Families and Children.

Local government rates

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan for raising this matter.

I have announced that the Fair Go Rates System will be established for local government beginning in Financial Year 2016-17. The Victorian Government has commissioned the Essential Services Commission (ESC) to conduct an inquiry and make recommendations on an implementation framework by 31 October 2015.

Council budgets for Financial Year 2016-17 will be subject to the rate cap. Councils that have a need to raise rates above the cap will have to make an application to the ESC.

Councils are currently consulting their communities on their 2015-16 budgets. These budgets are not subject to the cap. However, the Government expects councils to be prudent with their expenditure and not require ratepayers to pay for things that are unnecessary.

South Morang railway station car parking

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Ondarchie

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

The previous Coalition Government commitment to provide more car parking at South Morang station did not identify any specific location. A significant amount of land parcels adjoining the station are privately owned.

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) has been working collaboratively with the private land owners to discuss potential options for commuter car parking, taking into consideration local traffic and wider planning for the Plenty Valley town centre.

PTV is making arrangements with the private land owner to extend the period of use of the current informal car parking area, including the need to address the current condition in terms of amenity and safety.

The Andrews Labor Government has committed \$20 million to deliver carparks at train stations.

The Andrews Government is committed to the Mernda Rail Extension with \$9 million allocated this year for planning and Business Case development.

Regional and rural events

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government acknowledges the importance of Regional and Rural events and the benefits these activities bring to our economy and to the local communities.

Victoria is the proud leader of Australian racing, generating more than \$2.8 billion in economic activity and supporting more than 26 500 full time jobs. Country racing alone contributes almost \$940 million in annual economic output, and regional Victoria is home to around 80 per cent of trainers and breeders.

The Government is committed to keeping Victorian racing strong, investing \$86 million in racing and training venues across the State under the Victorian Racing Industry Fund (VRIF). The funding was confirmed as part of the 2015-16 Victorian Budget to renew the VRIF for a further four years. It includes \$72 million in new funding, and \$14 million unspent since the fund commenced. It funds projects and initiatives at tracks across Victoria, supporting jobs, improving animal and participant safety, increasing integrity measures and boosting the race day experience for racegoers.

Racing Victoria (RV) is the controlling body for Victorian thoroughbred racing, including jumps racing. Strategic decisions relating to the Victorian thoroughbred racing industry, including those pertaining to jumps racing, are made by the Board of RV and not by the Government.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that game hunting is carried out in a safe, responsible and sustainable manner. Recreational game hunting plays an important role in supporting regional communities and providing incentives to conserve habitats and enhance biodiversity.

Victoria has more than 48 000 licensed game hunters who play an important role in contributing to rural and regional economies. In 2013, hunting provided a total economic impact of \$439 million supporting approximately

3500 full time jobs in Victoria. Duck hunting is a popular recreational activity in Victoria, with more than 26 000 people licensed to hunt game ducks.

Game hunting in Victoria is regulated by the Game Management Authority. As an independent regulator, it works with other agencies and departments to deliver state-wide programs that improve and promote responsible hunting in Victoria and ensure all hunters comply with the law.

Discovery Science & Technology Centre

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

Bendigo is a proud regional city that's facing some challenges after the former Liberal-Nationals Government turned their back on this part of the world.

The Andrews Labor Government's \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund (RJIF) will invest in growing jobs, building infrastructure and strengthening communities throughout regional Victoria.

The Bendigo Discovery Science and Technology Centre was previously the recipient of a \$200 000 grant over four years to support a range of in-school, outreach and in-centre educational activities and programs.

The City of Greater Bendigo is currently working with the community to identify a sustainable model of operation for the Centre and the Government is receptive to discussing a sustainable model for future operations.

Pacific National job losses

Raised with: Minister for Industry

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

On 5 June 2015, it was reported that redundancies would occur at Pacific National Pty Ltd, a division on Asciano. On 15 June, the company confirmed that 32 redundancies would occur across regional Victoria.

The job losses are reported to be a result of restructuring due to lower forecasts of the volume of grain to be transported on rail by Pacific National.

The company is working with other rail businesses such as V/Line and Metro Trains to support these skilled employees with finding new employment.

In addition, my department will make available the Business in Transition Support program to assist affected employees with information and support in relation to new job opportunities or accessing to retraining.

The Government is working with businesses to attract new investment and create jobs, with a focus on high growth sectors and making Victoria's industries more competitive and sustainable. Initiatives to assist businesses will be delivered through the Government's Future Industries Fund, Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, and the Premier's Jobs and Investment Fund.

Dowry ban

Raised with: Attorney-General

Raised by: Ms Springle

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Government takes the responsibility of addressing family violence in our community very seriously.

The Government has established the first ever Royal Commission into Family Violence, which will systematically examine the underlying causes of and contributing factors to family violence.

The Royal Commission's terms of reference include an examination of the appropriate interventions and mechanisms to address family violence that occur in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Women who are suffering dowry related family violence are covered by the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. The Act contains a broad definition of family violence which includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and economic abuse.

Economic abuse is defined in the Act as coercive, deceptive, or unreasonably controlling behaviour that either denies someone financial autonomy, or withholds or threatens to withhold from dependants the financial support necessary for their reasonable living expenses. Examples of economic abuse listed in the Act include "removing or keeping a family member's property without permission, or threatening to do so" and "disposing of property owned by a person, or owned jointly with a person, against the person's wishes and without lawful excuse".

The Government will await the recommendations of the Royal Commission, all of which it has committed to accept, before committing to reforms to the family violence system, in order to ensure future policy is cohesive, systematic, and in line with the findings of the Royal Commission.

Anglesea power station

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The government is working to support workers affected by Alcoa's closure as its first priority.

Work to incorporate areas of the Alcoa Anglesea Coal Mine Lease which are not subject to rehabilitation into the Great Otway National Park has commenced. This requires legislative change and will take some time to complete. Regardless, the management agreement between Alcoa and the Victorian Government will continue to ensure ongoing protection for the environmental values in these areas.

Alcoa has not announced any plans for the future management of the Alcoa-owned freehold land portion.

Alcoa is focused on preparing technical plans for the safe closure of the mine and power station. Once complete, it will then prepare a rehabilitation plan with input from all stakeholders. Alcoa will work with Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources on both. The timeframe for this work is yet to be established.

Alcoa has committed to meeting all requirements regarding closure and rehabilitation of the Anglesea coal mine and power station. There will be major, long-term remediation and revegetation needed at the site and, at this stage, the future use of the former mine site is not known. The Andrews Government is committed to providing

opportunities for community and stakeholder input and will be working with the Anglesea Community, Surf Coast Council and other stakeholders around future uses and needs for the region.

Ice rehabilitation facilities

Raised with: Minister for Mental Health

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

Addressing the devastating effects of ice use in Victoria, particularly in our rural and regional areas, is of critical importance for this government. The Premier's Ice Action Taskforce was established and an Ice Action Plan released within our first 100 days of government. The plan delivers \$45.5 million in new investment to tackle the demand, supply and harm of ice. This investment is only the beginning.

I was pleased to announce almost \$25 million for extra support services distributed across the state as part of the Ice Action Plan in Ballarat on 26 June 2015. Of this, almost \$1.5 million will go to initiatives in the Barwon South West region, including \$833 000 for therapeutic day rehabilitation in Geelong, Warrnambool and Portland, \$400 000 to expand support services for families coping with ice use, and Community Ice Action Grants for groups undertaking local action in Geelong and Warrnambool.

It is important to have a drug treatment system that can support people recovering from a wide range of substances and poly drug use. A person recovering from substance abuse, and their families, need a range of available treatment options—there is no one size fits all solution.

Therapeutic day rehabilitation programs are one of those options, with international and local evidence demonstrating that these programs can be an effective instrument to keep people functional and engaged with their community whilst dealing with addiction.

This government is already acting to deliver a comprehensive whole-of-government and whole-of-community plan to deal with the damaging effects of ice. It will continue to work with experts and the community to tackle this issue.

I look forward to the National Ice Taskforce reporting to the Council of Australian Governments on evidence based strategies for prevention and community education, for coordinated investments in drug services and for development of the drug treatment workforce.

Aged-care facilities

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government seeks to ensure public sector residential aged care services have appropriately qualified staff and provide a suitable environment for care.

Commonwealth aged care reforms included a significant increase in the accommodation supplement paid for supported, concessional, assisted or low-income residents for services that invested in improvements to the quality of the facility.

Approximately 40 per cent of residents in public sector residential aged care services are low income, supported, assisted or concessional. Investment to improve the quality of these facilities will lead to a significant increase in Commonwealth revenue enabling the service to continue improving facilities and amenities and care for residents.

I have recently approved approximately \$6 million in funding to provide support for public sector residential aged care services in rural and regional Victoria facilities for specialist equipment, nurse training and to strength business operations. Over \$4 million has been allocated specifically to undertake minor capital refurbishments and modernise facilities to improve living conditions and amenity for residents.

Capital funding decisions are, and will continue to be, based upon established investment management principles that consider relative priorities which are based on detailed assessments of investment need and impact.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region roads

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Dingley road corridor between Moorabbin and Dandenong South is a strategically important transport route. VicRoads has identified the last remaining section between the South Gippsland Highway and the South Gippsland Freeway as a priority for planning and project development activities, which the government will consider for funding against other competing priorities.

Respite and emergency accommodation

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Mr Ondarchie

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that people with a disability have choice in the services they receive and that services are person-centred and enable greater independence and social inclusion.

This government is providing the biggest increase in a State Government Budget since 2008-09 for Individual Support Packages for people with a disability. The \$151 million in funding will provide up to an additional 830 Individual Support Packages to enable families to get the support and respite they need and to help young people with a disability transitioning from school.

This will contribute to the government's commitment of \$2.5 billion for the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

I have advised Mr Ondarchie that the previous government's announcement of \$3.6 million for the construction of two five-bed respite facilities in Mitchell and Whittlesea is being considered in the context of demand of respite services within the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Sunbury rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The decision to apply a consistent pick up and set down policy across the network was not taken lightly.

As you know, since 21 June 2015, passengers using Sunbury and Pakenham stations have been encouraged to board more frequent Metro services when travelling to the city, as has long been the case for people using stations such as Sunshine, Broadmeadows and Dandenong.

To help Metro customers travelling to and from Sunbury, an extra ten peak Metro services per week will service Sunbury station.

The initial focus of the new pick up and set down restrictions will be on communication and encouraging changed behaviours for passengers using Sunbury and Pakenham stations, with a view to exploring further enforcement options from 1 January 2016 if necessary.

Healthy Together Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Wooldridge

Raised on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

This government is strongly committed to preventative health measures.

In particular, the Achievement Program is helping organisations across Victoria to create healthy environments where people live, learn, work and play. More than one in four Victorian children are currently participating in this initiative through their early childhood service or school, and over 300 000 Victorian workers are benefiting through their workplaces.

The brutal cuts by the Commonwealth Government to the National Partnership Agreement, which was the significant funding mechanism to support the Healthy Together Victoria program, have severely affected the delivery of preventative health programs. I have asked the Department of Health & Human Services to make every effort to salvage key elements of the program.

Despite these Commonwealth cuts, this Victorian Government has maintained our commitment to prevention and has allocated funding to prevention activities across government in support of road safety, cancer prevention, VicHealth, and oral health amongst other programs.

There have been new investments in this year's budget, including provisions for sexual health, blood borne viruses, eye health, and planning towards a prescription monitoring system.

Although we are operating in a financially constrained environment, the Commonwealth cuts, the Victorian Government remains committed to delivering world-class preventive health.

Fogartys Gap Road–Calder Highway, Ravenswood South

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

The development of the section of the Calder Highway between Harcourt and Ravenswood was considered in the 1997 Faraday to Ravenswood Planning Study.

VicRoads has improved the safety of the intersection by installing an active electronic vehicle activated warning sign, and upgraded signage at the intersection, in early 2012.

In view of recent crashes at this intersection, VicRoads advises me that it will analyse crash patterns and develop appropriate road safety improvement measures under current road safety programs.

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

VicRoads will continue to monitor the safety of the Calder Highway/Fogartys Gap Road intersection.

Swinburne University of Technology former Lilydale campus

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

I thank Mr Mulino for raising this important issue and I appreciate your ongoing interest and support of training and TAFE in the Eastern Victoria Region.

The Andrews Government has made a firm commitment to re-open the site for the delivery of high quality TAFE and higher education services to enhance future employment and career opportunities for our kids and support the needs of local businesses in the Yarra Ranges. The Government's 2015-16 Victorian Budget provided a \$350 million boost to TAFE funding, including \$10 million to support the re-opening of the campus, of which \$1 million is set aside to support Melba Support Services to establish a permanent home on the site.

In addition, there is funding for the inclusion of a Tech School on the site, part of our \$125 million Tech School initiative—which will introduce students to the TAFE and higher education environment while they're still at school, providing them with a window into the future world of work, and linking a broad range of pathways in science, mathematics, technology and social sciences to integrated applied learning.

On Monday 15 June, Minister Merlino and I, together with Swinburne's Vice Chancellor Professor Linda Kristjanson, were pleased to announce the start of the Request for Proposal process for the sale and re-opening of Swinburne's former Lilydale campus.

The Request for Proposal is a significant step in re-opening the campus. The RFP is a robust process designed to identify a TAFE or dual sector university capable of delivering high quality, innovative and viable TAFE and higher education services on the site. We have been working in close collaboration with Swinburne University to reach this point and will continue to do so until the conclusion of the process later this year.

My Department has sought input from key stakeholder groups, including local government, secondary schools, local industry, the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) and the Yarra Valley Education Precinct

committee (YVEP). It is clear from the feedback that the community want high-quality TAFE training and higher education services delivered on the Lilydale campus and this process has provided a range of valuable insights.

Our inclusive and open consultative approach provides a clear understanding to prospective bidders about what opportunities there are for the future of training and higher education at this campus, and for other uses that would complement and support the education offer.

We expect that the RFP process will be completed later this year and the campus will re-open in the first half of next year with the opening of the Tech School to follow.

The Government has also facilitated a number of independent reviews in order to improve the quality, stability and sustainability of the Victorian training market. This includes a review of quality assurance which was publicly released last month, and a review of VET funding; an interim report of which was issued on 16 July, and a final report expected in August this year.

Wind farms

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

Since I became the Minister for Planning there have been two important changes to the wind energy facility (wind farm) planning rules in planning schemes to implement the governments policy on wind farms and reinvigorate the wind industry.

Amendment VC124 was gazetted on 2 April 2015 making myself the decision maker for all new wind farm planning applications (the issue Mr Ramsay is referring to) and reducing the distance from two kilometres to within one kilometre in which a landowners consent is required to make an application for a turbine near a dwelling.

The second change, Amendment VC125 gazetted on 11 June 2015, amended the definition in all planning schemes of a wind farm so that it includes the use of land to transmit or distribute the electricity generated, specifically to connect the wind energy facility to the electricity network. This enables a more holistic consideration of wind farm projects by streamlining the assessment and approval process.

This Labor government's approach to wind farms builds on the previous Labor government, in that I will have responsibility for deciding all new wind farms (the threshold for Ministerial approval was previously large projects-30MW or greater), enabling me to focus on a more consistent process of consultation and engagement with the community and local government across all wind farm projects.

In addition, obtaining a landowners consent to site a turbine within one kilometre of a dwelling provides further rigour when engaging with individuals and the community on the merits of a wind farm proposal.

Western Highway

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Dunn

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads advises me that the planning for the Western Highway duplication was done in three stages. The section to which the Member for Eastern Metropolitan refers is Section 2, between Beaufort and Ararat, and was planned under the former Victorian Government as part of a comprehensive Environment Effects Statement (EES) process.

The route determined through the EES involved extensive public consultation and the development of several alignment options. During the planning and preliminary design phase, all practical and feasible alternatives, without compromising road safety, were considered, with the aim of preserving trees and minimising overall impact where possible. VicRoads publicly exhibited a preferred and alternative option in 2012.

Alignment options were presented to an independent Inquiry Panel, along with all submissions received from the public. Based on the evidence provided and submissions to the Panel, which included submissions by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the Panel recommended that the then Minister for Planning, approve the current alignment option, which the Panel considered to be of lesser environmental impact.

VicRoads accepted this recommendation, and the former Minister for Planning approved the alignment, which has subsequently been gazetted in the Pyrenees and Ararat Planning Schemes.

VicRoads has created an Environmental Consultation Group, which I understand is meeting to consider various environmental issues that are encountered on a project of this size. This group has been formed to consult with concerned community groups and individuals and look for opportunities to continue to minimise impacts within the approved construction footprint and enhance the environmental outcomes of the project.

Both VicRoads and I understand the concerns of the community. VicRoads is committed to working with the community and its contractors to minimise the environmental impacts of the project. To date, VicRoads has been able to minimise the construction footprint on current contracts, and has minimised the environmental impact of the design for the next section east of Ararat. VicRoads will be calling for Expressions of Interest for this section in the next two months.

Some of the environmental initiatives that VicRoads will be implementing include:

- Providing additional habitat and restoring native vegetation on current contract landscaping works;
- Retaining a number of trees that were originally earmarked for removal for safety reasons, by installing additional wire rope safety barrier to protect motorists from the trees;
- Purchase of additional private land adjacent to Peacocks Road to realign the road, which has resulted in 40 large old trees that were marked for removal being saved;
- Providing nesting boxes and wildlife crossings at appropriate locations; and
- Reviewing median widths to consider site specific opportunities to protect vegetation.

VicRoads also advises me that it has used an independent expert to assess other alignment options proposed by community members. These proposals have been found to have higher environmental impacts than the approved alignment.

The environmental impacts considered as part of the approval process were estimates, which were required to be confirmed once the actual construction footprint was defined.

VicRoads further advises me that it has purchased all of the environmental offsets required under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, and is in the process of finalising the state offset requirements under Victoria's Native Vegetation Framework. The offset amounts are calculated based on the actual losses rather than the earlier estimates, to ensure that they are at the appropriate level. VicRoads also advises me that in addition to these legislative requirements, VicRoads is planting approximately 34 000 trees as part of the works currently underway.

Most of the tree removal works have been completed within the current sections underway. VicRoads advises me that the next section between Buangor and Ararat will require a smaller number of tree removal than originally planned, as a result of the works undertaken to minimise the footprint.

VicRoads will continue to keep the community informed of the project's progress, and where possible, will minimise the environmental impact.

Sunshine Hospital perinatal program

Raised with: Minister for Mental Health

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government acknowledges the positive impact of good mental health in the perinatal period on women, their baby and their families. The Western Health Perinatal Emotional Health Program Trial was funded on a one-off basis with non-recurrent funding associated with the National Perinatal Depression Initiative. The Abbott Commonwealth Government has ceased support to this Initiative. The Andrews Labor Government remains committed to funding its share of the Agreement.

The 10 Year Mental Health Plan, currently under development, provides an opportunity to explore how to support mothers during the perinatal period so that they and their babies may experience the best possible mental health. This will build on the evidence provided through the outcomes of the National Perinatal Depression Initiative and the evaluation of the Western Health Perinatal Emotional Health Program Trial.

City of Casey police resources

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

I appreciate your concerns regarding police resources in City of Casey. The government recognises that a well resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing, is critical to keeping communities safe.

The government understands the impact crime has on local businesses and residents, and believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to prevent crime. One of the most important approaches to keeping our communities safe is to provide young people with opportunities to encourage them to make positive choices for their future, through education, training, jobs and appropriate support, instead of being caught in a cycle of crime and incarceration.

This is why, in the 2015-16 State Budget the government provided \$148.6 million to recruit, train and deploy 400 custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria. The custody officers may be progressively deployed to other locations over time, depending on resourcing needs and allocation of resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong.

The roll out of custody officers will begin this year, with 400 more police to be progressively released to focus on tackling crime and keeping the community safe. Custody officers will initially work at the following police stations: Sunshine, Dandenong, Heidelberg, Ballarat, Geelong and Broadmeadows.

The residents of Casey, including Endeavour Hills, receive a 24-hour police service. I am assured by the Acting Chief Commissioner that the level of policing is continuously monitored by the respective command officers, with a view to maintaining optimum policing effectiveness.

If any members of the community have immediate concerns for their safety, or need to report a crime in progress, they need to continue to report these matters to Victoria Police through the emergency number '000'. Calls to '000' are recorded and responded to by the closest appropriate police personnel.

The government is working with the Acting Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community, including family violence and the use of Ice and other illicit drugs. These issues remain a key focus for Victoria Police.

Actions to address these key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-2016 State Budget with the government investing \$81.3 million, including \$40 million for the Royal Commission into Family Violence and \$4 million to support stakeholder engagement. The Royal Commission will explore solutions for preventing and identifying strategies to strengthen Victoria's response to family violence. The Royal Commission's work began in February 2015 to investigate the entire support system from the ground up, and to report by early 2016.

On 5 March 2015, the government released the Ice Action Plan which was developed on the advice of the Premier's Ice Action Taskforce. The government's new investment of \$45.5 million, also outlined in the 2015-2016 State Budget, focuses on priority initiatives to reduce the supply, demand and harm of a drug that is ruining lives.

Under the plan, the government will spend \$18 million over four years to expand drug and rehabilitation services. A new Ice Help Line will be set up to support families, service providers and other community members as part of a \$4.7 million investment in broader community support services.

The government is also investing \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 100 000 roadside random drug tests per year for the next two years, taking more alcohol and drug affected people off our roads.

The State Budget also announced the government's investment of \$4.5 million to help police track down and close clandestine drug labs more quickly by hiring additional forensic scientists for the Forensic Drug Branch.

While the government determines the level of funding required to resource Victoria Police, the Acting Chief Commissioner of Police is responsible for determining how such resources are allocated, based on assessed operational need.

Northern Victoria Region schools

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Symes

Raised on: 11 June 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.

The Government is also committed to implementing our plan for Victoria to be the education state.

Investment in education and school infrastructure is a priority for the Victorian Government and we are committed to spending \$530 million on school facilities during the period 2015-2018.

I am pleased to hear of your advocacy on behalf of schools in your electorate to ensure that students in Northern Victoria have the best facilities, resources and teachers to maximise their potential.

Thank you for your invitation to visit the electorate, in particular Wangaratta High School, Wangaratta District Specialist School, Yarrawonga College P-12, Cobram Secondary College and Benalla P-12 College which is a school of great significance to you.

I would welcome the opportunity to see first-hand the dedication of these school communities and to learn more about the work they are doing. A number of visits to schools across the state are being scheduled and I would be pleased to include visits to these schools in that schedule.

Gippsland tourism

Raised with: Minister for Tourism and Major Events

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government recognises the importance of tourism and events for regional Victoria. Since my appointment as Minister for Tourism and Major Events, I have had the opportunity to visit regional Victoria, including Gippsland, and meet with key representatives to gain insight into issues affecting tourism across the State.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting tourism and events in the Gippsland region and provides support to Destination Gippsland, the region's recognised Regional Tourism Board, as part of the \$9 million regional Tourism Partnership Program (2013-16) for Regional Tourism Boards across the State.

The region's many tourism experiences and attractions are regularly featured in a range of Tourism Victoria's marketing programs and campaigns including public relations, social media and international marketing. The region was featured as part of the Our Patch campaign in partnership with Fairfax and the region will continue to be promoted in any future regional tourism marketing activity.

Events in the region, including the Walhalla Vinter Ljusfest, have received funding through programs such as the Tourism Victoria's Events Program and Tourism Victoria's Country Victoria Events Program.

The region has also benefited from Sport and Recreation Victoria's community facility funding programs, with 58 sporting facility funding projects funded in the region since 2013.

The Victorian Government will continue to promote and support tourism, events and sporting facilities in Gippsland and I look forward to working with the region in the future.

Multicultural affairs grants

Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

The Multicultural Media Grants Program (the Program) has been established to assist multicultural media organisations to upgrade their equipment to extend their reach and/or enhance the quality of their services, coverage or capacity.

Grants will be awarded through a competitive process. Applications will be assessed against the Program's funding guidelines, including its objectives and eligibility criteria.

Grant applications will be assessed and determined by an independent panel comprising representatives from the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and an expert from the multicultural media sector. Applications are then subject to ratification by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

I invite you to encourage eligible multicultural media organisations to consider applying for these grants.

Refugees and asylum seekers**Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs****Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins****Raised on: 23 June 2015****REPLY:**

The Victorian Government is committed to improving support services and service access for Victorians from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, including for refugees and asylum seekers.

The Victorian Auditor-General's performance audit on Access to Services for Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers (VAGO Report) was tabled on 29 May 2014. The VAGO Report praised the Settlement Coordination Unit (SCU) within the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC) for its strategic leadership in coordinating an integrated approach across government and delivering programs to support refugees and asylum seekers. In recognition of the important role of this unit, including in advocating with the Commonwealth, who has primary responsibility for immigration and settlement, the Victorian Government provided ongoing funding to the SCU. This addresses an explicit concern from the VAGO Report, which noted that, "Given the critical functions that the SCU fulfils, the uncertainty of funding remains an issue."

Furthermore, in line with the audit's recommendations, in July 2014 the interdepartmental Multicultural Leadership and Coordination Group (MLCG) endorsed new terms of reference with a refined focus on cultural diversity planning and whole of government coordination. This renewed focus also supported the Victorian Government's endorsement in March 2015 of the National Settlement Framework, which sets out the Commonwealth Government's obligations to engage with States, Territories and local government in the planning and delivery of settlement and support services for new arrivals, including refugees and asylum seekers. Under this Framework, the Victorian Government will soon be establishing a Victorian Settlement Planning Outcomes Committee to provide a single structure for action orientated settlement planning at the State level.

Teacher travel policy**Raised with: Minister for Education****Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert****Raised on: 23 June 2015****REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education and Training circular issued on 4 June 2015 to all principals, school councils and school business managers stated that all international and interstate travel by principals or any other school-based staff must be approved by the Secretary of the Department, except where staff are accompanying students on excursions or trips, until a review of the International and Domestic Policy and Guidelines for school-based staff has been completed.

The circular also stated that approval will only be granted in exceptional circumstances which meet one or more of three exemption criteria, namely that: the travel will contribute a direct economic benefit to Victoria; the travel is to represent the Minister or the Secretary in Commonwealth or State forums; or there would be a severe impact on Victoria's reputation with a significant partner if the travel is not undertaken.

I acknowledge that there will be feelings of disappointment, and resentment, that the actions of a very small minority have created the need to implement a temporary approval process through exemption for all school-based staff, including principals, seeking to undertake international or interstate travel.

As a general principle, it is important to ensure that the purposes for which international and interstate travel is undertaken by all staff are clear and that the purposes of such travel meet community expectations around the intended benefit of such travel.

The Department remains committed to supporting schools with the professional development of school-based staff.

The review of the International and Domestic Travel Policy and Guidelines, which is being conducted as a Departmental priority, will not detract from this commitment.

Homesafe

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government committed to deliver the 12 month Homesafe trial from 31 December 2015, and will deliver this commitment. This will include a

2.00 am shuttle service to Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Traralgon from Southern Cross Station.

Swinburne University of Technology former Lilydale campus

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Thank you for your interest and ongoing support of VET and TAFE in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

The RFP is about how the Lilydale site will be a secure future educational and training resource for the people of the Yarra Ranges.

Our Government has made a commitment to re-open the site for the delivery of high quality TAFE and higher education services to enhance future employment and career opportunities for our kids and support the needs of local businesses.

As you will be aware, our Government has allocated \$10 million from the \$350 million of additional funding provided for TAFEs in the first Education State Budget to re-open the Lilydale campus, of which \$1 million will go to assist Melba Support Service in providing a permanent home on the site.

In addition, there is funding for the inclusion of a Tech School on the site, part of our \$125 million Tech School initiative to establish 10 new learning centres around Victoria—including the Yarra Ranges—which will introduce students to the TAFE and higher education environment while they're still at school, providing them with a window into the future world of work, and linking a broad range of pathways in science, mathematics, technology and social sciences to integrated applied learning.

The Request for Proposal process is a rigorous one, with the respondents required to provide a strong education delivery proposal together with a viable, sustainable business case to support their interest in the purchase of the Lilydale Campus and justify receipt of the committed funding.

The new owner will be required to enter into a Funding and Service Delivery Agreement with my Department which will set out all the necessary obligations and responsibilities that must be met in order to receive the committed funding.

A commercial settlement period will follow the sale of the site and there is expected to be a lead time for the new owner to make any necessary physical changes to the facilities and to ensure staff and programs are in place before the doors can be officially opened for business in the first half of 2016.

O'Herns Road, Epping

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mr Ondarchie

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government has committed \$40.7 million toward a new 'diamond' interchange connecting O'Herns Road to the Hume Freeway in Epping, the duplication of a 1.4km section of O'Herns Road, east of the interchange, and construction of auxiliary lanes along the Hume Freeway, between O'Herns Road and Cooper Street.

A business case is being developed and is expected to be completed shortly. The Andrews Labour Government would welcome a funding commitment by the Federal Government for this much needed project after four years of neglect by the former coalition government.

Western Metropolitan Region schools

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Western Metropolitan electorate will benefit from the completion of a secondary school in Tarnait, over 50 schools will benefit from breakfast clubs and a large injection of additional funding into school budgets, flowing through reforms to equity funding, will benefit disadvantaged students and schools throughout Victoria, including the Western Metropolitan electorate. Schools will receive their 2016 indicative school budgets, including this additional funding, in September.

Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund

Raised with: Minister for Industry

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for your Adjournment Question dated 23 June 2015 regarding the Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund (GRIIF).

The Victorian Government is committed to investing in jobs growth and economic regeneration in the Geelong region. It is not the Victorian Government that has decided to walk away from the GRIIF partnership.

The Victorian Government engaged the Federal Government on the future of GRIIF. Unfortunately, the Federal Government's position was inconsistent and a positive outcome was not reached.

Initially, the Federal Government refused to even accept Victoria's additional \$7.5 million that we have committed to GRIIF or to review the guidelines. Instead, they sought to close the Fund once existing funding was allocated.

Subsequently, they somewhat changed their minds and indicated they would be willing to accept Victoria's additional \$7.5 million and consider changes to the guidelines. However, they still refused to put any additional funding into GRIIF.

That is not the approach the Victorian Government is taking. The Victorian Government has decided to go it alone and assume administrative responsibility for the Fund once existing funding has been fully allocated.

We will invest out additional \$7.5 million into GRIIF as well as revising the guidelines so that the Fund helps local workers as much as possible.

Greater Shepparton Work and Learning Centre

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government believes it has a central role in creating jobs, protecting jobs and helping people to connect to job opportunities.

Through the 2015-16 State Budget we are providing \$6.6 million over four years to fund the Work and Learning Centre initiative, to work with 2800 vulnerable job seekers in Geelong, Moe, Shepparton, Ballarat and Carlton and deliver 1465 employment outcomes over this period.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence will continue to manage the work and learning centre initiative in partnership with local providers such as the Salvation Army at Shepparton.

I was appalled to hear that the Federal Coalition Government has cut funding for a pilot hospitality training program and social enterprise, run by Salvo Care, a subsidiary of the Salvation Army, which provided weekly breakfast and lunches to local people at Mooroopna.

While the Victorian Labor Government will continue to support the Shepparton community through the Work and Learning Centre initiative, I will be calling on the Federal Coalition Government to reinstate the funding that it has axed for the hospitality and social enterprise program at Mooroopna.

Crime prevention

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

Dob in a Dealer is a rolling campaign being delivered across 17 regional centres until December 2015, calling the community to action to provide intelligence on those manufacturing and dealing in ice and other illicit drugs.

This campaign has seen a significant increase in reporting in target areas. The intelligence from these reports has helped Victoria Police make 10 arrests so far. The Government looks forward to receiving Crime Stoppers' final report in December on the outcomes achieved.

Meanwhile, the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice is 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 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.

Bhangra Down Under

Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

The 2014 Victorian Auditor General's report on *Access to Services for Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers* (VAGO Report) found there was overlap and ambiguity between the roles and responsibilities of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC).

As part of its commitment to a thriving, diverse and harmonious Victoria, the Victorian Government recently announced the realignment of functions within the Multicultural Affairs portfolio to strengthen the role of the VMC and ensure more efficient multicultural funding. The realignment implements key recommendations of the VAGO Report.

As part of the realignment, multicultural communities are set to benefit from a clearer, simpler grants process to be administered by OMAC. Funding certainty for multicultural grant programs has also been provided, with ongoing funding secured through the recent 2015-16 State Budget for: Capacity Building and Participation; Multicultural Community Infrastructure and Cultural Precincts; Promoting Harmony and Social Cohesion; and Multicultural Festivals and Events.

The Government will continue to fund multicultural festivals and events that bring Victorians of all backgrounds together and celebrate our cultural diversity.

I am advised that there is no record that Bhangra Down Under applied to the VMC or OMAC for funding to support its 2015 festival. I encourage the organisation to contact OMAC to discuss this further.

Chisholm Institute

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

I am pleased to hear that Mr Mulino shares my enthusiasm for rebuilding and growing the TAFE sector. The TAFE Back to Work Fund, along with the Government's \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund, are providing opportunities for TAFEs like Chisholm Institute to deliver more training for young people to get the right skills to get a job.

Victoria's economy is facing a number of key challenges, including a high youth unemployment crisis. Victoria has the highest rate of youth unemployment of all mainland states, with regional areas hardest hit.

This is why the Government established the \$50 million TAFE Back to Work Fund, to support the Victorian Government's Back to Work Plan to grow jobs and get people back to work, while improving the financial viability of TAFE Institutes and supporting the skills needs of local communities.

Melbourne's south east is very well serviced by Chisholm Institute, the National Training Provider of the Year in 2014. That's why on 29 June 2015, I was delighted to announce that Chisholm Institute will receive \$2.9 million from the TAFE Back to Work Fund to deliver four initiatives:

- Manufacturing-Competitive systems and sales initiative
- Contemporary food and cleaning in health initiative
- Vinyl design and application initiative
- Pre-fabricated construction initiative

Chisholm institute will also share in a further \$1.4 million with Holmesglen Institute to deliver the Jobs for unemployed young people in south east Melbourne initiative.

These great initiatives are expected to create around 730 job placements.

Kindergartens

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Access between kindergartens and schools is important and assists in the transition of children from kindergarten to school.

As the former Children's Minister should be aware, the National Quality Framework has streamlined requirements for children who regularly visit a school site.

Where a kindergarten operating under the National Quality Framework is located on a school site, the children from the kindergarten may visit any area in the school without requiring authorisation from a parent provided they are in the company of an educator from the kindergarten.

Where a kindergarten operating under the National Quality Framework is not co-located with a school, the kindergarten is required to seek authorisation for regular visits to the school from parents once in a 12 month period.

My Department is also engaged in a range of initiatives to further support and strengthen arrangements between early childhood education and care services and schools.

This includes strengthening the assessment criteria for the Children's Facilities Capital Program to include more explicit support for new and upgraded early learning facilities that are co-located with schools. The criteria also gives credit to applications that can demonstrate strong operational links between early learning services and schools, recognising that these relationships can be developed to support a learning continuum, even where facilities are not integrated or directly adjacent.

Gippsland health services

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has committed to conduct a comprehensive study to identify the health care needs of the growing population of Baw Baw area.

The process to commence this study is underway with West Gippsland Healthcare Group Board and Executive along with senior staff at Latrobe Regional Hospital and Monash Health consulted to date.

The evaluation of the submissions is currently underway and has again involved representatives of the three health services. The expected completion date for this project is early 2016.

Neerim District Soldiers Memorial Hospital is currently subcontracted by West Gippsland Healthcare Group for the Maintenance Care program and a small amount of elective ophthalmology surgery. The health service also has a sub-contract arrangement with Latrobe Regional Hospital to undertake elective ophthalmology surgery. These arrangements are an excellent example of local health services working in partnership to meet community need.

Neerim District Soldiers Memorial Hospital is one of a number of stakeholders who will be consulted as part of the development of the West Gippsland–Baw Baw Strategic Health Services Plan. This process will provide an opportunity for Neerim District Soldiers Memorial Hospital to identify future partnerships and collaboration opportunities to support the communities in the Baw Baw area.

I look forward to visiting the Gippsland region again, and seeing first-hand the valuable work being undertaken by Victorian health services.

Women's Information and Referral Exchange

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

The Women's Information and Referral Exchange Inc. (WIRE) provides a valuable service to women across Victoria. They are the sole provider of a free generalist information service run by women for women across the state.

WIRE assists women by providing information and referral on a wide range of issues including family violence, family relationships, housing, employment pathways, health and education. WIRE sees around 5000 women face to face each year and deals with an additional 7000 phone calls annually.

I am pleased to advise that funding to WIRE has been extended for a further three years. Formal advice about funding arrangements and Service Agreement terms and conditions was sent to WIRE on 25 June 2015. WIRE has been allocated \$677 343 for the financial year 2015-16.

Melbourne Wholesale Fruit Vegetable and Flower Market

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

Ms Melina Bath MP has raised three issues in relation to the operations of the new wholesale market at Epping.

I will address each of these in turn.

The first relates to undercover parking and I wish to advise that the parking bays at Epping have been designed to meet Occupational Health and Safety requirements and provide for a much more efficient logistics use. The area for undercover parking at Epping is almost double the area for undercover parking at West Melbourne. Each individual parking bay at Epping is twice the size of the bay at West Melbourne. In addition, each reversed bay at Epping carries with it dedicated loading/unloading space on each side of the bay that does not exist in West Melbourne.

Country retailers at West Melbourne whose place of business is more than 140 kilometres from Epping have been classified as "Regional Retailers" in the Epping market. Not all retailers have obtained undercover parking at Epping and a wait list is being developed. This should be seen in the context of the requests for parking from retailers where some retailers appear to have sought parking bays beyond their business requirements. The Melbourne Market Authority (MMA) expects that over the next six months, parking demand will settle and as a result there will be a redistribution of parking bays. At this time, an assessment can then be made if the number of undercover bays need to be increased.

Second, concerning overnight truck parking, the MMA has advised that those businesses entering the market early to drop off produce will be permitted to rest at the location of their trucks. They will also be permitted to drop off empty bins and pallets at this time.

Third, regarding early access, "Regional Retailers" will be permitted to access the market from midnight to drop off produce and pick up pre-orders delivered to their bays prior to the designated trade commencement time. "Regional Retailers" may only enter the trading floor from the designated trade commencement time. The trade commencement time was determined by the MMA following consultation with market businesses. I thank the

Retailers Advisory Committee for their input into the decision by the MMA to provide early access to “Regional Retailers”.

Given the scale of the new market at Epping and the complexities involving more than 1200 direct market businesses, it is expected that it will take some months for the market to settle and over this time, it is expected that the MMA will make adjustments to the operating arrangements.

Police numbers

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O’Donohue

Raised on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

There are over 300 police stations currently in operation across Victoria. I assure you that residents of Victoria will continue to receive a 24-hour police response from frontline officers in all areas of State.

If any person requires urgent police assistance, they should contact Victoria Police on the emergency number ‘000’. Calls made to ‘000’ are processed and responded to by the closest appropriate police personnel.

A well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing, is critical to keeping communities safe.

In May 2010, Labor committed funding for an additional 1966 police to the front line.

The Andrews Labor Government’s first budget for 2015-16 delivered a record

\$2.5 billion to Victoria Police to continue their important work in keeping our community safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to redeploy 400 police to our communities where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 400 custody officers to supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria.

The custody officers may also be deployed to other locations over time, depending on the resourcing needs and allocation of those resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong. Custody officers will initially work at six police stations including Sunshine, Dandenong, Heidelberg, Ballarat, Geelong and Broadmeadows.

This is in contrast to the first Baillieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

Victoria Police has introduced an operational safety policy to enhance the safety and well being of all employees. The safety policy was developed in consultation with police officers and The Police Association and focuses on operational safety equipment, single officer activities and the security of marked police vehicles.

Police are encouraged to conduct risk assessments before and throughout their duties and apply a consistent and common sense approach when responding to operational duties and responsibilities.

Victoria Police advises that there will be no reduction in patrols or police response and Executive Command will continue to evaluate the impact of these measures.

Under Victorian law, I cannot direct the Chief Commissioner about the allocation or deployment of police officers to or at particular locations in accordance with section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013. This is an operational matter for the Chief Commissioner of Police.

The government works closely with the Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community, including family violence and the use of ice and other illicit drugs. In supporting rural and regional communities across Victoria, the government is providing \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new secure, encrypted digital radio network.

The upgrade will enable police working in regional areas to communicate more securely, preventing members of the public listening in on police operations.

Actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-16 State Budget, with the government investing \$81.3 million to boost family violence support services and protect victims, including \$40 million for the Royal Commission into Family Violence and \$4 million to support stakeholder engagement.

On 5 March 2015, the Andrews Government released the Ice Action Plan, which was developed on the advice of the Premier's Ice Action Taskforce. The government's new investment of \$45.5 million, also outlined in the 2015-16 State Budget, focuses on priority initiatives to reduce the supply, demand and harm of a drug that is ruining lives.

Under the plan, the government will spend \$18 million over four years to expand drug and rehabilitation services especially in rural Victoria, helping to address the disproportionate impact that ice is having on rural and regional communities. A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website — ice.vic.gov.au have already been set up to support families, service providers and other community members as part of a \$4.7 million investment in broader community support services.

The government has also recently announced a total of \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 100 000 roadside random drug testing per year for the next two years, taking more alcohol and drug affected people off our roads.

I am assured by the Chief Commissioner of Police that the allocation of police resources across Victoria is continuously monitored by respective command officers, with a view to maintaining an optimum law enforcement response.

The government understands the impact crime has on local communities and believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to preventing crime. One of the most important approaches to keeping our communities safe is to provide young people with opportunities to encourage them to make positive choices for their future, through education, training, jobs and appropriate support, instead of being caught in a cycle of crime and incarceration.

Jumps racing

Raised with: Minister for Racing

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

Decisions about the programming of thoroughbred racing, including jumps racing, are a matter for Racing Victoria.

Any application by the racing industry for funding support, including funding for jumps racing, will be considered in the context of the program guidelines for the Victorian Racing Industry Fund.

Mooroopna Football Netball Club

Raised with: Minister for Sport

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

Providing high-quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government. A range of commitments were made during the election campaign directed at achieving this objective. Following the announcement of the 2015-16 State Budget, the government has confirmed a \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund that will facilitate the upgrading of community sports facilities over the next four years.

On 17 April 2015, I approved the allocation of \$80 000 to Greater Shepparton City Council for the Mooroopna Football Netball Club's lighting application from the Country Football and Netball Program.

Gippsland public transport

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving public transport services throughout Victoria, and we are currently working to prepare a Regional Network Development Plan (RNDP). The RNDP will assess how regional public transport services should evolve to meet the needs of passengers in the short, medium and long term.

Community consultation will play an integral role in the development of the RNDP, and in the next months, local communities, councils and passengers are being invited to take part.

To that end, I am pleased to advise that Public Transport Victoria (PTV) held four well attended Community workshops, and one Stakeholder workshop in the towns of Warragul, Sale and Bairnsdale between 22 June and 26 June. PTV will return to Gippsland in mid-July to conduct similar workshops in Traralgon and Wonthaggi. An online survey is also now open and I urge your constituents to participate. I can assure the people of Gippsland that, like every Victorian who participates in the regional NDP process, their views will be treated with the utmost respect in the development of the regional NDP.

I encourage all residents of Gippsland to participate and provide further feedback. Further information is available on the PTV website <www.ptv.vic.gov.au>.

Kew ambulance station

Raised with: Minister for Ambulance Services

Raised by: Mr Dalidakis

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

I am informed that:

I thank the Member for alerting me to his concerns in relation to the condition of Kew Ambulance Station.

- Funding of \$20 million was provided in the 2015 State budget to fulfil the Andrews Government 2014 election commitment to upgrade ambulance stations across Victoria.
- The Department of Health and Human Services is working with Ambulance Victoria to identify high priority ambulance stations to be redeveloped within this funding.
- I look forward to considering their recommendations and the program for implementation.

Darebin City Council

Raised with: Special Minister of State

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

On 25 June 2015, the Minister for Local Government tabled the report of the Municipal Monitor, Mr Peter Lewinsky, on governance issues at Darebin City Council.

The report raised ongoing governance issues at Darebin City Council.

On 25 June 2015, I appointed Mr Bill Mountford and Mr Mark Madden as Monitors to work with the Council to assist in addressing these concerns, for a maximum of 12 weeks on a part-time basis.

Recommendations of potential Monitors were made by Local Government Victoria to the Minister for Local Government based on the prior expertise of candidates.

The Minister for Local Government then nominated the potential Monitors and Local Government Victoria undertook the appropriate independent probity checks.

Ararat and Stawell police stations

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr Bourman

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

I can assure you that the government is committed to a well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing.

I recently visited Ararat Police Station on 29 May 2015 and was impressed by the dedication and commitment of the local police.

The government is working with the Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community, including family violence and the use of Ice and other illicit drugs. These issues remain a key focus for Victoria Police.

Victoria Police advises that the Ararat and Stawell communities receive a 24-hour police response under the current service delivery model involving general duties police officers, the Highway Patrol Unit, the Criminal Investigation Unit, the Sex Offence and Child Abuse Investigation Team and the Family Violence Team.

Ararat Police Station's general duties team is comprised of 30 police officers including a Senior Sergeant, and Stawell Police Station has 20 police officers including a Senior Sergeant. Between the two locations, there are five

vacancies at various stages of the recruitment process. I am advised there is currently a range of leave being taken by local officers.

Both Ararat and Stawell Police Stations are classified as having holding facilities for short-term custody, associated with offender processing. Where custody relates to remand, sentencing or mental health, prisoners are transferred to an appropriate detention facility, usually Horsham or Ballarat.

While the government determines the level of funding required to resource Victoria Police, the Chief Commissioner is responsible for determining how such resources are allocated, based on assessed operational need.

The government will continue to consult with Victoria Police in relation to overall police resources across Victoria.

Community correction orders

Raised with: Attorney-General

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

1. On 22 December 2014, the Court of Appeal confirmed that the Community Correction Order (CCO) is capable of being highly punitive.
2. The guideline judgement affirms that a CCO can be an appropriate sentencing option even in the case of serious offending. In this context, the Court accepted the submission of the former Attorney-General, the Hon. Robert Clark MP that a CCO 'is intended to be available in serious cases where an offender may be at risk of receiving an immediate custodial sentence'.
3. The former Attorney-General, the Hon. Robert Clark MP further submitted that a very lengthy CCO (perhaps up to 20 years in the case of manslaughter) might be appropriate in 'very exceptional circumstances' and that the CCO has 'the robustness and flexibility to be imposed in a wide variety of circumstances'.
4. Some offenders who would have previously received a suspended sentence are now going to prison, and some are receiving a CCO. That is exactly as was intended by the former government, and exactly as the CCO was designed.
5. The previous Government amended the Sentencing Act 1991 ('the Act') in September 2014 via the Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Workers) Act 2014 to clarify the use of CCOs in more serious cases. The amendments provided that a CCO may be an appropriate sentence where, prior to the abolition of suspended sentences, the court may have imposed a sentence of imprisonment and then suspended that sentence. The Act was also amended to increase the term of imprisonment that could be imposed alongside a CCO from three months to two years.
6. The government will continue to monitor the use of CCOs, as will the Sentencing Advisory Council, to ensure they are working effectively. In particular, we will monitor the extent to which they are operating as a substitute for suspended sentences.

Port Melbourne Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education and Training uses relocatable classrooms to address school enrolment fluctuations, provide temporary accommodation where damage has occurred, and house students during the construction and refurbishment of permanent facilities. The Department allocates double-storey relocatable buildings according to enrolment need and site size.

Due to the chronic under investment in school infrastructure under the previous government, there has been a 500 per cent increase in the requirements for relocatables.

The Department annually assesses each school's current and future enrolment as well as its infrastructure entitlements according to facility schedules. Relocatable buildings are transferred throughout the year to ensure that schools have sufficient capacity to meet their enrolment needs.

The Andrews Labor Government has committed to delivering both South Melbourne Park Primary School and Ferrars Street Primary School in this term of government which will ease enrolment pressure at Port Melbourne Primary School.

Centre–Mackie roads, Bentleigh East

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads is currently arranging a site meeting at the intersection of Centre Road and Mackie Road in East Bentleigh with Victoria Police and representatives from the Glen Eira City Council, which is responsible for traffic management on Mackie Road. Your constituents' concerns regarding the operation and safety of the intersection, including the movement of buses and trucks, will be assessed and consideration will be given to measures to improve road safety.

The meeting is expected to take place by the end of July 2015 and I will notify you of the outcome, in due course.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 5 August 2015

Shepparton Art Museum

Raised with: Minister for Creative Industries

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Government has a strong focus on regional Victoria. A prime example is the recent initiative 'Building Cultural Impact in Regional Victoria', to which the Government committed \$20 million.

Regional infrastructure projects are funded, managed and considered by Regional Development Victoria (RDV), which is the lead Victorian Government agency on the proposed development of the Shepparton Art Museum (SAM).

I recently met with the Minister for Regional Development and Ms Suzanna Sheed MP, Member for Shepparton, to discuss this matter. A proposal for the development of a new standalone SAM was subsequently endorsed by Greater Shepparton City Council (GSCC).

GSCC anticipates submitting an application to the Federal Government's 'National Stronger Regions Fund' in the July 2016 funding round. If successful, I anticipate that GSCC would proceed with an application to RDV. As with any proposal considered by RDV, the success of the Shepparton proposal would be dependent upon GSCC submitting a robust business case that strongly argues the economic and social benefits to the region.

Funeral services

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

I refer to the matter raised in the Legislative Council on 24 June 2015 by the Hon Damian Drum, Member for Northern Victorian, seeking clarification on whether cemeteries are about to enter the funeral market.

The Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (the trust) is a Class A cemetery trust, responsible for the management of eight cemeteries including Bunurong Memorial Park.

I am aware that concerns have been raised by some in the community regarding SMCT's most recent development at Bunurong Memorial Park and proposed services to be provided.

In light of these concerns, I have requested the Department of Health and Human Services investigate this matter further and provide me with advice on the nature of SMCT's plans.

I am happy to provide the member with further advice on this matter in due course.

VicForests

Raised with: Treasurer

Raised by: Ms Dunn

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

VicForests' Timber Release Plan lists planned harvesting and regeneration activities for a period of up to five years and is updated annually. VicForests consults broadly when preparing or updating TRPs and, in general, there is a period of four weeks for public submissions regarding TRPs.

Although the Government does not have a formal role in approving the VicForests' TRP, there are a number of regulatory measures with which VicForests must comply to protect forest values.

For example, all timber harvesting in Victoria is subject to the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014, developed and enforced by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). The code plays a key role in making sure timber harvesting is compatible with the conservation of forest values. The code provides clear direction to VicForests to ensure that it plans for and conducts harvesting operations in an environmentally sound way.

At a strategic level, the Andrews Labor Government is supporting the establishment of a taskforce to reach common ground on future issues facing the timber industry, job protection, economic activity, and the protection of our unique native flora and fauna. As outlined in Labor's Our Environment, Our Future election policy, our Government strongly supports a consensus approach to these issues.

VicForests has amended the wording on their website to provide more clarity to members of the community about the proposed changes to VicForests' Timber Release Plan and details are available at www.vicforests.com.au/proposedtrp.

Mobile Black Spot program

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Ms Symes

Raised on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for raising the \$21 million Victorian Mobile Project. As you know, the Victorian Government partnered with Telstra in April 2015 to submit a joint bid for the Commonwealth's Mobile Black Spot Programme. The Government has since secured Commonwealth funding for the construction of 109 new mobile towers across regional Victoria and will provide \$21 million of State funding towards these towers. Additionally, Vodafone is constructing a tower in regional Victoria through the Commonwealth's programme without a State funding contribution. This brings the number of new mobile towers in regional Victoria to 110, and the total project cost to \$86 million.

The new mobile towers will provide mobile voice and data access to approximately 12 000 households and businesses in the implementation areas, and generate up to \$120 million per annum in productivity benefits for regional Victoria.

Local government has been consulted through the project development phase. A number of local governments have responded to both the Commonwealth Government's program discussion paper in early 2014 and to the Victorian Government's requests for information on mobile black spots within local government areas. The project currently includes up to \$450 000 of local government funding. In conjunction with the Emergency Management

Commissioner, the Government's site selection process has also taken into account mobile black spots nominated as priorities by local governments to ensure these local government areas would not be disadvantaged through the determination process.

The Victorian Government is currently finalising the funding agreement with Telstra and the Commonwealth Government with a view to commence construction by the end of 2015. Local governments will be contacted as part of the process ensuring they are well advised of the project and how they can assist in the planning and detailed design phases.

I look forward to providing you with further updates on the delivery of this important infrastructure project.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 6 August 2015

Health funding

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

Labor's budget initiative 'Meeting Hospital Services Demand' will enable health services to respond to growing patient demand across Victoria.

It is anticipated that this injection of funds will increase the Victorian acute public hospital operating capacity e.g. increase the number of beds, places to accommodate same day patients and operating theatre capacity. This means that more patients can be treated sooner, reducing the elective surgery waiting list and reducing waiting times in emergency departments.

Funding of \$970 million will be allocated over a four-year period. Your electorate in the Western Victoria Region holds 27 facilities that will receive additional funding. The increase to funding for health services is as follows:

	Additional funding from 2014-15 (\$'000)
Ballarat Health Services	9423
Wimmera Health Care Group	2023
Djerriwarrh Health Services	2319
East Grampians Health Service	619
Stawell Regional Health	285
Beaufort & Skipton Health Service	164
Dunmunkle Health Services	135
East Wimmera Health Service	1377
Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital	139
Hepburn Health Service	382
Rural Northwest Health	280
West Wimmera Health Service	577
Barwon Health	20 240
South West Healthcare	5484
Western District Health Service	1975
Colac Area Health	645
Portland District Health	1173
Casterton Memorial Hospital	200
Hesse Rural Health Service	143
Heywood Rural Health	93
Lorne Community Hospital	80
Moyne Health Services	175

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

2424

COUNCIL

Thursday, 6 August 2015

	Additional funding from 2014-15 (\$'000)
Terang And Mortlake Health Service	198
Otway Health	106
Timboon And District Healthcare Service	127
Maryborough District Health Service	536
Inglewood And Districts Health Service	96
Western Victoria Electoral Region	48 995