

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Wednesday, 10 June 2015

(Extract from book 8)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

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
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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
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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 Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. A. Somyurek, MLC
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 Dalidakis, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning — Ms Bath, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Leane, Ms Shing, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

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

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 Elasmr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mr Perera and Ms Ryall.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 — Acting 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

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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

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 10 June 2015

Local government review

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 15 April 2015

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Western Victoria for his comments.

The Government has a strong commitment to ensuring all Victorian councils remain financially sustainable in order to continue providing quality services that the community needs and demands.

I note the member's concern over the changes to Financial Assistance Grants (FAG) and road funding. I am advised by my department that these changes will reduce the total amount of FAG funding by \$200 million over a four year period. In 2015-16 alone, the indexation freeze will deny Victorian councils an estimated \$42.7 million in grants.

The new Fair Go Rates System will ensure council rates are kept at a level that allows local councils to continue to be financially sustainable, while still being able to provide essential services and making necessary investments in infrastructure.

I am also pleased to advise the Government will deliver on its election commitment to undertake a comprehensive review of the Local Government Act 1989, the principal legislation governing the role of Victoria's 79 councils.

Sunbury municipality

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 16 April 2015

REPLY:

After consultation with various stakeholders, including local resident groups, I appointed Transition Auditors as an independent advisory body to review the issues and community concern surrounding the establishment of a new Sunbury City Council and provide advice to me on the way forward.

The former government rushed to sign off on a transition process that left significant issues unresolved and this government has taken a responsible approach to remedy that.

The Transition Auditors have already started work. Those interested can visit the Transition Auditors website at <http://sunburyhumetransition.vic.gov.au> and express interest in participating in the process as well as read the relevant reports provided by the Auditors.

The Transition Auditors will continue to make information available to Sunbury and Hume residents through their website and other means, including local newspapers, to ensure that residents are fully informed. They will also be seeking public submissions at an appropriate time. Members of the community can register their interest in being a part of this consultation process via the website.

Libraries

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Ms Dunn

Raised on: 16 April 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is a strong supporter of public libraries. Public libraries provide a wide range of services to the community and are safe spaces that help develop strong and connected communities. Libraries are accessible to all Victorians and provide valuable support for people as they engage in life long learning and education.

The Government will deliver on its commitment to undertake a critical review of the Victorian Library concept and future funding arrangements. The Victorian Government has started discussions with the sector about the likely impact of the recommendations made to the former government.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support of public libraries.

Melbourne Metro rail project

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

The 2015-16 Victorian State Budget committed \$9-11 billion to deliver the Melbourne Metro Rail Project, including \$1.5 billion over four years, to complete the planning and design of the project and to commence construction by 2018.

The balance of funds required for the project beyond the \$1.5 billion, allocated in this year's budget sitting outside the forward estimates. Before construction commences, details about the source of this funding will be set out, and further detail on the project will be provided as part of the Melbourne Metro Rail Project Business Case that is currently underway.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Project allows 20 000 extra people to use our train network in the peak hour. Unless we build Melbourne Metro, people in South Yarra and across Melbourne face increased crowding as pressure on the rail network continues to grow.

South Yarra already has a very high level of public transport services, and will continue to have a high level of service when Melbourne Metro is built, with these services being less crowded. An interconnecting station at South Yarra would cost nearly a billion dollars for little benefit and is there not part of the Melbourne Metro project. This does not mean that improvements to South Yarra Station will not occur in the future.

Improvements to stations are considered by Public Transport Victoria through its network development planning.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority will work with Stonnington Council and other South Yarra stakeholders as the project is planned and developed.

Mornington Peninsula wine industry

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government's \$1 million plan to boost cellar door visits, grow wine export markets and promote wine tourism will support Victoria's \$1.5 billion wine industry including the Mornington Peninsula Wine Industry.

The funds allocated in the 2015-16 Victorian Budget will fund a Victorian Wine Tourism Strategy and support initiatives that promote wine tourism, cellar door sales, regional exports and regional wine marketing.

The Victorian Wine Tourism Strategy will inform the future development of the wine tourism industry, with a focus on supporting niche businesses, such as those in the Mornington Peninsula.

These efforts will be reinforced by a Victorian-Government led, in-bound wine trade mission to build the profile of Victorian wine in overseas markets and increase wine exports. Mornington Peninsula will be a key region in this trade mission.

The Victorian Government will also establish a Wine Industry Ministerial Advisory Committee to advise on agricultural and regional development issues affecting the long term performance of the Victorian wine sector.

Drawing on industry knowledge, the Committee may advise on market access, research and development, regional investment, skills and workforce, infrastructure, and regulatory matters impacting the industry.

Thompsons Road duplication

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

In the 2015 State Budget the Victorian Government is investing \$20 million to do the planning and pre-construction work to duplicate Thompsons Road. This is addition to the \$500 000 in planning funds announced in February.

The \$5 million allocated in 2015-16 will enable VicRoads to progress the project for construction. Pre-construction activities will include design, environmental studies, traffic modelling, identifying underground services and property surveys. These works are essential to allow for the subsequent efficient construction of this project.

Local residents and business will be engaged to provide input into the planning and proposed concept designs through consultation and information sessions.

Barwon Health North

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to delivering the Barwon Health-North project for the residents of the northern suburbs of Geelong.

The Department of Health & Human Services is working closely with Barwon Health to progress this important project.

Capital planning consultants are currently finalising master planning for the Barwon Health-North facility based on extensive user group consultation. Detailed design and documentation will then be undertaken prior to tendering the construction.

In addition, regular liaison has also been occurring with the City of Greater Geelong regarding the siting of Barwon Health-North and I expect to be able to make an announcement on this in due course.

I am pleased to confirm that the facility is still scheduled to be operational in mid-2017.

This commitment sits alongside the recent budget investment of \$560 million in new hospitals and equipment for Victoria, ensuring families can access state-of-the-art care closer to home.

Old Coach Road, Narrawong

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Bourman

Raised on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

The Glenelg Shire Council is responsible for the management of the Old Coach Road in Narrawong and its closure is a matter for the local Council.

I have, however, consulted with the Office of the Minister for Local Government and been assured that the road closure complies with the Local Government Act 1989 which states that "A Council may block or restrict the passage or access of vehicles on a road by placing and maintaining any permanent barrier or other obstruction on the road."

Glenelg Shire Council are also the committee of management for this section of the Narrawong Coastal Reserve, which is crown land, so they don't need to get further approval from any other roads corporation.

The Council published a public notice on the proposed closure of a section of the Old Coach Road inviting submissions under Section 223 of the Act in local newspapers.

Submissions closed on 4 March 2015 and a Submissions Committee of Council considered all submissions on the proposed closure. The decision was made to close the road at the April Council meeting after the community consultation period.

Given Glenelg Shire Council have followed the relevant sections of the Local Government Act in making this decision the State Government cannot intervene to have the decision reviewed.

Council also has responsibility to fund, or seek funding for, the roads they manage.

Sunshine Hospital

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

In response to the significant growth in Melbourne's west, the Andrews Labour Government made an election commitment of \$200 million to build the Western Women's and Children's Hospital in Sunshine. This commitment was confirmed when full funding for the project was announced in the 2015-16 State budget.

This new hospital is vital, as the number of expected births at Sunshine continues to increase.

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

The new dedicated Sunshine Hospital Women's and Children's Centre will provide 237 beds, 39 special care nursery cots, four theatres and additional clinics. This will allow for an extra 2000 births a year and free up beds and services at Sunshine and surrounding hospitals.

Construction is targeted to commence in mid 2016, with completion targeted for late 2018.

The new hospital will provide much-needed support, services and treatment for the booming and diverse population in Melbourne's west.

Southern Metropolitan Region public housing

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

I refer to the adjournment debate you raised in the Legislative Council on 06 May 2015 regarding pigeon waste at some public housing estates in Southern Metropolitan Region.

I am informed by the Department of Health & Human Services that window cleaning contractors have been engaged via the current cleaning and gardening contractor to remove bird waste at three sites in the southern metropolitan area.

The cleaning of the worst affected windows at two sites is underway and cleaning of other windows in the southern metropolitan area badly affected by bird waste will be completed by the end of May, subject to weather conditions.

I am further advised that bird waste is removed weekly from hard surfaced areas, including footpaths around the base of high-rise towers, as part of the requirements of the current cleaning and gardening contract.

Legislative Council regional sitting

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

Initiatives to promote stronger regions and improve the openness and transparency of government are priorities.

My Government has no plans to commence a program of regional sittings of the Legislative Council at this time.

Caroline Springs railway station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

Public Transport Victoria has reviewed the design for Caroline Springs station to ensure that it meets the current requirements of local residents, and will continue to meet the future transport needs of the area.

Tenders for the construction of the station have closed and are being evaluated. It is expected that construction contracts will be awarded in the near future and main works are expected to commence shortly afterwards. The station is expected to be ready for use in 2016.

Craft Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Creative Industries

Raised by: Ms Patten

Raised on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

Craft Victoria is a champion for contemporary Victorian crafts and craftspeople. Beautiful jewellery, textiles, ceramics and other art objects are available from their shop in Flinders Street and online.

I encourage The Hon Fiona Patten to approach the Presiding Officers directly, outside the Chamber, with her idea about commissioning or making Craft Victoria products available in the Parliament House gift shop.

Geelong–Warrnambool rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

After four years of neglect and inaction, the Coalition released its Country Rail election commitment on 18 November 2014. This was 11 days before the State Election and more than 1400 days since the Coalition had

been elected to Government. After four years, Coalition funded none of its election promises in its Budget of only six months earlier. Four years of Coalition underfunding have left regional rail lines in a dangerous state of neglect.

The Andrews Labor Government's first Budget includes \$257 million for new regional rail carriages and infrastructure. This investment will provide 21 new V/Locity carriages and a maintenance and stabling yard at Waurm Ponds. New carriages mean more services on more lines all across Victoria.

In addition, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) has commenced work on a Network Development Plan (NDP) for regional Victoria. The regional NDP will represent PTV's assessment of how regional train and couch 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 regional NDP. In the next months, the Government and PTV will liaise with local communities, councils and passengers to explore opportunities for adding and improving public transport services and infrastructure in regional and rural Victoria.

Shepparton rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 7 May 2015

REPLY:

After four years of neglect and inaction, the Coalition released its Country Rail election commitment on 18 November 2014. This was 11 days before the State Election and more than 1400 days since the Coalition had been elected to Government. After four years, Coalition funded none of its election promises in its Budget of only six months earlier. Four years of Coalition underfunding have left regional rail lines in a dangerous state of neglect.

The Andrews Labor Government's first Budget includes \$257 million for new regional rail carriages and infrastructure. This investment will provide 21 new V/Locity carriages and a maintenance and stabling yard at Waurm Ponds. New carriages mean more services on more lines all across Victoria.

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Community consultation will play an integral role in the development of the regional NDP. In the next months, the Government and PTV will liaise with local communities, councils and passengers to explore opportunities for adding and improving public transport services and infrastructure in regional and rural Victoria.

Ballarat rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 7 May 2015

REPLY:

I acknowledge that V/Line services were overcrowded for Ballarat commuters travelling to, and from, two AFL matches scheduled in Melbourne on Sunday 12 April 2015.

I am advised that PTV and V/Line did not have access to historical travel data to provide a guide for anticipated patronage in the event of two AFL matches in Melbourne finishing an hour apart. Unfortunately, this led to further congestion at Southern Cross Station.

V/Line and PTV have carefully observed the travel patterns from this particular instance, and will ensure appropriate service levels are introduced in future.

Geelong defence contract bid

Raised with: Minister for Industry

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 7 May 2015

REPLY:

I thank the Honourable Member for Western Victoria for his question.

The Member raises two very important matters—the decline of manufacturing in Geelong following the announced closure of the auto industry and Victoria’s defence industries.

On manufacturing and the auto industry I remind the Member that were it not for the failure of the Abbott Government to work with Ford, Toyota and Holden on a long term, sustainable solution Victoria’s heritage as an auto manufacturing state may have continued. Sadly, the Abbott Government did the opposite. The Abbott Government also attempted to cut \$500 million from the Automotive Transition Scheme, only to reverse its decision under intense advocacy by the Andrews and Wetherill Governments and the auto industry, and refused to join the Andrews Government in providing an additional \$18.5 million to support Geelong and Melbourne’s North through Regional Innovation and Investment Funds. These funds encourage investment to create new or additional business capacity that result in sustainable jobs. The Andrews Government will deliver on this commitment because we understand the importance of creating opportunities for business and jobs for Victoria’s highly skilled manufacturing workers.

On defence industries, the Andrews Labor Government recognises the importance of helping Victorian businesses secure Commonwealth and overseas defence contracts, and the opportunities that this provides for Victorian workers.

When Labor was last in office the unemployment rate was 4.9 per cent and we created over 250 000 jobs between 2006 and 2010. We inherited an unemployment rate at 6.8 per cent—the worst unemployment rate on the mainland—and the Coalition created half the jobs Labor did. Regional unemployment was even worse after four years of Coalition Government: Bendigo 8 per cent, Geelong 8.2 per cent, Shepparton 7.4 per cent and Warrnambool 6.7 per cent. With cuts to the public service and no clear direction it is no surprise that the prominence of Victoria as Australia’s defence enabling state deteriorated.

Defence is one of six priority industry sectors that the Andrews Government has identified for high economic growth. Victoria’s defence industry will benefit from the Government’s Back to Work plan, which includes \$200 million to the Future Industries Fund, \$508 million to the Premier’s Jobs and Investment Fund and \$500 million to the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund.

Our Government has also adopted a strategic and tactical approach to attracting and supporting potential bidders, by developing support packages based on the needs of each individual consortium, rather than a one size fits all approach.

Defence industry jobs are critically important to Victoria. Yet the former Coalition Government did nothing. Under the Coalition Government the Defence Industry Unit was allowed to decline to just two full time equivalent staff instead of the 14 people the Andrew Government will have on board.

The Andrews Government has also substantially bolstered business support and investment attraction with a new \$5 million Defence Procurement Office in Geelong. This office, opened in less than 100 days since our Government was elected, acts on behalf of all Victorian-based defence companies, promoting Victoria’s capabilities, identifying defence industry opportunities, and promoting industry research collaboration to boost the competitiveness of our industry.

The Andrews Government knows that Victoria has the capability and capacity to produce international standard vehicles, ships and equipment that our defence personnel need to safely protect our nation and way of life. For Victorian defence industries to prosper they need a Commonwealth Government that backs Australian businesses and workers. Sadly the Abbott Coalition Government has done the opposite. The lack of defence projects being awarded to Geelong business is and will be entirely attributable to the failure of the Member for Corangamite, Sarah Henderson MP, Prime Minister Abbott, Defence Minister Kevin Andrews and their Coalition colleagues who have sent work overseas, while excluding Australian businesses and workers, and created uncertainty by failing to make decisions and award contracts like Land 400 and Land 121.

For Victoria's defence businesses to survive they need certainty from the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government will spend tens of billions of Australian taxpayers dollars on defence procurement over the coming decades. This money should be spent in Australia at our world class manufacturing facilities. Unless the Prime Minister commits to build and maintain vehicles, ships and equipment in Australia, jobs and businesses are at risk.

Victoria is Australia's defence enabling state. I look forward to the cooperation of the Victorian Opposition and all Victorian MPS and Senators to keeping it that way.

Elyptol

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian government supports local businesses, manufacturers and suppliers with opportunities and access to government contracts and tenders. Victoria has implemented the Victorian Industry Participation Policy which connects government buyers with local suppliers. It is a requirement under the Victorian Industry Participation Policy for government departments and agencies to consider competitive local suppliers when awarding contracts.

The previous Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Products tender was run after an open public invitation and closed in 2010. This tender is due to expire in December 2015 and is currently being reviewed. No decision has been made at this time on any future commitments beyond December 2015.

At my request, The Department of Health and Human Services has discussed the issues raised by Elyptol with both the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Procurement at Health Purchasing Victoria. I understand that Elyptol has now successfully registered their interest with Health Purchasing Victoria as a supplier, and has also identified and selected tenders and tender categories in which they would be interested in tendering.

Health Purchasing Victoria will notify Elyptol as well as other interested and registered suppliers of upcoming tenders as part of an open, public transparent process in order to comply with probity standards in procurement. When a decision is made on the future tender for Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Products, Elyptol will be eligible to tender for the supply of these products.

Colac police station

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Government is committed to a well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing. That is why, as part of the 2015-16 State Budget, the government provided \$148.6 million over four years to recruit and deploy 400 police custody officers.

Transitioning the supervision of prisoners held in police cells to custody officers will release 400 frontline police back into the community, where they can focus on tackling crime and keeping the community safe.

The government recognises that Victoria Police requires appropriate facilities to support police in the work that they do, in keeping our communities safe. I am happy to receive feedback from Victoria Police and the Department of Justice & Regulation about future priorities for station upgrades, including Colac.

The operational need for new and upgraded police stations is established through the Victoria Police Strategic Facilities Development Plan, where projects are considered in the context of other priorities across the State. Where the need for additional police infrastructure funding is identified, the status of projects is determined by government through the Budget process.

The government will continue to work with the Acting Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community.

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Under the former Liberal Government, Victoria's economy was in a parlous state. Unemployment was skyrocketing with Victoria having the highest rate of youth unemployment of all mainland states, with regional areas hardest hit.

The former Liberal Government's savage cuts to TAFE funding compounded this problem and had a devastating impact on training in Victoria. Constant and repeated changes to subsidy rates left TAFE institutes in financial turmoil. Under the former Liberal Government, TAFEs were forced into mergers out of financial desperation. Campuses were closed. Courses were cut. Fees skyrocketed. Some 3000 jobs were lost in TAFE institutes.

We are committed to repairing the damage of the former Liberal Government by focussing on growing jobs, increasing productivity and rebuilding TAFEs.

That's why the Andrews Labor 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.

I am currently assessing the applications submitted by TAFEs to the TAFE Back to Work Fund. I am taking all submissions seriously, including those that GOTAFE has submitted.

I hope to make an announcement soon.

However, GOTAFE was one of the seven TAFE institutes who received funding under the Andrews Labor Government's fast-tracked \$20 million from the \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund. This funding has already commenced flowing to TAFE institutes under severe financial distress.