

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**13, 14 and 15 September 2016**

**(Extract from book 13)**

Internet: [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard)

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# HANSARD<sup>150</sup>



1866–2016

Following a select committee investigation, Victorian Hansard was conceived when the following amended motion was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 June 1865:

That in the opinion of this house, provision should be made to secure a more accurate report of the debates in Parliament, in the form of *Hansard*.

The sessional volume for the first sitting period of the Fifth Parliament, from 12 February to 10 April 1866, contains the following preface dated 11 April:

As a preface to the first volume of “Parliamentary Debates” (new series), it is not inappropriate to state that prior to the Fifth Parliament of Victoria the newspapers of the day virtually supplied the only records of the debates of the Legislature.

With the commencement of the Fifth Parliament, however, an independent report was furnished by a special staff of reporters, and issued in weekly parts.

This volume contains the complete reports of the proceedings of both Houses during the past session.

In 2016 the Hansard Unit of the Department of Parliamentary Services continues the work begun 150 years ago of providing an accurate and complete report of the proceedings of both houses of the Victorian Parliament.



## **The Governor**

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

## **The ministry**

(from 20 June 2016)

Premier . . . . .	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, and Minister for Emergency Services (from 10 June 2016) [Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation 10 June to 20 June 2016] . . . . .	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer . . . . .	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects . . . . .	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade . . . . .	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development . . . . .	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 Health and Minister for Ambulance Services . . . . .	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, Minister for International Education and Minister for Corrections . . . . .	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 Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation . . . . .	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs . . . . .	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water . . . . .	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment, and Minister for Resources . . . . .	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 G. A. Tierney, MLC

### Legislative Council committees

**Privileges Committee** — Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Donohue, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

**Procedure Committee** — The President, Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Davis, Mr Jennings, Ms Pennicuik, Ms Pulford, Ms Tierney and Ms Wooldridge.

### Legislative Council standing committees

**Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure** — Mr Bourman, #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

**Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning** — #Mr Barber, Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, #Ms Hartland, Mr Melhem, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing and Mr Young.

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

# participating members

### Legislative Council select committees

**Port of Melbourne Select Committee** — Mr Barber, Mr Mulino, Mr Ondarchie, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing and Ms Tierney.

### Joint committees

**Accountability and Oversight Committee** — (*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.

**Dispute Resolution Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh

**Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Elasmarr and Mr Melhem. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.

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

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

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

**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*): Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward.

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

### Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

**President:**

The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

**Deputy President:**

Mr K. EIDEH

**Acting Presidents:**

Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Mr Melhem, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Ramsay

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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 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 <sup>2</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>1</sup>	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 <sup>3</sup>	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
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 Jaclyn	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	SFFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 25 February 2015

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 15 April 2015

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 27 May 2016

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

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





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**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Tuesday, 13 September 2016**

**Goods and services tax**

**Raised with:** Treasurer  
**Raised by:** Ms Patten  
**Raised on:** 22 June 2016

**REPLY:**

The GST is a broad-based tax of 10 per cent on most goods, services and other items sold or consumed in Australia, which includes feminine hygiene products.

The 2008 Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA) sets out the process for changing the GST rate and base. Under the IGA, changes to the GST base require the unanimous support of all the state and territory Governments and the endorsement of the Commonwealth Government.

The proposal to remove GST on feminine hygiene products was discussed at the Council on Federal Financial Relations meeting in August last year. The Victorian Government supported the proposal to make feminine hygiene products GST-free. However, unanimous agreement could not be reached with all other state and territory Treasurers and therefore there could be no change to the existing GST arrangements for feminine hygiene products.

**Police resources**

**Raised with:** Minister for Police  
**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Raised on:** 22 June 2016

**REPLY:**

The Andrews Government will continue to work with Victoria Police and local communities to make sure that communities feel safe.

There is a clear process within Victoria Police about how changes to operations are authorised. All changes to counter hours must be approved by executive police command.

My expectation, however, is that any changes to counter hours be made in consultation with local residents — with police explaining how local police operations best serve the community.

The changes are also allowing for improved proactive policing.

The Chief Commissioner recognises the benefits of having police on patrol, responding to community calls for assistance and detecting crime, providing a better policing service to local communities. He has stated that he is not planning to close police stations.

We will continue to support police in every way possible — from the additional frontline numbers announced in the Victorian Budget to the mobile technology needed to boost efficiency on the beat.

The Andrews Labor Government's Police Custody Officer (PCO) rollout has saved thousands of hours' worth of frontline police work, with more than 200 custody officers now working across 22 of the state's busiest police stations.

Since January, custody officers have worked more than 10 500 shifts across Victoria, performing custody management tasks in police cells and supervising police prisoners in court.

Over the next 12 months, around 1000 new police, Police Custody Officers and Protective Services Officers will move through the Victoria Police Academy.

Police received \$596 million in this year's Budget, part of our promise to give Victoria Police the resources and the powers they need to keep Victorians safe.

This is in stark contrast to the previous Coalition government, which failed to fund a single additional police officer in their last term.

I am assured by the Chief Commissioner that the allocation of police resources across Victoria is continuously monitored by the respective command officers to ensure the best possible policing service is delivered to the Victorian community.

### **Local government reform**

**Raised with: Minister for Local Government**

**Raised by: Mrs Peulich**

**Raised on: 22 June 2016**

#### **REPLY:**

The review of the Local Government Act 1989 is the first of its kind in 26 years, and it is important that sufficient time is provided to ensure a comprehensive approach is taken. I dispute the assertion that the review is taking too long. The review includes consultation with the local government sector and the community, and commissioning of expert advice on possible reforms. The review will shape the direction of Victorian councils for many years to come, ensuring our local government sector remains a leader in Australia.

In 2015, I released a Discussion Paper seeking feedback on the issues that need to be addressed in the review. Approximately 340 submissions were received, and community forums were undertaken throughout Victoria. This year, I have released a Directions Paper outlining proposed reform directions to address the issues identified. This is the subject of further consultation with the sector and community. It is envisaged that further consultation will occur on a draft Bill in 2017.

Regarding closing council meetings to the public, I agree this is an important issue and I am committed to ensuring transparency from all councils including through the ground-breaking Know Your Council website. This shows that in 2014/15 Casey City Council made 37 per cent of its decisions in dosed meetings. This compares with an Interface council group average of 19.27 per cent and the State average of 12.2 per cent.

The types of reasons for which decisions can be made in-confidence are currently being reviewed as part of the Act review.

I am committed to raising standards of probity and integrity in the local government sector, and the Act review currently underway is an important opportunity to do so.

### **Goulburn Valley Health**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Lovell**

**Raised on: 16 August 2016**

#### **REPLY:**

In April of this year, I was delighted to join the Premier in announcing the \$168.5 million redevelopment of the Shepparton campus of Goulburn Valley Health. This long awaited announcement followed years of neglect by the former Liberal Government, who failed to invest in the Goulburn Valley.

The redevelopment will double the size of the emergency department and enable the health service to treat more patients, resulting in reduced waiting times.

The Department of Health and Human Services and Goulburn Valley Health are moving quickly to complete the planning for this major redevelopment.

In the interim, Goulburn Valley Health are activity pursuing processes to improve patient flow, these include:

- Introduction of a seven day per week fast track service with nurse practitioners
- A rapid assessment triage process where senior medical staff work to assess patients on presentation
- Increase intern recruitment and electronic bookings of inpatient beds
- The introduction of a Health Information Officer located in the emergency department to aid in timely and accurate data recording
- Increased focus on telemedicine to the Urgent Care Centres located at partner sites so that patients can receive safe and appropriate care at facilities closer to their home.

I acknowledge the high level of demand at Goulburn Valley Health and the increase in more complex patients presenting to the Emergency Department. I can assure you that the department is working with Goulburn Valley Health to implement strategies to ensure that it continues to provide the highest possible level of services until such time as this exciting project is completed.

As part of the Andrews Labor Government's record \$16.5 billion investment in health in Victoria, Goulburn Valley Health will receive \$168.6 million, which is \$10 million or 6.3 percent more than the previous year to support increased service activity.

The Andrews Labor Government is making sure that the people of Shepparton will have a modern, state of the art and well-funded facility which will treat more patients faster.

### **Boris and Lana Zaitsen**

**Raised with: Minister for Planning**

**Raised by: Ms Dunn**

**Raised on: 16 August 2016**

#### **REPLY:**

I am aware of Boris and Lana Zaitsen's ongoing concerns with the construction of two double-storey dwellings and car parking at their Caulfield property. An adviser from my office has met the Zaitsens and an officer from my department has engaged with them on a regular basis.

The Victorian Building Authority has undertaken a number of investigations into building practitioners involved in the Zaitsen's property project. Consequent inquiries held by the Building Practitioners Board resulted in guilty findings against a number of practitioners.

I am informed that, following these matters the Zaitsen's lodged further complaints in relation to practitioners engaged to complete the building works. The Victorian Building Authority is currently investigating those complaints.

The Andrews Government has acted swiftly to improve the situation for domestic building consumers. From 1 September 2016, a range of reforms provided for in the Building Legislation Amendment (Consumer Protection) Act 2016 will commence, including:

- a new "fit and proper person" test for registration, and a requirement for building practitioners to renew their registration every five years;

- a requirement that domestic builders provide consumers with a contract information statement before entering into a major domestic building contract;
- better integration of practitioner regulation and discipline, with the Victorian Building Authority assuming responsibility for both registration and disciplinary functions;
- a speedier “show cause” disciplinary process; and
- new grounds for suspension and disciplinary sanctions, and improved powers to issue directions to builders regarding non-compliant work.

Further reforms to commence in the coming months include the establishment of a new dispute resolution body, known as Domestic Building Dispute Resolution Victoria (DBDRV) with a Chief Dispute Resolution Officer, expert conciliators and independent technical experts.

The DBDRV will be empowered to conduct mandatory conciliations and issue binding dispute resolution orders where parties cannot reach agreement. Dispute Resolution orders will be able to require builders to rectify defective or incomplete works.

### **Sex work regulation**

**Raised with:** Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation  
**Raised by:** Ms Patten  
**Raised on:** 16 August 2016

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the adjournment debate on 16 August 2016 in relation to unlicensed sex work service providers operating as massage parlours, and calling for a review of the operation of massage parlours in Victoria.

In 2012, the Sex Work Act 1994 (the Act) was amended by the Sex Work and Other Acts Amendment Act 2011 to clarify that the responsibility for enforcement of the Act’s provisions in relation to illegal sex work lies with Victoria Police. Since then, Consumer Affairs Victoria’s role has been limited to supervision of the licensed sex work sector.

Accordingly, as your question concerns the unlicensed sector, your question should be directed to the Minister for Police.

### **Goulburn Valley Health**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health  
**Raised by:** Ms Lovell  
**Raised on:** 17 August 2016

#### **REPLY:**

Earlier this year, I was delighted to join the Premier and members of the community to announce the \$168.5 million redevelopment of the Shepparton campus of Goulburn Valley Health. This long awaited announcement followed years of neglect by the former Liberal Government, who failed to invest in the Goulburn Valley.

This redevelopment will ensure that Goulburn Valley Health is able to treat more patients from its primary and extended catchment areas, which include Rushworth, in modern, state of the art facilities, resulting in reduced waiting times.

The 2015-16 State Budget provided funding of \$1 million to commence planning for this much anticipated redevelopment. Part of this planning has also focused on the proposed redevelopment of the Waranga site in Rushworth.

I am advised that officers of the Department of Health and Human Services have worked with Goulburn Valley Health to progress master planning for the site and a feasibility study for the co-location of aged and acute services into contemporary facilities. As you are aware, consultants are about to be engaged to proceed to the Schematic Design stage of project planning.

The new \$200 million Regional Health Infrastructure Fund was announced in the 2016-17 State budget. This fund is the largest of its kind in Victorian history and will provide for upgrades to rural and regional health services, community health services, bush nursing centres and bush nursing hospitals.

Projects under the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund will be determined through application based funding rounds. Applications for the first round of grants closed recently and are currently being reviewed.

I look forward to announcing the recipients of the first round of funding in coming months.

### **Western Highway duplication**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Raised by:** Ms Dunn  
**Raised on:** 17 August 2016

#### **REPLY:**

VicRoads has previously acknowledged publicly that there has been a discrepancy between the number of Large Old Trees estimated to be impacted by the duplication, and the actual impact. This was identified by undertaking on-the-ground counting, which occurred in 2014.

An investigation, and subsequent report, which is publicly available on VicRoads' website, has shown that the underestimation would not have changed the recommended route.

As part of the Environment Effects Statement process, VicRoads conducted extensive investigations into the flora and fauna, land use, cultural heritage, traffic, noise quality and social impacts of duplicating the highway.

This was a mandatory process, and was conducted over two years, to identify an alignment with the least overall impact taking into account social, environmental and economic considerations.

Public exhibition and consultation were a significant part of that process with the views of the community and the potential impacts of the different alignment options helping to shape the options for VicRoads and the recommendation of the Panel.

The peer-appraisal report to which the Member refers, was actually commissioned to check compliance against the 2002 Native Vegetation Framework, not to appraise the Environment Effects Statement.

This report did raise three issues, which VicRoads has further investigated, however VicRoads has complied with the Framework, which was the purpose of the review.

VicRoads also does not believe these matters would have altered the Panel's chosen alignment.

Further to comments that VicRoads should consider alternatives to the current approved alignment, some community members have proposed an alignment that follows the existing Western Highway through the foothills of Mt Langi Ghiran State Park.

The Independent Panel, appointed to make a recommendation to the Planning Minister, was fully aware of a similar version of this alternative route and dismissed it because it had greater environmental impact.

Also the then Department of Sustainability and Environment made it clear that it would not support a route through the foothills of Mt Langi Ghiran State Park because of the potential environmental impact.

Therefore work will continue on the much-needed duplication which will make this section of road much safer for all motorists.

There is strong community support for the duplication of the highway, and the overwhelming community feedback at recent information sessions VicRoads had in Ararat, Great Western, Ballarat and Buangor was supportive.

VicRoads also hears from many in the community who are enjoying using the safer duplicated road between Ballarat and Buangor and ask when work will start on the duplication to Ararat.

### **Metropolitan Remand Centre**

**Raised with:** Minister for Corrections  
**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Raised on:** 18 August 2016

#### **REPLY:**

Following the riot, Corrections Victoria took immediate action to provide support to staff at the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC). The following strategies were implemented:

- A Recovery Team was put in place, which included a well-being consultant, who was on site daily until the end of August 2015.
- The Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider was on site daily for the first month following the riot. Staff not wanting to access the onsite service were encouraged to contact the service number for support.
- The onsite service ceased in late August 2015 as the need for it had reduced. The service was then offered via self-referral and staff were strongly encouraged to contact support services on an as needs basis.
- Another specialist provider of psychological and occupational rehabilitation services was engaged to provide onsite services at MRC and individual sessions to staff offsite. Staff could also contact this provider via a 24-hour phone service. This service continued for two months until staff need for it reduced.
- Services continued to be offered to staff on an individual basis as, required. The uptake of these services has significantly reduced each month.
- Internal prison officer support staff members are also in place to provide support to their colleagues.
- In August 2015, the MRC General Manager sent individual letters to all staff encouraging them to engage with support services and provided a range of materials on the supports available.
- In April 2016, the People Recovery project commenced. As part of the project up to 350 staff at MRC were engaged to identify key strategic drivers for change towards a safer, healthier and recovered work environment.
- A People Recovery plan is in progress with development of actions, including an implementation plan, due in mid-September 2016.
- MRC management continue to support and encourage staff to engage with support services where appropriate. The MRC Safety and Wellbeing consultant maintains regular contact with staff who remain off work.
- Contrary to the article published in the *Herald Sun* on 15 July 2016, which stated that more than 35 MRC staff remain on leave with physical or psychological injuries following the riot, there are approximately a third of that number off work, most of whom have not been continuously off work since the riot.



### Christmas carols in schools

**Raised with:** Minister for Education  
**Raised by:** Ms Lovell  
**Raised on:** 18 August 2016

#### REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

All programs and teaching in Victorian government schools must be delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to freedom of religion, speech and association.

The new Victorian curriculum recognises the importance of world histories, global cultures, ethics and traditions. It helps ensure Victoria remains a successful multicultural society, strengthens our diversity and increases the capacity of our young people to understand others, and act with respect towards one another.

Victorian government schools will continue to celebrate the diversity and traditions of our society, including through music. This may take the form, for example, of signing Christmas carols or a study of sacred music as part of the music program within the school's curriculum.

Government school students can sing religious or praise-based carols such as 'O Come All Ye Faithful, Silent Night, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Joy to the World and Away in a Manger during school hours and on school grounds as part of their Christmas celebrations.

### Dairy industry

**Raised with:** Minister for Agriculture  
**Raised by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Raised on:** 18 August 2016

#### REPLY:

The Dairy Recovery Concessional Loan scheme is a Commonwealth program. The concessional loans allow for re-structure of existing eligible farm debt, funding operating expenses necessary to continue normal operations and/or providing new debt for productivity enhancement activities.

While we are seeing increasing uptake of the loan program, I have heard from farmers themselves that concessional loans are not the most important support they need.

One of the key issues for farmers is low cash flow in the face of low milk prices over the coming months.

Farm Household Allowance (FHA) provides farmers with household income support to put food on the table. Timely provision of these welfare payments is a priority for the coming months.

The Farm Household Allowance (FHA) is a Commonwealth Government program. The allowance is delivered by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services. The Victorian Government has no responsibility for its administration.

The allowance provides eligible farmers and their partners with up to three years of household income support and is paid at the same rate as Newstart Allowance (or Youth Allowance for those under 22 years). To be eligible for FHA, an individual needs to:

- be a farmer or the partner of a farmer
- be aged 16 years or over

- contribute a significant part of their labour and capital to a farm enterprise in Australia, or be the partner of a farmer who does
- meet an income and assets test
- meet residence requirements
- have regular contact with a Farm Household Case Officer
- agree to and comply with mutual obligations requirements, and
- have received less than three years of FHA.

There has been an increase in the number of dairy farmers receiving FHA since the impacts of the milk price stepdown. As of 16 August 2016, there were 208 Victorian dairy-related recipients of the FHA (from a total of 1212 in Victoria).

I have been made aware of the extended processing times for FHA (beyond three months) and the complexity of the applications process. I have raised my concerns directly with the Hon Barnaby Joyce, MP, Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, who is responsible for the FHA.

On 25 May 2016, the Commonwealth Government announced additional Department of Human Service resources to help fast track applications for the FHA.

Agriculture Victoria continues to promote and monitor Commonwealth Government drought and dairy support and provide constructive feedback to ensure its effective implementation.

I will continue to lobby the Commonwealth Government to ensure it delivers fair and timely support for Victorian dairy communities.

### **Homelessness**

**Raised with:** Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

**Raised by:** Mr Purcell

**Raised on:** 30 August 2016

#### **REPLY:**

The Victorian Government believes that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should be supported to achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion. Currently, the government funds over \$200 million a year to community service organisations across Victoria to provide accommodation and support services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

In the 2016-17 Victorian State Budget, the Victorian Government committed \$152 million to the family violence Housing Blitz. With this investment, we will:

- build or upgrade up to 180 crisis accommodation units
- provide 184 social housing properties and head-lease up to 124 additional properties
- redevelop four existing communal refuges and to provide 24 hour staffing at six refuges
- assist people to access private rental housing
- provide flexible tailored support packages for victims of family violence, including assistance to stay safe at home.

In response to the significant recent rise in the number of people sleeping rough in inner city Melbourne, I allocated \$1.6 million to immediate actions to assist homeless people, including:

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- extending the Rough Sleepers Initiative, which provides mobile support and access services
- funding to purchase more emergency accommodation
- deliver 38 additional crisis accommodation beds to provide additional capacity over winter
- provide additional workers to staff a safe, warm shelter that will be opened in the inner city during winter.

Building on this immediate response, I have established an 18-month Rough Sleeping Response Taskforce to advise on practical actions to address the significant rise in rough sleeping in the CBD. The Taskforce held its first meeting on 24 August 2016 and has been challenged to be bold in its goals to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the CBD.

There is more we can do. I am committed to looking at ways in which we can improve these services to ensure they deliver better outcomes for people. I would be more than happy to arrange a briefing to your office on these matters if required.



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

**Wednesday, 14 September 2016**

**Level Crossing Removal Authority**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr Davis**

**Raised on: 16 August 2016**

**REPLY:**

It is acknowledged that tree removal is one of the reasons that the Liberal Opposition has decided to oppose the removal of 50 of Victoria's worst level crossings and the Metro Tunnel project.

Tree removal is an inevitable aspect of delivering new infrastructure, but unlike the Opposition, the Government will not use it as an excuse to delay vital public transport infrastructure projects.

The Government's elevated solution to remove the 9 level crossings between Dandenong and Caulfield will save trees when compared with an alternative trenched solution. It will also provide the opportunity to plant more trees alongside the rail line and in the open spaces created by this solution. The project will result in over 4000 new trees being planted.

Detailed information on tree removal at all level crossing removal projects is available at [www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au](http://www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au).

**Victoria Police mounted branch and dog squad**

**Raised with: Minister for Police**

**Raised by: Mr O'Donohue**

**Raised on: 16 August 2016**

**REPLY:**

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the dedicated and important work of both the Victoria Police Mounted Branch and Dog Squad

Victoria Police expects the highest standards from its officers and I welcome feedback about police officers who display these qualities in their work. Victoria is fortunate to have such a highly respected and committed police force.

I have seen firsthand the outstanding work of the Mounted Branch and Dog Squad and look forward to continuing to meet the exceptional officers, their horses and dogs, that keep the Victorian community safe.

**Night Network services**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Raised by:** Ms Symes  
**Raised on:** 17 August 2016

**REPLY:**

Night Network has been well received by the community. The recent decision to continue services through Melbourne's busy Summer and Autumn months will benefit many shift workers, visitors, businesses and people after a night out.

The current scope of Night Network services includes Night Coaches to the regional centres of Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo and Traralgon.

A recent investigation by Public Transport Victoria found that a Night Coach to Seymour could be a viable inclusion to Night Network services.

The introduction of a Night Coach to Seymour means that all regional centres with regular commuter services to Melbourne, will now also benefit from Night Network services.

The Government will continue to evaluate the trial over the coming months and will provide advice regarding the trial outcomes and the future of Night Network in due course.

**Indented Head bus bay**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Raised by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Raised on:** 30 August 2016

**REPLY:**

I asked Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to review the site.

PTV advised the bus stop location has been assessed as at low risk of causing any accidents or injuries. The concerns raised are common to many bus stops. Relocating the stop will not resolve these concerns, only move them to another location.

The potential visibility issue has been considered, with the location confirmed by Greater Geelong City Council, the bus operator and PTV as an appropriate location for a bus to stop.

I am satisfied PTV has completed its due diligence in assessing the safety of the location of this bus stop.

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Thursday, 15 September 2016**

**South Melbourne Park Primary School**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**  
**Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert**  
**Raised on: 17 August 2016**

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Although South Melbourne Park Primary School is outside the area defined under The Australian Grands Prix Act 1994, the Department of Education and Training is working closely with the Grand Prix Corporation to manage operations during construction. The construction programme for the school factors in the Grand Prix set-up and break-down phases.

South Melbourne Park Primary School will join two other successful Government schools operating within Albert Park. Both existing schools work with the Grand Prix Corporation to minimise disruption to their ongoing operations during the event.

It is disappointing the Liberal Party failed to fund this new school in government and continues to not support this school in Opposition.

As promised, the Andrews Labor Government will deliver and open South Melbourne Park Primary School in Term 1, 2019.