

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

21, 22 and 23 June 2016

(Extract from book 10)

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

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HANSARD¹⁵⁰



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 (to 22 May 2016)

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

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Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
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Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

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
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Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
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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, #Ms Hartland, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, Mr Somyurek, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acting Presidents: Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmar, 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 ³	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
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ 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;
SFP — Shooters and Fishers 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, 21 June 2016

RSPCA funding

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 8 March 2016

REPLY:

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) provides a valuable service to the community and government through its inspectorate function. The RSPCA is provided with two government grants for the work of its inspectorate under both the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and Domestic Animals Act 1996.

Ongoing government funding of \$1 million per annum is provided to the RSPCA to support its inspectorate and enforcement costs. Funding is directed only toward the cost of its inspectorate and the RSPCA have advised that government funding does not fully cover the cost of delivering this service. The balance is funded by money raised from the Victorian community who value the important role the inspectorate fulfils.

There is a memorandum of understanding in place which sets out the expectations of myself and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources regarding the conduct of the RSPCA Inspectorate including reporting requirements.

The Victorian Government has also provided \$5 million over four years to the RSPCA to strengthen its inspectorate capacity to deal with illegal and non-compliant domestic animal breeding establishments. The first year of funding will be complete in June 2016. There is a funding agreement in place which specifies reporting requirements including provision of financial statements.

RSPCA have advised that there were a total of 5762 cruelty complaints, including over 120 reports of alleged non-compliant breeding activities, addressed by its inspectorate for the July to December 2015 period. In this period they resolved 37 cases at court, with 21 cases receiving animal ownership disqualification orders as a result of these prosecutions.

Other than its spending of grant funding, the Government has no oversight role in respect of RSPCA's general financial operations. However, the RSPCA have provided me with information in regard to your concerns around their financial spending.

Of the organisation's annual income of around \$30 million, government grants account for less than 3% on average, noting that income from government sources has increased slightly in 2015-16 due to the additional grant provided by this Government to investigate illegal and non-compliant puppy and kitten farms.

Opened in 2010, the Animal Care Centre and kennels at RSPCA Victoria's state headquarters at East Burwood were funded entirely from community bequests at a cost of approximately \$31 million to build. The Animal Care Centre at Burwood East includes a large veterinary clinic which treats both shelter animals and private clients, and an extensive quarantine and adoption area from which dogs, cats, rabbits and guinea pigs are rehomed. The facility also includes education, training and animal support facilities as well as offices for staff and volunteers to work in.

The RSPCA investment in its kennel facilities at Burwood East, and at regional facilities for Victoria at locations such as Bendigo and Portland, directly support animals and their owners across the state.

The RSPCA financial statements are freely available on its website www.rspcavic.org.

Elevated rail proposal

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 12 April 2016

REPLY:

The Government's Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) assessed the project against the Ministerial Guidelines for the assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978.

On 27 May 2016, Amendment (GC37) was Gazetted to facilitate the Caulfield Dandenong Rail Upgrade Project.

In approving the amendment, I took into account any social, environmental and economic effects in accordance with section 12(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

I have also required, as a condition of the approval, that LXRA prepare an Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) for the project. The EMS will provide an overarching framework for the site, or specific measures to reduce and manage environmental and amenity effects during the construction of the project. The approval also includes conditions relating to heritage management, flood management, urban design, development of newly created open space areas, native vegetation removal and offsets, telecommunications facilities, substations, and tie stations, potentially contaminated land and noise.

In addition to this approval, the project is required to be delivered in accordance with the Passenger Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy and must comply with the relevant requirements of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, Conservation, Forests and Land Act 1987, Environment Protection Act 1970, Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1995, Heritage Act 1995, Water Act 1989 and Wildlife Act 1975.

I am satisfied that the planning approval and other policies and regulations provide appropriate safeguards and management measures to ensure an acceptable environmental outcome for Victoria.

Acland Street, St Kilda, closure

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 14 April 2016

REPLY:

Public Transport Victoria and Yarra Trams will upgrade the terminus stop on Acland Street to improve access, safety and reliability for passengers travelling on route 96.

Route 96 is one of the busiest tram routes on the network. It is imperative that the stop is upgraded to comply with DDA and safety requirements.

As part of these works, there will be a need to close sections of the street.

The City of Port Phillip is delivering a new streetscape for Acland Street, for matters related to the streetscape design, refer to the Council website.

Morwell high-tech precinct

Raised with: Minister for Industry and Employment

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 3 May 2016

REPLY:

The 2016–17 State Budget allocated \$40 for economic development initiatives in the Latrobe Valley. This will include a suite of measures designed to diversify the economy, increase industry investment, attract emerging and future industries, improve education and skills levels to ensure the future workforce matches the needs of industry. It will also help to revitalise the Latrobe Valley as a great place to work and live. The establishment of a high tech precinct in Morwell is a component of this program.

Thank you for joining me recently at my first meetings in Morwell where we spoke with a number of key stakeholders. At this meeting, I committed that ownership of this important initiative would be driven locally. I look forward to returning in the near future to work with local government, industry, unions and community groups to detail the development and implementation of this economic development program.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to growing jobs and economic development in places like the Latrobe Valley and across regional Victoria and recognises the importance of focusing on key growth levers such as skills, connectivity and industry innovation to build a stronger, more diversified economy.

Ballarat West police numbers

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 3 May 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government recently announced a \$596 million Public Safety Package as part of the 2016-17 State Budget, delivering on our promise to give police the necessary resources to respond to gang-related crime, gun crime, terrorist threats and family violence. This reflects the government's commitment to work with the Chief Commissioner to ensure we provide the resources to police that will keep our community safe.

Victoria Police will soon have an extra 406 sworn police officers and 52 support personnel, bringing the total number of new police personnel funded by the Andrews Government since it came to office to 1156.

Of the additional 406 sworn police officers, 300 will be general duties frontline police deployed across Victoria. The Chief Commissioner has stated that deployment of those 300 general duties police will focus on responding to local crime issues in growth corridors and other areas of greatest need, to be determined in consultation with The Police Association.

The remaining 106 sworn police officers will be specialist police officers appointed to teams targeting issues such as gangs and illicit trafficking.

Victoria Police continues to recruit, train and deploy Police Custody Officers (PCOs) across the state. The full deployment of 400 PCOs, funded in last year's budget will be fast tracked by six months to the end of 2017, further freeing up police officers to return to the frontline.

The first 84 new custody officers are already deployed to 19 police stations across the State: Ballarat, Bendigo, Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Geelong, Heidelberg, Sunshine, Bairnsdale, Frankston, Horsham, Mildura, Moorabbin, Morwell, Ringwood, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Wodonga and City West. Eleven of these police stations are in regional and rural locations, meaning that regional Victoria will especially benefit from

this policy. The new custody officers have now been rostered on for more than 1580 shifts since they were first deployed in January 2016.

I am advised that as of 2 May 2016 there are 5 PCOs deployed to Ballarat.

I am also informed the construction of the new Ballarat West Police Station will be completed by June 2016. Funding of \$9.25 million Total Estimated Investment has been provided for the new emergency services precinct at Ballarat West.

We are making a major investment in police equipment and technology to put Victoria Police at the forefront of providing smarter more responsive policing. For the first time, police will have mobile technology, including mobile tablets, enabling police to access and exchange up to date information while in the field. Combined with new body worn cameras, this investment will significantly enhance Victoria Police's frontline operations.

Policing across Ballarat and the surrounding area is managed in a flexible manner to ensure the best possible use of available police resources for community safety.

As you would expect, 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. These issues remain a key focus for Victoria Police.

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 operational need.

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. The decision of how and where resources are deployed is appropriately a matter for the Chief Commissioner.

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

Western Metropolitan Region small business

Raised with: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 4 May 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises the significant contribution Victoria's 540 000 small businesses make to local communities, particularly in providing jobs, growing the economy and building social cohesion.

The Government also recognises the challenges and pressures small business owners face. That is why we are committed to providing support services, including mentoring, to small business operators across the state to help them grow and succeed.

I would like to inform the Member that there are several ways in which business owners, and individuals looking to start a small business, can access business mentoring and support in the Western Metropolitan Region.

The Small Business Bus offers free mentoring and information to time-poor business operators across the state. The on-board mentoring can help individuals to establish a clear direction for their business, identify key issues and priorities, and develop an action plan for achieving their goals.

The Small Business Bus will visit four locations in the Western Metropolitan Region in June. These are as follows:

– Werribee — Monday 6 June from 10am-4pm

- Williams Landing — Tuesday 7 June from 10am-4pm
- St Albans — Wednesday 8 June from 10am-4pm
- Wyndham Vale — Thursday 9 June from 10am-4pm

Bookings can be made online at business.vic.gov.au/sbb or by phoning the Business Victoria Contact Centre on 13 22 15.

The Small Business Bus will make further visits to the Western Metropolitan region in the second half of 2016.

Current and prospective business owners can also access personalised support through the Small Business Mentoring Program. Low-cost mentoring from a pool of business experts is available throughout Victoria. These experts come from a range of industry backgrounds and are specialists in areas such as marketing, business planning, financial management and human resources. Through the program business owners can select a mentor that best suits their individual needs.

The Small Business Victoria Workshops program is focused on helping small business operators to build their management capability. Over 350 workshops on 22 different topics are offered throughout Victoria. Free mentoring is also included in many of these workshops. This includes the “Financial Health Check” short workshop, which is being held on Wednesday 13 July at Moonee Valley City Council in Moonee Ponds.

Additionally, the Grow Your Business program helps small businesses to develop and implement strategies to become internationally competitive by offering a range of planning and management services. Businesses can access the services of an independent specialist to undertake either one-to-one or group programs.

Finally, the Victorian Government has a network of metropolitan and regional offices in all areas of the state that are focused on supporting investment and job creation. The Western Metropolitan Office is located in Tottenham, where local businesses can go to access the full range of government support.

More information on all of these initiatives is available at the Business Victoria website at business.vic.gov.au or by phoning 13 22 15.

Boating safety

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 4 May 2016

REPLY:

The Victoria Police Water Police Squad supports safe marine activity on Victorian waterways through the enforcement of the Marine (Drug, Alcohol and Pollution Control) Act 1988, the Marine Safety Act 2010 and the Marine Safety Regulations 2012. Water Police play an important role in keeping Victorian waterways safe, by monitoring boating activities in zoned areas, enforcing speed restrictions and ensuring that all boat owners carry the required safety equipment.

Section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013 provides powers to the Chief Commissioner of Police relating to the enforcement of the law. My role is to ensure that the Chief Commissioner is provided with the resources he needs to ensure communities across Victoria are safe.

The promotion and enforcement of marine safety laws is vital to ensure the safety of all persons undertaking recreational and commercial activities on Victorian waterways.

I am advised that boating activity within the Western Region of Victoria significantly increases during the ‘tuna’ season period from April to June, resulting in an increased demand on police resources.

The Portland area was previously policed by a single crew of two members and one patrol vehicle. Victoria Police has determined that this level of policing presence was no longer sufficient to cope with the increased boating activity.

Victoria Police advises that between November 2012 and January 2015, the Western Region of Victoria experienced over 130 marine incidents that required a response from the Coast Guard or Water Police. The Western Region also experienced 7 boating related fatalities, which represents more than 20% of the Victorian total for that period.

An updated enforcement strategy was developed in 2014 and implemented in 2015. The updated strategy focusses on Victorian locations that are over-represented in marine fatality and serious injury incidents.

A key component of the new strategy is Operation RampStop, a high-profile multi-agency operation by local police and the Water Police, to attend high risk community locations, to enforce the Marine Safety Act and other laws and regulations. Operation RampStop was conducted with success in 2015 and continues in this format in 2016.

The scope of enforcement has been extended to include vehicles, trailers and related securing devices. Victoria Police advises that many of these vehicles do not have the capacity to transport water craft, thereby posing a substantial risk to road users.

Victoria Police considers that the increased enforcement activity through Operation RampStop is necessary for achieving improved marine safety outcomes.

Operation RampStop was conducted in January, March and April of this year. During 2015, boating fatalities in the Western Victoria Region reduced to two, and to date there have been no fatalities during 2016.

Police are best placed to assess the circumstances of a case and will often be in the possession of information that is not known to the wider community. This enables them to weigh up sometimes competing priorities to arrive at a course of action that is in the best interests of the community. Effective policing requires careful examination of the facts and the exercise of judgement, as well as the application of appropriate discretion. Please be assured that the deliver), of community safety is a priority for Victoria Police.

Country Fire Authority training facility

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 4 May 2016

REPLY:

The closure of Fiskville created an immediate gap in State capacity and capability for training firefighters and other emergency management volunteers and staff.

The 2016-17 State Budget commits \$46.2 million to address this issue. The investment does not seek to build another Fiskville. Instead, it takes a strategic approach to providing current and future training capability across the State.

The investment will:

- establish a new Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre in the Central Highlands, including Hot Fire and Multi-Purpose training pads and support facilities
- establish a State Emergency Management Training and Conference Centre at another site in the Central Highlands
- allow for necessary upgrades to the Country Fire Authority Huntly training centre to cater for increased usage and specialist investigation capability.

The 2015-16 State Budget included \$300 000 to commence planning for a new training site in Central Highlands to replace the regional training capacity lost through Fiskville's closure. This seed money has allowed the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to identify potential sites and conduct purchase negotiations. CFA is working towards a 30 June 2016 deadline for acquiring a suitable site.

Wandong Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Symes

Raised on: 4 May 2016

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Investment in education and school infrastructure is a priority for the Andrews Labor Government. This has been demonstrated through our 2016-17 State Budget allocation of \$1.1 billion to build, upgrade and maintain school infrastructure across the state, ensuring that every community has access to a great local school, and every child gets the chance to succeed.

I share the Wandong Primary School community's enthusiasm about additional land being provided to cater for the school's expected enrolment growth in the coming years. I am pleased to advise that the acquisition of the property adjacent to the school has been completed with settlement having occurred on 23 May 2016.

I look forward to visiting the school again to see first-hand how it is able to utilise the additional space provided by this acquisition.

Native vegetation clearance

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 4 May 2016

REPLY:

The 'right to farm' is a concept that extends from the application of existing use rights that is provided for within the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

This allows an occupier to continue a lawful activity without a planning permit, where changes occur to the Victoria Planning Provisions that would have restricted or not allowed that use. Existing use rights are typically considered on a case-by-case basis but may apply if the use has been continuous for the last 15 years, without any breaks of 2 or more years.

As existing use rights are intended to allow a lawful activity to continue where changes to the planning scheme occur, then changes to the native vegetation regulations should not impact on the 'right to farm'.

The Andrews Government made an election commitment to review the native vegetation permitted clearing regulations so that they sensibly protect sensitive vegetation. This review is underway and is supported by an extensive consultation process. A consultation paper, summarising the key issues raised during the first phase of consultation and proposed improvements to the regulations, was recently released for comment as part of the review. The comment period on the consultation paper has just closed with more than 200 submissions received.

The initial consultation phase saw workshop sessions and meetings held across Victoria, including regional areas, with more than 600 people involved. In addition, there is a stakeholder reference group as part of the review which includes a representative from the Victorian Farmers Federation and the Environmental Farmers Network. There

will be continuing opportunities for consultation on any proposed changes to the regulations planned as part of the review.

I welcome the opportunity to listen to and understand the concerns of our farmers and discuss our government's policies directly with them.

Public transport bicycle access

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Dunn

Raised on: 5 May 2016

REPLY:

In April this year, a 12 month trial of bike racks commenced on 15 buses across the Bendigo, Moreland and Cowes/Wonthaggi regions, and on two metropolitan routes (510 — Essendon to Ivanhoe, 512 — Strathmore to East Coburg). A bike rack is fitted to the front of the bus and is spring loaded to allow customers to load and unload their bike quickly, and easily.

Public Transport Victoria offers the cycling community the use of secure bike cages, found at all premium railway stations, and bike hoops.

The trial is important to establish that the use of bike racks is not delaying buses, to measure patronage, performance and customer satisfaction.

Dairy industry

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 5 May 2016

REPLY:

Thank you for raising your concerns about the viability of the dairy industry following the recent milk price reductions.

The price reductions imposed by some major processors have created a major challenge and the Andrews Labor Government has acted swiftly to provide support.

On 24 May 2016, the Government, together with the Victorian dairy industry, announced an \$11.4 million support package for dairy farmers.

As part of the announcement, the Government is providing a \$1.5 million mental health and wellbeing package for dairy farmers. This includes extra personal counselling services, mental health first aid training, and support for community events. More support is also being made available for the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

Victorian dairy industry bodies, including United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Foundation are increasing technical and decision making support for dairy farmers by boosting the Tactics for Tight Times and Taking Stock programs.

The Andrews Labor Government has set aside \$4.5 million to support affected farming communities. The allocation of these funds will be shaped by the conversations I have with dairy farmers and communities over the coming weeks.

In recent weeks, I have also met with the financial sector to reinforce community views that banks should be patient and work closely with, dairy farmer clients at this time of enormous challenge. I have also called on processors to provide farmers with early certainty for 2016–17 prices. Early certainty will give farmers the best possible opportunity to plan for financial challenges ahead.

I appreciate that thousands of Victorian families depend on the strength of the dairy sector; their plight is a top priority for our state. Thank you sharing your views on these difficult issues.

Self-defence laws

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr Bourman

Raised on: 5 May 2016

REPLY:

In Victoria, capsicum spray is classified as a prohibited weapon, as are any articles designed or adapted to emit or discharge an offensive, noxious or irritant liquid, powder, gas or chemical so as to cause disability, incapacity or harm to another person. Prohibited weapons are considered to be dangerous and unsuitable for general possession and use in the community. Accordingly, the possession and use of these weapons in Victoria is strictly limited to people who are able to demonstrate a valid need for them and who are provided with an exemption or approval under the Control of Weapons Act 1990.

Self-defence is not a lawful reason for carrying a prohibited weapon under an exemption or approval, and even if a weapon is not prohibited, carrying any type of weapon or dangerous article for the purpose of self-defence is not lawful in Victoria. Arming oneself on the off-chance of an attack is prohibited because it increases the number of weapons being carried in the community and potentially places people at greater risk of an escalation of violence.

Ultimately, the wish to carry weapons as a form of self-defence must be balanced against the broader public interest in keeping weapons off our streets. The Government believes that the current laws strike the appropriate balance in the interests of the safety of the community as a whole.

Avondale Heights public transport

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 5 May 2016

REPLY:

The Government's focus is to modernise the existing tram network by introducing new fleet and replacing old inaccessible trams, upgrading stops to level access to comply with Disability Discrimination Act standards and improving reliability and priority of the existing network.

The Avondale Heights area is connected to Highpoint Shopping Centre, Victoria University, and Footscray station by bus Route 406. Frequent train connections to the city are available at Footscray station.

The Government has recently implemented a revised timetable on bus Route 406 that aims to improve reliability, better taking into account traffic conditions. Route 406 runs every 15-18 minutes in peak periods, every 20 minutes during the day Monday to Saturday, and every 40 minutes on Sundays.

I am advised that an extension of the tram route would not provide better travel times to the city than the current coordinated bus and train services.

However, I have asked Public Transport Victoria to monitor these transport services and consider Councillor Cornish's request to extend the number 57 tram line if required.

Water trading

Raised with: Minister for Water

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 24 May 2016

REPLY:

I thank the honourable member for her question about water trading and the challenges facing dairy farmers. I have had a chance to listen to and speak with many irrigators in my recent visits to northern Victoria. I have heard about the impacts on farmers of the global fall in milk prices and the decision by Murray Goulburn and Fonterra to retrospectively cut the prices paid to producers. To support dairy farmers through this time, the Victorian Government has made a \$11.4 million assistance package available to ensure affected farmers and communities experiencing financial and emotional stress receive the support they need.

To place a permanent ban on any further water being traded out of irrigation districts in the Goulburn and Upper Murray valleys would impact the value of water entitlements in those areas and also limit the ability of farmers to manage their own water needs. Victoria has been a net importer of water allocation this year with 222GL of water trading into the Murray-Goulburn region up until June this year.

Water trade and the water market provides an important tool for entitlement holders to realise the value of their water and manage their own business risks. The Andrews Government is committed to building confidence in Victoria's water market through continual improvement of the information available and overall market transparency. A key example of this is the recent release of the report Water Market Trends: Trends in Northern Victorian Water Trade 2001-2015.

Opportunities to strengthen Victoria's water market are being developed as part of the preparation of a water plan for Victoria, Water for Victoria. Stakeholders have provided valuable feedback through the Water for Victoria discussion paper consultation process.

The government recognises that any relaxation of river system operational constraints may flood public and private land impacting infrastructure, stock and people. This is why, under state arrangements for environmental watering, the government will not intentionally flood private land without prior agreement of landholders. The government recently committed to an extension of time for the investigation of constraints relaxation to allow further engagement with the community.

Dairy industry

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 24 May 2016

REPLY:

The price reductions imposed by some dairy processors have created a major challenge for Victorian dairy farmers and their affected communities. The Andrews Labor Government acted swiftly to provide support.

On 24 May 2016, the Government, together with the Victorian dairy industry, announced an \$11.4 million support package for dairy farmers.

As part of the announcement, the Government is providing a \$1.5 million mental health and wellbeing package for dairy farmers. This includes extra personal counselling services, mental health first aid training, and support for community events. More support is also being made available for the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

Victorian dairy industry bodies, including United Dairyfarmers of Victoria, Dairy Australia and the Gardiner Foundation are increasing technical and decision making support for dairy farmers by boosting the Tactics for Tight Times and Taking Stock programs.

The Andrews Labor Government has also set aside \$4.5 million to support affected farming communities. The allocation of these funds will be shaped by the conversations I have with dairy farmers and communities over the coming weeks.

I encourage you to view the Agriculture Victoria website

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/dairy.support-for-dairy-farmers>. The website includes information about the support available to dairy farmers and how to access programs such as Tactics for Tight Times and the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

Victoria Street, Richmond, tram zone signage

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Elasmarr

Raised on: 24 May 2016

REPLY:

The newly constructed easy access tram stops were installed in late February 2016 as part of the tram track renewal works between Hoddle Street and Church Street.

Together, PTV, Yarra Trams and VicRoads will evaluate and monitor the behaviour of all users at the easy access stops along Victoria Street. I have requested that PTV investigate your concerns along with all aspects of road safety at this location as part of this evaluation.

Country Fire Authority Buninyong brigade

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 24 May 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of the Buninyong Country Fire Authority (CFA) Brigade and its selfless contribution to the safety and wellbeing of the community. The government appreciates the vital role played by the brigade's volunteers during the Scotsburn fires in December 2015.

The government has provided \$1.5 million to purchase a suitable site and build a new fire station in Buninyong.

The CFA has advised that while it is actively searching for a suitable site for a new fire station for Buninyong, at the brigade's request it is also exploring the potential redevelopment of the existing fire station site.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Dairy industry

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 25 May 2016

REPLY:

The price reductions imposed by some dairy processors has created a major challenge for Victorian dairy farmers and their affected communities. The Andrews Labor Government acted swiftly to provide support.

The Government is providing \$1.5 million for a mental health and wellbeing package for dairy farmers. This includes extra personal counselling services, mental health first aid training, and support for community events. More support is also being made available for the Rural Financial Counselling Service.

The Andrews Labor Government has also set aside \$4.5 million to support affected dairy farming communities.

The allocation of these funds will be shaped by the conversations I have with dairy farmers and communities over the coming weeks. This includes the very helpful information I gained during my visit to Shepparton on 1 June where I was able to talk with affected dairy farmers. I will also consider suggestions made by my parliamentary colleagues.

Victorian dairy industry bodies are increasing technical and decision making support for dairy farmers by boosting the Tactics for Tight Times and Taking Stock programs. I have also met with the financial sector to reinforce community views that banks should be patient and work closely with dairy farmer clients at this challenging time.

School bullying

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 25 May 2016

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Andrews Labor Government takes the issue of bullying seriously and has invested significantly in a range of initiatives and strategies to help schools prevent and respond to all forms of bullying and unacceptable behaviour.

Bullying is a serious issue for everyone in a school community. Victorian government schools do not tolerate any form of bullying, whether it is physical, verbal or online. All Victorian schools are required to develop and implement a bullying and cyberbullying prevention policy in collaboration with their school communities, to ensure every student is provided with a safe and inclusive learning environment where they feel physically and emotionally secure.

The Victorian Government has, through the Department of Education and Training, a partnership with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation (AMF) which sees over 1600 Victorian schools participating in eSmart schools, a framework designed by AMF to assist schools to develop a culture that promotes the safe, smart and responsible use of technology.

The Bully Stoppers initiative has been developed and made available to all schools to establish a common understanding of bullying for Victorian schools and their communities with support, clear guidance and practical tools to effectively prevent and respond to bullying. Bully Stoppers consists of three components:

- an online toolkit

- a schools grants program, and
- community awareness raising campaigns.

The Bully Stoppers online toolkit was developed by the Department in partnership with national and international experts including Dr Ken Rigby, Dr Andrew Fuller, Susan McLean and Robyn Treyvaud. The toolkit provides evidence-based, practical advice and resources to empower school leaders, teachers, parents and students understand what to do when they see bullying or if they are being bullied for any reason. As at 26 May 2016, there have been over 1.7 million visits to the Bully Stoppers online toolkit.

Over 270 Victorian schools have received Bully Stoppers grants to help them implement strategies, initiatives or programs that aimed to prevent and respond to bullying (face-to-face and online) in their school community.

Bully Stoppers community awareness raising campaigns have included partnerships with Facebook and online media presence ‘mamma mia’, radio competitions for students and print media. Of particular note is the Facebook partnership, which resulted in over 1.8 million impressions reaching over 1.5 million students and parents. Bully Stoppers resources are also used in other jurisdictions across Australia. The National Safe Schools Hub provides links to Bully Stoppers resources, as does the national Bullying No Way! Website.

In addition to Bully Stoppers, the Victorian Government is committed to equality and supporting same sex attracted and gender diverse students in our schools. Safe Schools Coalition Victoria supports schools to address homophobia and transphobia in schools, reducing homophobic bullying and making schools safe and supportive places for all.

As part of its election commitments, the Victorian Government has provided an extra \$1.04 million to expand Safe Schools Coalition into every Victorian government secondary school.

In 2015, 117 schools were provided with a grant of \$5500 to participate in the Victorian Government’s Building Resilience in School Communities project. Each participating school has administered a Resilience Survey to collect, collate and analyse the self-reported strengths of Australian young people. Schools then implemented a project to address the needs identified in their school population.

Premier comments

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 24 May 2016

REPLY:

I am advised that the Premier apologised and Mr Katos has said publicly that he considers the matter closed.

Vermont Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 26 May 2016

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Investment in education and school infrastructure continues to be a priority for the Andrews Labor Government. This has been demonstrated through the Government’s 2016-17 State Budget allocation of more than \$1.1 billion

to build, upgrade and maintain school infrastructure across the state, ensuring that every child has access to a great local school, and gets the chance to succeed.

Fulfilling our ambitious agenda of making Victoria the Education State will take some time, and our ongoing challenge is to responsibly balance and prioritise the needs of over 1500 government schools, all in varying condition. I can assure you that the Andrews Labor Government will continue to use all available data, including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, when allocating funding in future State Budgets.

In the meantime, as part of the \$200 million secured for school maintenance in the 2016-17 State Budget, Vermont Primary School will receive additional Student Resource Package maintenance funding. This can be used to address day to day maintenance issues at the school.

I would be pleased to visit Vermont Primary School with you as soon as my schedule permits to discuss any issues the School may be having.

North Road, Ormond, level crossing

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 26 May 2016

REPLY:

I thank you for your question. To reiterate, as you confirmed, the power outage you referred to was not connected to the North McKinnon Centre Level Crossing Removal Project.

The crossings at North Road, McKinnon Road and Centre Road are three of the eleven crossings that are being removed by the Andrews Labor Government on the Frankston line. As you are aware, the previous Liberal Government did not remove any.

The removal of the three crossings is an enormous project taking place in a built up area. Some impacts on traders and residents are unavoidable. The project team, in response to traders concerns, has put in place a number of specific initiatives to support local traders over the major works in June/July. These include a trader specific advertising campaign on radio and print for the major construction period in June/July, the popular 'Open For Business' campaign which is getting a refresh over the June/July period, business mentoring support, and the establishment of a working group to look at the opportunities around station openings for traders and working to reduce peak road closures over June/July to just one weekend.

In the long term, local businesses will benefit from the removal of three dangerous and congested level crossings which will improve traffic flow and general amenity. The construction of three new modern stations will revitalise local communities, create more harmonious and integrated shopping strips as well as public spaces for locals, visitors and commuters.

London hotel, Port Melbourne

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 26 May 2016

REPLY:

A planning permit application (P1313-2015) was lodged with the City of Port Phillip in December 2015, for the construction of a new eight (8) storey apartment building at 92 Beach Street, Port Melbourne. The proposed

redevelopment of the site would involve demolition of the existing building. There is currently no Heritage Overlay applied to the site, and accordingly no planning permit is required for demolition.

The applicant has now lodged a Section 79 Application for Review with the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), which is listed for hearing on 22 August 2016.

A building permit for demolition has been issued by a private building surveyor dated 25 June 2015.

The City of Port Phillip has requested that I exercise my powers under section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, to apply an interim Heritage Overlay (H0498) to 92 Beach Street, Port Melbourne (London Hotel) through Amendment C128 to the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

Amendment C128 as an interim measure, proposes to protect the property from demolition while Council undertakes a thorough heritage assessment of the site.

I have received Amendment C128 and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning are currently assessing Council's request prior to a decision being made.

The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria has not received a request for an interim protection order under the Heritage Act 1995.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 22 June 2016

Western Metropolitan Region constituent

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 4 May 2016

REPLY:

Ms Sadler emailed my office on 19 April 2016. The Director of Housing replied on behalf of the Government to Ms Sadler's email prior to your adjournment matter being raised.

Past adoption practices memorial

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 24 May 2016

REPLY:

On Thursday, 25 October 2012, the Victorian Parliament formally apologised to the mothers, fathers, sons and daughters who were profoundly harmed by past adoption practices in Victoria.

The Apology stands as a commitment to the community to ensure those past practices are never repeated and recognises the pain and trauma experienced by those affected.

My department has been in contact with Independent Regional Mothers and the Wellington Shire Council regarding the memorial project. I am advised that the project is under the auspices of Wellington Shire Council.

I am advised that Independent Regional Mothers have secured \$5000 in funding from Relationships Australia Victoria under their Forced Adoption Support Service Small Grants Program.

I commend Independent Regional Mothers for the support and advocacy the group provides to those affected by past adoption practices in Victoria.

We have received a request for a Victorian Government contribution to the memorial from Ms Brenda Coughlan, Spokesperson for Independent Regional Mothers. This proposal is under consideration by my department.

Small Business Festival Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 24 May 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises the significant contribution Victoria's 540 000 small businesses make to local communities, particularly in providing jobs, growing the economy and building social cohesion.

This is why the Government is committed to ensuring that small businesses can access the information and support they need to help them innovate, connect with new markets, invest and create jobs.

The Victorian Small Business Festival is one of the ways the Government is working with Victorian small business owners to ensure they have the knowledge and resources they need to succeed.

Now in its 11th year, the 2016 festival is the State's premier event for small business. The festival will host more than 400 free and low cost events in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Western Metropolitan will host 30 Small Business Victoria workshops running throughout the Festival, including: 'The role of collaboration in innovative enterprises' on 10 August and 'Success outside home office walls — mastering the transition' on 18 August. You may wish to promote these and other events scheduled during the festival to small businesses in your electorate.

In addition, the Small Business Bus will be in Footscray, outside the Library, on Tuesday 9 August, from 10am to 4pm as part of the Festival, and will be able to provide practical advice and assistance to small business operators in the western metropolitan region.

National disability insurance scheme

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins

Raised on: 26 May 2016

REPLY:

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) represents a fundamental change in the operating environment for providers of disability services across Victoria, including the supply and delivery of housing for people with a disability.

The current Commonwealth Government and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) have designed a pricing framework that intends to incentivise housing development and increase supply of specialist disability housing. There are however a number of critical components to achieve this which Victoria is committed to working through.

The Victorian Government has established an Implementation Taskforce as a forum for people with a disability and key stakeholders to work closely with the Victorian Government on issues relating to the NDIS during transition and at full scheme, including housing issues relating to the NDIS.

The Housing Working Group that informs the Taskforce has representation from social housing providers and serves as a mechanism for the Victorian Government to consult with people with a disability, peak organisations and social housing providers specifically on housing policy issues under the NDIS.

This working group has provided input into the Victorian Government's response to the review of the Victorian Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the NDIA's Specialist Disability Accommodation pricing framework.

In November 2015 the Disability Reform Council announced that funds would be released to progress housing pilots for innovative specialist disability accommodation in Barwon. In June 2016 the NDIA is expected to run a co-design process on innovative specialist housing with Barwon NDIS participants, carers and their support staff with submissions closing in August 2016. The Victorian Government will seek to work through our concerns with NDIS housing matters.

Small business sector

Raised with: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 26 May 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises the significant contribution Victoria's 540 000 small businesses make to local communities, particularly in providing jobs, growing the economy and building social cohesion.

The Government also recognises the challenges and pressures small business owners face. That is why we are committed to providing support and mediation services to, small business operators across the state to help them grow and succeed.

I would like to inform the Member that:

- The office of the Victorian Small Business Commissioner (VSBC) was established in 2003 to enhance a competitive and fair operating environment for small and medium businesses in Victoria.
- The VSBC offers low-cost dispute resolution services to small businesses, mediating business to business, business to government, retail tenancy, owner driver and forestry contractor, and farm debt disputes.
- The services offered by the VSBC are designed to save both parties the time, cost and distraction of tribunal and court proceedings.

I would encourage you to direct small business owners in your electorate to the VSBC website at www.vsbcc.vic.gov.au or phone 13 87 22 for further information.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 23 June 2016

Tambo River

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Bourman

Raised on: 26 May 2016

REPLY:

The matters raised fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Water. The member will need to redirect his question to the Hon Lisa Neville.

Greening the Pipeline project

Raised with: Minister for Water

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 8 June 2016

REPLY:

The Greening the Pipeline initiative aims to convert 27 kilometres of the heritage listed Main Outfall Sewer (MOS), along the Federation Trail bike path, into a vibrant and unique parkland.

The initiative is currently focused on seeking ideas for the parkland along a 3.7 kilometre stretch of the pipeline through the suburbs of Williams Landing, Hoppers Crossing, Truganina and Laverton North.

Face to face and online communication channels are being used to receive ideas from the community. This includes a stakeholder workshop currently scheduled for 29 June 2016, and I am pleased to advise that the following organisations are among those invited to participate:

BayWest BUG, Werribee Historical Society, LeadWest, Friends of Skeleton Creek and Altona Bay Wetlands, Truganina Landcare Group, Westbourne Grammar School, Al-Taqwa College, Truganina South Primary School, Truganina Hornets Soccer Club, Werribee Environmental Community Park, NatureWest, Williams Landing Estate Residents Association, Truganina Community Group Inc. and Truganina Residents Association.