

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

8, 9 and 10 March 2016

(Extract from book 4)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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

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

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Drum, Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, Ms Mikakos, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

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

Legislative Council standing committees

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

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

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — Ms Fitzherbert, #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, Ms McLeish and Ms Sheed.

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

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

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

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

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): 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:
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Deputy Leader of the Government:
The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

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

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

Leader of the Greens:
Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	V1LJ
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
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

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 8 March 2016

Bangholme land rezoning

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Ms Springle

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

On 23 November 2015 City of Greater Dandenong (Council), considered their submission to the Plan Melbourne Refresh Discussion Paper. Council resolved to include in their submission their support for the Keysborough Golf Club to be considered for future urban use and for the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to be relocated to include the site within the boundary. Council also resolved to include in their submission for the Bangholme Precinct to be considered for inclusion within the UGB and used for future employment.

At its 15 December 2015 meeting, Council rescinded this decision and removed its support for the Bangholme Precinct to be considered for inclusion within the UGB in its official submission to the Plan Melbourne Refresh Discussion Paper.

I am committed to strengthening and protecting Victoria's green wedges and maintaining the UGB. Melbourne's green wedge areas are vital assets for our community, providing opportunities for productive agriculture uses, conservation of biodiversity, water catchments and landscapes.

The Plan Melbourne Refresh Discussion Paper has reaffirmed the importance of the UGB. Submissions are now closed for the Discussion Paper. All submissions received will now be considered in development of Plan Melbourne 2016.

Community correction orders

Raised with: Minister for Corrections

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

As you would be aware, Community Correction Orders were introduced by the former government as part of the Sentencing Amendment (Community Correction Reform) Act 2011. This Act replaced the former suite of community based sentences with a single, flexible order that targets the risks and needs of the individual offender and their offences.

Given this any implication that the guideline judgement (Boulton v The Queen 2014) expands scope or somehow adds risk to the community, appears misguided. Importantly, the Sentencing Advisory Council recently found that the Community Correction Order was largely being used in place of suspended sentences, not in place of imprisonment. This means that the Community Correction Order is reducing risk in that people that would have been in the community, unsupervised, on a suspended sentence are being monitored by Corrections Victoria through supervision and other conditions.

Corrections Victoria monitors each individual offender's compliance with their Community Correction Order, matching assessed risks and needs with case management and required interventions. The intensity of the offender's case management and monitoring is aligned to the level of risk they present to the community as is the response to non-compliance and escalation in risk. That means responses to keep the community safe will range from:

- Minor sanctions such as warnings.
- Applications to the Court for additional conditions to mitigate risk (such as curfews, non-association, place restriction or alcohol and drug exclusion).
- Contravention proceedings or applications to cancel the Community Correction Order.

If Corrections Victoria identifies that there is an imminent risk of reoffending, with a potential to cause harm, action is undertaken through liaison with the appropriate emergency services.

The Andrews Government provided increased resources to Community Correctional Services in the 2014/ 15 State Budget. This included an extra 147 staff since August 2015 as part of our \$88.9 million funding injection to support community corrections. This includes 143 additional Community Correctional Services staff, and four staff to pilot a mental health clinical advice service at two court locations. Providing appropriate resources to Community Correctional Services is the most effective way to ensure that offenders are managed effectively.

The Andrews Government constantly monitors criminal sentencing, including the use of Community Correction Orders. If it becomes clear that the design of the former government's legislation is flawed, this will be addressed in the same way the Andrews Government has taken action on fixing the former government's Bail Act and baseline sentencing scheme.

South-western Victoria public transport

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 9 February 2016

REPLY:

Through consultation to inform the Regional Network Development Plan (RNDP), over 15 000 pieces of feedback have been collected, analysed and fed into the formulation of the RNDP.

The RNDP will be released in 2016, and will inform priority setting across the regional public transport network, on all modes of transport as well as identifying service gaps within the network.

Through this process, opportunities to improve public transport in the State's South West will be identified and prioritised to connect regional Victorians to jobs, family and friends, and essential services such as health care and education and training opportunities.

Community shade grants program

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 9 February 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to reducing the burden of skin cancer, and as such has committed \$15 million for skin cancer prevention initiatives and programs in the 2015-16 Victorian State Budget.

The new Community Shade Grants Program provides grants for shade development in community based settings, such as parks, sports clubs and playgrounds.

The first application round closed in December last year and received great interest from the community. This response is a clear indication of the great need for shade in our community spaces.

In order to meet this need, the Victorian Government has doubled the grant pool for this round, increasing it from \$900 000 to \$2.1 million. In total, 323 grants will fund much needed shade provision in a range of community based organisations including the Newport Power Junior Football Club, Western Athletics and Altona Miniature Railway.

With such community interest in the grants, I am pleased to announce the next round will open towards the end of this year. Applicants that were not successful in receiving a grant in the first application round will be invited to apply in the next round.

Community shade grants program

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Shing

Raised on: 9 February 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to reducing the burden of skin cancer, and as such has committed \$15 million for skin cancer prevention initiatives and programs in the 2015-16 Victorian State Budget.

The new Community Shade Grants Program provides grants for shade development in community based settings, such as parks, sports clubs and playgrounds.

The first application round closed in December last year and received great interest from the community. This response is a clear indication of the great need for shade in our community spaces.

In response, the Victorian Government has doubled the grant pool for this round, increasing it from \$900 000 to \$2.1 million. In total, 323 grants will fund much needed shade provision in a range of community based organisations including those within the local government areas of East Gippsland Shire and Baw Baw Shire.

With such community interest in the grants, I am pleased to announce the next round will open towards the end of this year. Applicants that were not successful in receiving a grant in the first application round will be invited to apply in the next round.

Dhurringile Prison

Raised with: Minister for Corrections

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 10 February 2016

REPLY:

The Cultural Review is an internal operational document regarding the management of the prison, and it is not normal practice to release such documents to the community.

I acknowledge the importance of the relationship that exists between Dhurringile Prison and the Murchison and surrounding local communities. I highlight the role of the Dhurringile Community Action Group (CAG) through which community members can raise issues directly with prison management. I am advised that the scheduled

meeting for November 2015 was cancelled by mutual agreement with the community members, predominantly due to them not having any issues to progress at that time.

I am advised that the CAG met on 5 February 2016 where members were advised that a more comprehensive overview of the review findings would be provided to them after management have had an opportunity to hold additional staff briefings. The CAG will continue to meet with prison management.

Gender equality

Raised with: Minister for Women

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 10 February 2016

REPLY:

Across all stages of life women face significant barriers to employment opportunities, pay equity and living free from discrimination. We also know that gender inequality is the key driver of family violence.

That's why in December 2015, the Andrews Labor Government launched a consultation paper for Victoria's first Gender Equality Strategy. The strategy will guide actions and priorities to enhance women's equality and establish a community that does not tolerate negative attitudes and behaviours towards women.

Individuals and organisations can share their ideas on how gender equality can be achieved in Victoria by making a submission to the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy Consultation Paper by 18 March 2016. Submissions can be made via email to genderequality@dpc.vic.gov.au or by writing to the Women and Royal Commission Branch, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne Vic 3002.

Improving outcomes for women across all areas of the community is not just a win for equality, it's a win for productivity. Your constituents may also wish to join the conversation about the development of the Gender Equality Strategy on Twitter by following #VICforWomen.

Regional and rural kindergartens

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 10 February 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is making Victoria the Education State. This means ensuring children don't miss out on a kinder education because of where they live.

I recognise that operating a kindergarten service in a rural context can be challenging, particularly where there are low and fluctuating enrolments from year to year. I recently announced that an additional \$500 000 in funding will be made available to small rural kindergarten services in Victoria, providing greater certainty for local families and staff.

It is highly disappointing that there has been a misinformation campaign about this by the Liberal Member for Ripon. All small rural kindergarten services will be better off under the new model. Across the state, our smallest kindergartens will be thousands of dollars better off when compared to funding they would have received under the previous Liberal Government's funding model.

Small rural services with eight or less enrolments will receive a new base level of funding that provides a funding increase of up to \$34 888. Services with nine to 14 enrolments will receive a boost to their Small Rural Grant, with indexation being applied for the first time.

The Andrews Labor Government is also providing a package of support measures to assist families and communities in ten drought affected Local Government Areas. The package include free kindergarten to provide access to free kindergarten for all families that reside in one of the ten drought affected LGAs and Financial Hardship Grants of up to \$10 000 for eligible community based funded kindergarten services to support their continued operation during these tough times.

The initiatives will give kindergarten services in these areas confidence that they can continue to offer high quality kindergarten programs for their local communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the services in your electorate for their continued commitment to providing quality kindergarten programs for children in rural Victoria. I am looking forward to my imminent visit to a number of small rural kindergartens in your electorate to hear about the positive impact this additional funding is making in the community.

V/Line services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 10 February 2016

REPLY:

V/Line has a formal process in place to assist customers with a disability if the service is not accessible.

Where the train or the replacement coach is not accessible V/Line will arrange and cover the costs of alternative transport. The alternative transport is normally in the form of an accessible taxi.

These procedures are applicable for customers travelling from staffed or unstaffed stations.

V/Line will work through the future travel requirements of customers with disabilities so they feel confident to travel while V/Line is experiencing these disruptions. I encourage such passengers to contact V/Line so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Level crossings

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 10 February 2016

REPLY:

The Government recognises that local councils are important stakeholders for this project. The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) has provided detailed council briefings on the proposed designs for each municipality along the rail corridor. This includes City of Monash and City of Glen Eira on Tuesday 9 February 2016, and City of Greater Dandenong and City of Kingston on Monday 15 February 2016.

Engagement with councils will continue as this project moves forward, including detailed briefings for council officers. The LXRA is currently consulting with all key stakeholders on the proposed designs, both in person and online, and will be accepting formal submissions on the project until 18 March 2016.

The Victorian Government has committed to fund both the development and long- term upkeep of the 11 MCGs worth of new open space that will be created by this project. Discussions will be held with the relevant councils, as well as community groups, to finalise the ownership and ongoing management of these facilities, however the Victorian Government is committed to providing funds and negotiating with local councils regarding the ongoing upkeep.

Mount Waverley Primary School and Templestowe College**Raised with: Minister for Education****Raised by: Mr Leane****Raised on: 11 February 2016****REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

As part of the Andrews Labor Government's Special Needs Plan commitment, the \$10 million Inclusive Schools Fund is designed to assist schools to implement innovative projects which promote inclusive learning environments and support the social and educational needs of children with disabilities.

Applications for the Fund closed on Monday 30 November 2015. We had an overwhelming response to the Fund, with 287 applications seeking funding of over \$30 million.

All applications have been assessed against the Fund criteria with successful projects announced on 22 February, 2016. We received some very high quality applications and commend the efforts that both Mount Waverley Primary School and Templestowe College have put into looking at how their facilities and grounds can be more inclusive, to complement their current teaching approaches.

The innovation and commitment to inclusion demonstrated in the applications from both of these schools makes me pleased to announce that they were both successful under the first round of the Inclusive Schools Fund.

Mount Waverley Primary School has been allocated \$60 000 for its Maths and Science Sensory Garden and Mindfulness Learning Centre and Templestowe College has been allocated \$200 000 for its Eco-cafe, enterprise and training precinct project.

We look forward to working with successful schools to deliver innovative projects that make their school environments more inclusive.

Interchange Gippsland**Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing****Raised by: Ms Shing****Raised on: 11 February 2016****REPLY:**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) represents a significant change for people with disability, families and carers, as well as service providers and the sector. It also provides an opportunity to improve social inclusion and accessibility, and to strengthen social capital within local communities.

Once implemented the NDIS will provide people with disability access to the supports they need to lead an active life in their communities. There is much planning underway between Victorian and Commonwealth governments and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), to ensure that families have a smooth transition to the Scheme over this three year period.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that people on various support services across Victorian Government will enter the scheme as the first groups in each geographical area. In addition, people who have the most urgent need for supports will enter the scheme within the first two years of the transition period ahead of their geographic area entering the scheme.

The Victorian Government recognises both the opportunities and the challenges that this significant reform presents for service providers like Interchange Gippsland. While there is a substantial increase in funding to the disability service sector, organisations will be working to transition their business practices to a new operating environment while also supporting their clients to make the transition to the NDIS and to ensure minimal disruption.

In recognition of this, in late 2015, I was pleased to announce a \$10 million investment to scale up the breadth and depth of transition support for people with disability, their families and carers, providers and workforce, so that we are well equipped to successfully make this transition to the NDIS.

Also, to ensure people across Victoria can continue to access supports over the time of transition to the NDIS, the 2015-16 State Budget included \$151 million for 827 new individual support packages. We know that one of the valuable services people access through this funding will be respite services.

The Victorian Government has been hosting a number of community forums across Victoria, and we have been meeting with people with disability, families and carers. We have listened and learnt of the need for timely information and support for families in the lead up to NDIS transition, and the need to ensure that people are equipped to be able to discuss their needs and aspirations for the future.

We are working in partnership with NDIA to ensure that information and supports are readily available six months in advance of roll out. Existing services will remain in place until the NDIS rolls out in each area. The role Interchange plays in advocacy and respite provision for the Gippsland community is noted.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 9 March 2016

Warrnambool Special Developmental School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 9 February 2016

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian Government is investing billions of dollars to make Victoria the Education State — a record investment that will ensure a great local school for every community, and give every child the chance to succeed.

The Education State is about ensuring that all Victorians have equal access to the benefits and opportunities that come from education. It's about ensuring that no one is left behind. This is why the Victorian Government launched its Special Needs Plan—to better support children with disabilities and special requirements—because every young person deserves to learn in a supportive environment best suited to their needs.

The Andrews Labor Government made a \$5 million commitment to purchase land and plan for the relocation of Warrnambool Special Developmental School to a larger, more suitable site. I am pleased to confirm that we have delivered on that commitment. On Wednesday 17 February 2016, I was pleased to join you in Warrnambool to officially announce that land has been purchased for the relocation of Warrnambool Special Developmental School.

This is a crucial first step towards building a new facility for the school community, and more broadly, an important step in addressing the capacity of schools to support the social and educational needs of children with a disability, and maximise their learning.

Beechworth Correctional Centre

Raised with: Minister for Corrections

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 11 February 2016

REPLY:

Beechworth Correctional Centre continues to play an important role in the Victorian prison system and provides pre-release preparation to assist prisoners in their transition back into the community. As evidence of its ongoing commitment to the prison, the department continues to fund a range of minor capital works to ensure the facility is maintained to an appropriate standard.

The Department of Justice and Regulation is not aware of any outstanding correspondence from the Indigo Shire Council regarding this matter. The Regional Director for the Hume Region has been in contact with the Indigo Shire Council, and remains available to discuss regional issues as required. As a key partner in a number of regional projects involving the prison, senior regional staff have indicated to council their commitment to continue to work collaboratively with the Shire, and to ensure that it remains informed of plans for the facility.

Police custody officers

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 23 February 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Government is committed to a well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing. In May 2010, the Labor Government committed funding for an additional 1966 police to the frontline which includes an increase of 91 police in the Western Region Division 1, which includes the Geelong Police Service Area.

Since coming to office in November 2014, the Andrews Government has funded almost 700 additional police personnel, reflecting the government's commitment to work with the Chief Commissioner to ensure we provide the resources to police that will keep our community safe. The commitment has seen additional resources for Victoria Police with more police officers, Protective Services Officers, intelligence experts, forensic analysts, and new Police Custody Officers (PCOs).

Our continued investment in policing has seen a record \$2.5 billion budget for Victoria Police in 2015/16 to continue their important work. This is the largest budget Victoria Police have ever received.

The government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to free up police to undertake frontline duties protecting our community where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria. The first of the new Custody Officers are already managing prisoners in police cells at Dandenong, Heidelberg, Sunshine, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong police stations. Three PCOs were deployed to Geelong on 11 January 2016, with a further three PCOs scheduled to be deployed in March 2016.

PCOs undertake custody management duties including processing and supervising detained people, managing visitors to police cells, facilitating access to health services and other administrative tasks as required. PCOs are also empowered to perform other duties such as facilitating appearances before court and performing hospital guard duties.

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

Country Fire Authority Eltham station

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services

Raised by: Ms Wooldridge

Raised on: 24 February 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is proud to advise that the Eltham Country Fire Authority (CFA) station is fully operational and is focussed on the very important responsibility of keeping the community safe during the summer season.

For this reason, plans for an official opening ceremony are underway for later in the year. The CFA has advised that the Eltham Brigade proposes to officially celebrate the new station in May or June 2016 and a media release will be issued at this time.

We look forward to celebrating this exciting milestone for the Eltham Brigade at the opportune time.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 10 March 2016

Youth employment

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 9 February 2016

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Thank you for raising this important issue. Since coming to Government we are taking a multi-pronged approach to tackling youth unemployment. This includes strengthening our TAFE and training system, provision of support for disengaged youth, employment incentives through the Back to Work scheme, and improving transition services in and between school and pathways to further education or work. However, our first priority in assisting youth has been to invest in the TAFE and skills sector. A strong and relevant TAFE and skills sector will enable people to get the necessary skills they need to obtain jobs.

With regard to assisting unemployed youth in Melbourne's west, we have implemented a couple of key initiatives through the local TAFE. In December 2015, I was delighted to announce \$1.4 million to Victoria University from the \$50 million TAFE Back to Work Fund for its new YouthSpark IT Program. The program will support disadvantaged unemployed young people in Melbourne's west to get them into work and support the skills needed by industries in the area.

Additionally, Victoria University is receiving \$500 000 from the \$15 million Skills and Jobs Centre Fund to establish its Skills and Jobs Centre. The hub will be the first point-of-call for students looking to start training, workers needing to reskill, and unemployed workers needing support for retraining and Work placement and for employers. This includes unemployed youth also. These centres will help link jobseekers and employers to ensure they are engaged in quality training that will lead to a job at the end of their course.

Assistance for Disengaged Youth

Young people who disengage early from education are vulnerable in the labour market and are at greater risk of economic and social exclusion more broadly. Providing support to disengaged youth to finish school and obtain qualifications is another important way we're addressing youth unemployment, including those in Melbourne's west.

To assist young people at risk of disengaging, or who have already disengaged from education and training, the Victorian Government is providing \$32 million over four years to Local Learning and Employment Networks. In supporting youth to embark on training, the Government provides a level of subsidy for any training undertaken by eligible Victorians. Additional loadings are available to all students aged 15-19 years who have not completed VCE or VCAL and are from a low socioeconomic status background.

A new \$14 million Reconnect program will help address the drop in early school leavers taking up training. The Reconnect program will provide grants to Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to engage young people in foundation training and support them through their training to further education and the workforce. Applications for grants opened on 1 February and closed on 19 February 2016. I hope to be able to make announcements on this program in early March 2016.

The Reconnect program will also include an additional 10 per cent loading under the Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) applied to all early school leavers aged 15-19 (without Year 12 or equivalent) in any Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) course.

Career Development

A key part of preparation for life post school is building knowledge and understanding of employment options and how to pursue them and of employer expectations. To assist young people to get jobs, we need to strengthen and support the information provided in schools. The Department has developed a range of online resources for teachers, students and parents to support delivery of career development services for young people. These include:

- Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework (VCCF)
- Engaging Parents in Career Conversations (EPiCC)
- Victorian Skills Gateway
- Strengthened Pathways Planning

Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of workplace learning activities while still at school to assist in developing a realistic understanding of the world of work. Students can undertake workplace learning through work experience, structured workplace learning, a School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship or school community work (volunteering work).

Over \$16 million is provided annually to Victorian government schools through the Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) program to ensure that all young people aged 15 years and over (Years 10-12) are provided with an individual Career Action Plan. This includes career development support to assist them to make a successful transition through the senior years of schooling to further education, training or employment.

Back to Work

The Victorian Government's Back to Work Scheme is providing \$100 million in payroll tax or grants relief to business hiring unemployed youth, the long-term unemployed, out-of-trade apprentices and retrenched workers. In October 2015, the Hon Tim Pallas, Treasurer, and I announced a package to boost the Scheme, including extended employer benefits and additional training initiatives that will complement the Back to Work Scheme's employer incentives and contribute to helping participants in target groups. Training initiatives include the following:

Expanding VTG eligibility

Since 1 January 2016, TAFEs and dual sector universities can provide some students who are beginning a new course with exemptions from the upskilling requirement in the VTG eligibility criteria. The exemptions are intended to assist people who are particularly vulnerable, such as the long-term unemployed, as well as those who want to move into a new job or career and need to do training at the same level or lower than their existing qualifications.

Back to Work participants will also be exempt from some restrictions of the VTG. For these students, upskilling requirements will be removed and they will now be able to access government subsidies for training at a lower level of qualification than they already hold and/or if they have already used their VTG entitlement for training in another field.

Other Initiatives

Employers of out-of-trade apprentices and other unemployed people will also receive assistance through the Government's recently increased Back to Work Scheme. Employers will now receive government funding of up to \$12 000 when they hire long term unemployed workers and up to \$5000 for retrenched workers, out-of-trade apprentices, and young people aged between 15 and 25 who have been unemployed for three months or more.

The eligibility criteria for the scheme have also been expanded to include employers who hire eligible employees as an apprentice or trainee.

The Victorian Government is also supporting apprenticeships through a number of new initiatives including:

- The Major Projects Skills Guarantee: On 21 December, 2015, the Victorian Government announced that at least 10 per cent of the work carried out on Victoria's major projects will be undertaken by apprentices, trainees or engineering cadets, giving young job-seekers and workers looking to re-skill, the experience and opportunities they need to kick-start their careers.
- A 50 per cent discount on vehicle registration for eligible apprentices, who need their car for work.
- Investing an additional \$3.5 million to continue support and guidance to apprentices aged 15 to 24 during the first year of their apprenticeship through the extension of the Apprenticeship Support Officers program.

The Andrews Government is committed to connecting young people to employment through training, skills development, career pathways and employment programs

Kangaroo control

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 10 February 2016

REPLY:

While kangaroos are an integral part of Victoria's natural ecosystems and are a protected species under the Wildlife Act 1975, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) issues Authorities to Control Wildlife (ATCWs) for the control of kangaroos where they are damaging property or impacting on biodiversity. The aim of the ATCW system is to strike a balance between the conservation of wildlife and the needs of land managers.

The number of ATCW that can be issued, and the number of kangaroos authorised for control under an individual ATCW, are not fixed. Kangaroo populations have the capacity to significantly increase over time during favourable conditions, and they can also decline in poor seasons. The state-wide numbers of ATCWs and the numbers of kangaroos authorised for control fluctuate significantly between years as these conditions change. These figures are available on the department's website.

Goulburn-Murray irrigation district

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 11 February 2016

REPLY:

In my many trips to northern Victoria, I have met with a range of people within the community, including local government, individual irrigators, and industry representatives.

I am once again heading up to region, this time to Echuca, to meet with farmers at an open forum organised by the Victorian Farmer Federation but open to all farmers.

I have previously made statements both in the house and in the media, about government's support of the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID) irrigators and their communities.

This includes significant financial investment, but also strong action to ensure the social and economic impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan are minimised and local environmental benefits are optimised.

I am listening to the communities concerns and acting on them, for example the release of the Water Market Trends report, which provides irrigators with transparent information on how the market is operating.

The GMID is an important part to the success of the region. We continue to work with the Commonwealth to invest in the future of the area.

I call on local members in the region both locally and federally to support these important programs rather than creating angst and confusion.