

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

9 and 10 February 2016

(Extract from book 1)

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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

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 — Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris, Mr Ondarchie and Ms Tierney.

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

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

participating members

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

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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

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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, 9 February 2016

Defence industry procurement policy

Raised with: Minister for Industry

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 4 August 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Defence Procurement Office was launched on 11 March 2015. The Office is now established in permanent accommodation at Deakin University's Waurn Ponds Campus and three staff have been recruited.

The Victorian Defence Procurement Office, as part of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, has state-wide responsibility and acts on behalf of all Victorian-based defence companies. The office is engaging with Victoria's defence industry, including SMEs, defence primes and research organisations to facilitate opportunities for industry development and job creation.

It has been known for sometime that the BAE Systems' Williamstown shipyard is facing an employment 'valley of death'. Despite this the Federal Government has failed to take timely action to address this situation.

BAE Systems has been reducing its workforce since October 2014 and announced 125 job losses on 12 August 2015 and a further 350 job losses on 13 November 2015.

While on 4 August 2015, the former Prime Minister announced a \$89 billion investment in new surface warships and submarines, which includes the Future Frigate and Offshore Patrol Vessels projects being bought forward by three and two years respectively, there is no commitment from the Federal Government to undertake any shipbuilding work at Williamstown.

Furthermore, the former Prime Minister's announcement did not address any of the Andrews Government's current concerns:

- it fails to address the 'valley of death' for our Victorian shipbuilding workers;
- it directs the build of the Future Frigates will be in Adelaide;
- it makes no commitment as to where the Offshore Patrol Vessels will be built; and
- there is no commitment for an on-shore build for the Future Submarines.

The Andrews Government has been and will continue to work closely with BAE in identifying opportunities to maintain capability and jobs at its Williamstown shipyard and to support those employees facing loss of their employment under the Business in Transition Support program.

Shepparton youth foyer

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 1 September 2015

REPLY:

I am advised that the builder of the Shepparton Education First Youth Foyer, a builder appointed when the Member was the relevant Minister, has provided the Department of Health & Human Services with an amended building works program that shows an expected completion date in the second quarter of 2016. The department continues to monitor the progress of the works.

It is anticipated that the successful tenderer will develop an implementation plan that will see young people move into the foyer in a staged in manner commencing from when the building is complete. The experience of both the Holmesglen and Kangan Education First Youth Foyers shows that a staged process enhances a successful transition for young people.

Gippsland regional aquatic centre

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 3 September 2015

REPLY:

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Andrews Labor Government.

My colleague, the Hon John Eren MP, Minister for Sport, announced the Government's \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund that will facilitate the upgrading of community sports facilities. The Community Sports Infrastructure Fund provides grants for planning, building or improving facilities where communities conduct, organise and participate in sport and recreation.

I note the Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre is part of Latrobe City's plan to provide 'appropriate, affordable and sustainable facilities, services and recreation', outlined in the Council Plan 2013-2017, and that Latrobe City's 10 Year Financial Plan indicates that Council intends to borrow \$12 million to contribute to the project, subject to Council's annual budgeting process.

Given local government's instrumental role in developing and supporting projects for consideration under Victorian Government grants programs, I encourage you to advise your constituents to continue to liaise with Latrobe City Council regarding this matter.

I would also encourage you and your constituents to engage with The Nationals' Member for Gippsland, the Hon Darren Chester MP, about a contribution to the project from the Federal Government; a key element missing from the Coalition's promise last year to Traralgon and the Gippsland community more broadly referred to in your adjournment contribution.

With the right decisions and investment, the Latrobe Valley can attract visitors, and be home to the jobs and industries of the future. The Andrews Labor Government is investing in infrastructure, services, schools and TAFE in regional Victoria, to create jobs and to get our regional cities and small county towns back on track.

Port of Melbourne**Raised with: Minister for Ports****Raised by: Ms Hartland****Raised on: 3 September 2015****REPLY:**

The Port-rail Shuttle concept may not be the only way of achieving improved rail modal outcomes at the Port of Melbourne. Therefore, in the interests of the State, and to provide a holistic approach to the future management of the Port, the government has decided to seek rail modal outcomes as part of the Port of Melbourne lease, rather than proceed with an Expressions of Interest for the Port- rail Shuttle project.

Funding has been retained in the budget against the Port rail Shuttle pending the outcome of the lease process (refer to 2015-16 State Budget, Paper 4, pg 20). The Government will work in partnership with the leaseholder of the Port of Melbourne. to achieve a rail modal outcome that benefits both the State, and port users, at the appropriate time.

Sunbury rail services**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mr Finn****Raised on: 16 September 2015****REPLY:**

The Andrews Labor Government will add 83 Metro train services for Diggers Rest and Sunbury each week at the end of the year, and ensure local passengers retain access to most V/Line services. All trains from 7:00pm onwards extend to Diggers Rest and Sunbury, doubling the frequency of late-night services and providing trains every half-hour for local passengers.

In addition, Sunbury passengers are able to board all but two V/Line services-the 4:25pm (arriving Sunbury at 4:55pm) and 5:04pm (arriving Sunbury at 5:44pm) weekday trains. These evening peak Bendigo line services are experiencing the greatest level of overcrowding.

This change means passengers travelling beyond Sunbury can get the train home at the busiest times, while ensuring that Sunbury passengers still have access to the services they want, when there is room.

At these times, Sunbury passengers are encouraged to use the more frequent metro services available.

Details of fares and ticketing are available in the Victorian Fares and Ticketing Manual which can be found on the PTV website, www.ptv.vic.gov.au.

Max Parkinson Lodge**Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing****Raised by: Ms Lovell****Raised on: 7 October 2015****REPLY:**

I note that this matter is quite longstanding and I have not been advised of any significant progress under the previous government. I am more than happy to work with the Council and the community housing sector to find a solution to house more Victorians.

Murray Basin rail project

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 7 October 2015

REPLY:

On 17 August 2015 the Premier announced the Government's commitment to deliver the full Murray Basin Rail Project at a cost of \$416 million. The Project will boost Victoria's agricultural, mining and freight industries by standardising all of the rail freight lines servicing the Murray Basin region in the west of Victoria.

The project will include standardisation of the Murray Basin rail network from Geelong to Mildura, Manangatang, Sea Lake and Murrayville, as well as reopening of the existing unused standard gauge connection between Maryborough and Ararat. The project will also increase axle loading on these lines to 21 tonnes (the Murrayville line will remain at 19 tonnes axle loading), which will allow an extra 300 tonnes of freight to be carried by each train.

The business case for the project was publicly released and identifies the full cost of the project at \$416.2 million. The Victorian Government has already committed up to \$220 million to the Murray Basin Rail Project.

The Victorian Government is in negotiations with the Commonwealth Government on assistance to fund the remainder of this critical project. Subject to the outcomes of these negotiations, final arrangements for the delivery of the project will be confirmed with industry. An early indication of support from the Commonwealth Government for the project would allow works on the full project to be completed by the end of 2018.

Macedon Ranges equine centre

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 8 October 2015

REPLY:

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council was the recipient of a \$60 000 State Government grant to support a feasibility study to determine the viability of establishing an international standard equestrian centre in the Macedon Ranges.

Completion of the study delivered on a commitment by the Council to investigate the feasibility of an international standard equine facility within the Macedon Ranges Shire. The study benchmarked and identified possible approaches to developing and managing such a facility.

Regional Development Victoria is working with Macedon Ranges Shire Council to discuss the next steps for the project.

Better Together alliance

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 20 October 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring that we have great schools for every community and great teachers in every classroom, as part of our plan to make Victoria the Education State. That's why we are providing the biggest-ever increase in needs-based funding for government schools to ensure the Education State gives all children the best chance to succeed. This includes \$566 million over four years in additional equity funding provided through the Student Resource Package (SRP), targeted at reducing the impact of disadvantage on student outcomes.

All schools can expect to benefit from the recent changes to SRP equity funding, including those in Greater Shepparton. McGuire College, Mooroopna Secondary College, Shepparton High School and Wanganui Park Secondary College will share in more than \$4 million in equity funding in 2016: an increase of over \$1.4 million compared with the equity funding they received in 2015.

Following a meeting with the Better Together Alliance organised by the Member for Shepparton, I instructed my Department to work with the schools. I was pleased to advise the Member for Shepparton and the schools that the Government will be contributing \$120 000 over 3 years to the program.

The Government has also developed the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes to give schools clear direction on how to ensure their funding supports the state-wide priorities of excellence in teaching and learning, professional leadership, positive climate for learning and community engagement in learning. Following my conversations with the Better Alliance Together, the aims of the Alliance, as I understand them, appear to align well with the priorities described in the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes.

In addition, the Government is providing more support for principals and school communities by strengthening services and supports for schools, including at a regional level. Seventeen new areas will be created within the Department of Education and Training's current four regions and approximately 150 new staff will be employed in regional offices to work directly with schools. This initiative will ensure regional offices will be better equipped to meet the individual needs of local schools and communities so they are able to improve student outcomes.

Waverley Park powerlines

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 20 October 2015

REPLY:

The Waverley Park Transmission Lines Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) submitted its report to me on 17 February 2015.

On 17 December 2015 I wrote to all submitters who both opposed and supported the application to amend the permit, to advise that I have publicly released the report of the Advisory Committee.

I have advised the submitters that I now feel obliged to recommend in support of the findings of the Advisory Committee to the Governor in Council that the permit should be amended to release Mirvac from its obligation.

However, a recommendation to the Governor in Council to issue an amended permit will not be made until I have further considered the Community Benefits Package proposed by Mirvac. I will need to be satisfied that the package provides an adequate offset for the impacts of not undergrounding the powerlines.

As part of that consideration I have given all submitters and Mirvac the opportunity to consider the Advisory Committee's report. All parties will also have the opportunity to have a say on the content of a revised Community Benefits Package.

Local government funding

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 20 October 2015

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Northern Victoria for his question.

The financial sustainability of rural councils has been strengthened by a number of factors including the redirection of Victorian Grants Commission Funding to rural Victoria. Other support will be made available in the form of the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund (RJIF). RJIF includes a \$70 million over four years commitment through the Rural Development Program stream to support projects in small towns and communities in the 38 rural local government areas.

The Andrews Government has also invested \$35.8 million to upgrade regional bridges and crossings, on top of the \$1 billion we are investing in regional roads.

The Victorian Auditor General's annual report on local government audits also provides a comprehensive longitudinal analysis of the financial sustainability of all Victorian Councils. Whilst there remains challenges for rural councils in terms of economies of scale and geographical size, the audits confirm the sustainability of the great majority of rural councils. My Department also continues to work directly with councils in the pursuit of organisational and financial sustainability through the provision of 'Better Practice' guidelines and management and governance reform programs.

The Andrews Government has also released "Victoria's Regional Statement" which is a new vision for our regions that will change the way government works with regional Victoria.

Thank you for voting in support of the Governments Local Government Amendment (Fair Go Rates) Bill 2015.

Bellarine Peninsula police resources

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian 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. Division 1 includes the Greater Geelong and Surf Coast Police Service Areas.

Since coming to office in November 2014, the Andrews Government has funded almost 700 additional police personnel reflecting the Government working with the Chief Commissioner to identify additional resources needed to keep our community safe. This commitment has seen additional resources for Victoria Police with more police officers, Protective Services Officers, intelligence experts, forensic analysts, and new Police Custody Officers.

The Government when in Opposition understood that additional resources were required in the Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula area. This was in stark contrast to the then government who failed to listen to the community or provide any additional resources.

After consultation with Victoria Police the Andrews Government committed in our first budget to provide an additional 15 police officers to the Geelong Police Service Area, which includes the Bellarine.

I am pleased to see recent advice from the Chief Commissioner that these additional police have already been deployed and are now providing additional patrols to the Bellarine Peninsula and Geelong.

I am further advised that the increased police hours at the three stations on the Bellarine Peninsula has now commenced.

As you are aware, 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.

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

The Chief Commissioner recently wrote an open letter to the Geelong Advertiser informing the community of Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula that further to the additional 15 police for the Geelong Police Service Area, dedicated police vehicles have been allocated to patrol the Bellarine Peninsula and foot patrols had increased in Geelong.

Local command is reviewing rostering and security arrangements at Portarlington and Drysdale police stations and the counter service will be expanded to seven days per week. The Queenscliff police station counter service will increase to four days per week. The Chief Commissioner expects these services to be in place prior to Christmas.

The Andrews Government has also committed \$30 000 to support crime prevention initiatives being developed by the Bellarine Community Safety Group, which is chaired by local member Lisa Neville MP and Victoria Police.

Rural City of Wangaratta

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Ms Symes

Raised on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

On 21 September 2015, I met with the Administrators of Wangaratta Rural City Council to discuss the progress that they have made during their term.

I am advised that the Council is taking steps to facilitate community engagement and participation in the upcoming council elections.

The return to elected representatives is an important opportunity for the community to be involved. I will continue to talk with the Council to ensure the community is fully prepared.

Eastern Beach development

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

The Geelong Mineral Spa and Wellness Centre is proposed on land fronting Corio Bay within Eastern Park, north east of central Geelong. A significant project for Geelong and G21 Region, the recently updated project feasibility analysis suggests that the project could create 84 jobs and millions of dollars to the Victorian economy in its first year of operation.

It is anticipated that planning approval for the proposed development will be facilitated through a planning scheme amendment to be commenced by Greater Geelong Council in early 2016. The Minister for Planning, the Honourable Richard Wynne will be responsible for making a final decision on the planning scheme amendment and will seek the advice of the Geelong Authority before making his final decision on the proposal.

In addition to the formal statutory approval roles of the Government, Tourism Victoria is working cooperatively with the City of Greater Geelong to ready the project for potential market exposure in 2016.

I am confident that Government agencies are working cooperatively with the City of Greater Geelong to support this project.

Rural and Regional Committee export inquiry

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 22 October 2015

REPLY:

Thank you to the Honourable member for Northern Victoria for his request that the government provide a more detailed response to the Regional and Rural Committee's Final Report into its Inquiry into the Opportunities for Increasing Exports of Goods and Services from Regional Victoria.

The government values the report and the broader role the committee system plays in our parliamentary democracy. That's why it has not only been considered but directly responded to via the government's other policy processes.

The government's initial response, tabled in this Parliament on 22 October 2015, was a precursor to the 17 November 2015 release of the Andrews Government's Regional Statement.

Victoria's Regional Statement will put Government back to work for Regional Victoria.

It builds on our commitment to invest in Regional Victoria, grow jobs and strengthen local economies. The Statement outlines the work already underway to strengthen the competitiveness of our food and fibre industries in overseas markets and boosting our regional tourism offerings.

It sets out how regional communities will be given a stronger voice in government decision-making by directing priorities identified by regional communities straight into the heart of the Government's agenda.

The Regional Statement also builds on our election commitment to establish the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund.

Legislation to establish the fund was approved earlier this year, and \$500 million fundi rig was allocated in the 2015 Budget. The Fund was opened on 1 July 2015 and Regional Development Victoria is now working closely with regional communities and businesses to identify and invest in the priorities that will boost local economies, grow jobs and strengthen communities.

Sunbury rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 10 November 2015

REPLY:

I refer to the matter raised in the Adjournment Debate on 11 November 2015 regarding Sunbury rail services.

A community forum was held in Sunbury recently to hear from residents and passengers regarding public transport. This forum was organised by the local Member for Sunbury, Josh Bull MP, who has been advocating for better train services on behalf of his community.

Following review of feedback from the Sunbury community, I recently announced that Sunbury residents will be able to continue to use V/Line trains to travel to and from Melbourne, except for two trips in the PM peak that are currently heavily loaded. This will allow Sunbury residents to continue to travel on V/Line trains at times when trains are less busy, whilst ensuring there is capacity for passengers travelling along the Bendigo line in peak periods.

In addition to this, I was pleased to announce an additional 73 metro trains per week to Diggers Rest and Sunbury station, with all Watergardens trains after 7.00 pm extending to Sunbury station from the beginning of 2016. On top of this, Sunbury will benefit from all-night train services on Friday and Saturday nights as part of the Andrews Labor Government's Night Network Trial in 2016. This is a significant boost in train services for Sunbury residents.

Family violence

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 10 November 2015

REPLY:

I am happy to confirm that I joined the Member in Western Victoria in early December 2015. Whilst there is no community that is immune to family violence, we know that this harm occurs at greater levels in regional and rural Victoria. Upon being appointed as the first Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence I established a series of round tables with representatives from all 79 local governments. Local government has a unique role in the prevention of family violence and the roundtables provided an opportunity to discuss the specific needs and experiences of each community.

During my visit to the Geelong region I also joined the Member for Geelong and Member for Lara at a public family violence forum. I provided an update on the Royal Commission into Family Violence and the work being undertaken by the Andrews Labor Government to address this harm. This forum provided participants with an opportunity to discuss the needs and experiences of this region in relation to family violence.

These two events formed part of the first Victoria Against Violence campaign. The campaign coincided with the United Nation's endorsed Unite: 16 Days of Activism that aims to enhance awareness and education to prevent family violence.

Further prevention activities that were held across Victoria included the Clothesline Project, the joint sitting of the Victorian Parliament and the Walk Against Family Violence. A full list of events held across Victoria during this campaign can be found at <http://www.vic.gov.au/news/victoria-against-violence.html>.

Manufacturing innovation

Raised with: Minister for Industry

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 10 November 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Government is committed to ensuring manufacturing continues to play an important role in Victoria's economy. While we often hear the most about the decline of traditional manufacturing, Victoria is embracing the challenges of a transitioning sector in an increasingly sophisticated and intelligent way. Victoria is emerging as Australia's leader in advanced manufacturing, as demonstrated by the Commonwealth's recent move to place its new \$14 million national Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre in Geelong.

As you are aware, the Government's strategy for industry is to focus on investing in industry sectors with high growth potential and to support the businesses and workers from slowing parts of the economy to transition to into those growth sectors. Priority sectors for the Government include medical technology and pharmaceuticals, new energy technology, food and fibre, transport, defence and construction technology, international education, and professional services. Advanced manufacturing is a critical enabling capability across all of these sectors.

The Future Industries Manufacturing Program, part of the \$200 million Future Industries Fund, will provide grants of up to \$500 000 to assist companies to implement new manufacturing technologies and processes that will provide a critical foundation for growth. The Government has developed Towards Future Industries: Victoria's Automotive Transition Plan. This provides \$46.5 million of support for automotive workers and businesses to transition and compete in new markets after vehicle production ends in Australia in 2017. It also supports the growth of businesses located in the regions most affected by the transition of the automotive industry, particularly local manufacturers. The Local Industry Fund for Transition (LIFT) allocates \$5 million for businesses in Melbourne's West to help grow jobs and boost economic development in the area.

Team Respect

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

Raised by: Ms Patten

Raised on: 10 November 2015

REPLY:

I would like to thank the Member for raising this important matter of targeted prevention programs with me.

As the Member is aware the Royal Commission into Family Violence that is now well underway has been tasked to examine the current service system and propose practical solutions to address systemic issues. The Royal Commission's recommendations will guide appropriate system reform and will provide state-wide benefits, including the northern metropolitan region.

The 2015-16 State Budget is supporting the Royal Commission and meeting the immediate needs of the family violence service system while the Royal Commission is underway. The Budget provides \$81.3 million over five years for family violence. The 2015-16 State Budget includes \$2 million for the extension of a number of projects for preventing violence against women and children.

The Andrews Labor Government understands that community engagement is vital in preventing this social harm. That is why I am proud that the Andrews Labor Government this year established the first Victoria Against Violence Campaign, that concluded last week. The campaign coincided with the United Nation's endorsed Unite: 16 Days of Activism that aims to enhance awareness and education to prevent family violence. A range of prevention activities were held across Victoria including the Clothesline Project, the joint sitting of the Victorian

Parliament and the Walk Against Family Violence. A full list of events held across Victoria during this campaign can be found at <http://www.vic.gov.au/news/victoria-against-violence.html>.

Bendigo region occupational therapy forum

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 10 November 2015

REPLY:

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a national scheme based on insurance principles. It provides choice and control and a whole-of-life approach to supporting people with a disability to enable them to live more independently and work towards achieving their goals. People who are eligible for the NDIS will receive individualised care and support that is flexible and responsive to their needs.

As identified by the work of the Productivity Commission, the NDIS will improve economic growth across Victoria with the disability workforce expected to double its current size to approximately 48 000 to full scheme roll out by 2019. The demand for allied health professionals such as occupational therapists is likely to increase significantly as a result of this expansion.

The Victorian Government recognises that fundamental to the success of the NDIS will be a strong and diverse sector with providers that can respond flexibly to the needs and preferences of NDIS participants.

Through National Disability Services Victoria, the Victorian Government has invested in a range of activities to ensure sector and participant readiness. In July 2015, the Victorian Government provided a further \$450 000 to National Disability Services Victoria to continue to support existing service providers to get ready for the roll out of the full scheme.

On 1 December 2015 the Victorian Government also announced \$10 million for the NDIS Transition Support Program to scale up the breadth and depth of transition support for people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and the workforce. To deliver this program we will partner with agencies that know what people, providers and the workforce need to successfully make the transition from our existing state based systems to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting people with a disability, their families, carers, service providers and the workforce to ensure a successful transition to this significant reform and make the vision of NDIS a reality in Victoria.

Portland aluminium smelter

Raised with: Minister for Energy and Resources

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 10 November 2015

REPLY:

I have, and continue to meet with Alcoa regarding the Portland aluminium smelter. I am happy to offer Mr Purcell an opportunity to meet Alcoa with me.

Growing jobs in Portland and across Victoria is a priority of the Andrews Labor Government. That is why we are acting to support the growth of jobs through targeted policies and funding programs. This includes the Future Industries Fund and the Government's renewable energy purchasing initiative. Through this clean energy initiative, 1000 jobs are expected to be created, with many likely to be based in Western Victoria.

Dandenong-Pakenham-Cranbourne rail corridor

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 10 November 2015

REPLY:

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) is currently undertaking a tender process for the removal of nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong. This tender is in the advanced stages and the issue of future proofing the corridor continues to be a key consideration. To that end, the two shortlisted proponents have been required to demonstrate in their proposals how allowances have been made for additional tracks in the future.

The LXRA will ensure that the final design does not preclude further expansions to the line.

The Government will continue to engage with groups such as the Victorian Transport Action Group, as we focus on delivering the benefits of this major rail upgrade, to support the significant growth in Melbourne's south-east corridor.

Renewable energy

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 11 November 2015

REPLY:

Under the previous Government, the renewable energy industry in regional Victoria collapsed.

Manufacturers in renewable energy technology, such as Keppel Prince in Portland, were the subjects of attacks by both the State and Federal Coalition Governments.

The Andrews Labor Government is now acting to revitalise the renewable energy industry in Victoria. Since forming Government, we have reversed onerous wind farm laws and announced we would use our purchasing power to build at least 100 MW of clean energy generation. We have also released our Renewable Energy Roadmap. The Roadmap, which was released in Portland, sets out the Government's framework for driving renewable energy generation and jobs across the State, particularly in regional Victoria.

Deer Park level crossing

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 11 November 2015

REPLY:

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

V/Line regularly inspects and maintains all level crossing safety equipment and no fault has been detected at the Deer Park level crossing. Since the full activation of Regional Rail Link on 21 June 2015, V/Line has been running 30 per cent more weekday trains and this means level crossings are activated more often. V/Line reminds motorists and pedestrians not to take risks at level crossings.

Geelong–Melbourne rail service

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 11 November 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has provided funding for the purchase of more V/Locity carriages for V/line regional trains, following the failure of the former Coalition Government to order enough trains to cater for demand.

The Andrews Labor Government's Rolling Stock Strategy will allow for future growth on the network, and address the deficiency in rolling stock numbers that currently exists. Next generation regional rolling stock will also be specified to enable the carrying of a greater number of passengers.

As more carriages become available they will be deployed across the network to cater for demand. The deployment will be informed by Victoria's first ever Regional Network Development Plan which will set out the priorities for the short, medium and long term to improve public transport in regional Victoria.

Western Victoria Region disability services

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 11 November 2015

REPLY:

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a significant reform that will support Victorians with a disability across this state to exercise choice and control over the supports they need to live their life to the fullest.

People with disability, like all of us, have a variety of preferences for living arrangements, whether that be on their own, sharing with others or living with family. Providing housing options for people with disability is an important priority for the Victorian Government and an important aspect of ensuring the NDIS achieves its vision.

The Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and Victoria to transition to the NDIS provides for supports for specialist disability housing. The Victorian Government and the Department of Health and Human Services will work closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency to ensure participants will be supported to pursue their independent living goals during their transition to the full NDIS.

At a recent Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Disability Reform Council meeting, an agreement was made to proceed with housing pilots in the Barwon trial site in November 2015. This is a positive step forward in developing new and innovative models and approaches to housing for people with a disability.

On the 1 December 2015, the Victorian Government announced \$10 million for the NDIS Transition Support Program to scale up the breadth and depth of transition support for people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and the workforce. To deliver this program we will partner with agencies that know well what people, providers and the workforce need to successfully make the transition from our existing state based systems to the NDIS.

A number of community forums across Victoria have been held about the implementation of the NDIS. These forums have been well attended by potential participants, service providers and interested community members. A forum will also be held in Warrnambool on 16 December 2015 and I look forward to talking with your constituents about this significant reform.

Further details on public forums to be held over the coming months are available on www.ndis.vic.gov.au.

The Victorian Government is committed to support participants, service providers and the workforce to make the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme a reality for Victoria with a disability.

Heavy vehicle regulation

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 11 November 2015

REPLY:

I refer to the Adjournment Debate matter raised by you in the Legislative Council on 11 November 2015 regarding insurance cover for over-dimensional heavy vehicles, when used during an emergency. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I am advised that section 197 of the Heavy Vehicle National Law Application Act 2013 (HVNL) provides exemptions to enable a heavy vehicle to be used in an emergency. An 'emergency' under section 197 includes a fire, explosion or natural disaster. This section empowers the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) or its delegate, which in Victoria is VicRoads, to exempt a heavy vehicle or the driver or operator of a heavy vehicle, from the prescribed requirements of the HVNL.

VicRoads has advised that it is working with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and NHVR to develop a state-wide Gazette that suspends over-dimensional heavy vehicle permit requirements during emergencies.

For further information regarding this matter, VicRoads has suggested that you contact Mr Ian Mond, Senior Policy Officer, on (03) 9854 1830.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Night Network

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 12 November 2015

REPLY:

Community and stakeholder engagement forms an important part of the evaluation of the Night Network trial in 2016. As you are aware, the Salvation Army's Youth Street Teams work closely with Victoria Police on its Safe Streets program. To understand the outcomes of the trial, the evaluation team will draw on supporting resources such as the data collected by the Safe Streets program where appropriate. In addition, community and stakeholder engagement forums running throughout 2016 will provide an opportunity to obtain further feedback from the Salvation Army and other similar organisations.

Public transport infrastructure

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Bourman

Raised on: 12 November 2015

REPLY:

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) has reviewed the options and still deems the designated site as the most suitable for the new Train Maintenance and Stabling Facility.

As part of the land acquisition process, PTV will engage an agronomist to assess the options available to minimise the impact of the facility on the operation of Mr Larcombe's farm.

PTV is also assessing the viability of providing a link that connects both sides of the farm, thereby enabling livestock to freely pass between the paddocks on the southern side of the Train Maintenance and Stabling Facility and the shearing and other sheds located on the northern side.

Drought assistance

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 12 November 2015

REPLY:

On 15 and 16 November 2015, the Victorian Government announced a \$27 million drought response package targeting north west Victoria. The measures have a strong community focus and aim to complement the ongoing support that is already available Victoria wide.

The package includes:

- \$1.5 million for a Drought Extension Program to help farmers make necessary on-farm decisions such as de-stocking, animal health and welfare, feed budgeting, land management, irrigation and water use efficiency;
- \$500 000 to establish a Stock Containment Areas Program to protect key soil and land assets and improve livestock management during drought;
- \$1 million for the Catchment Management Authority Drought Employment Program which will provide local employment for people directly affected to undertake works on key environmental projects;
- \$400 000 to support ten of the most drought impacted Local Councils to deliver targeted social support for drought affected households, businesses and communities through community led events and activities;
- \$220 000 to deliver Mental Health First Aid training and implement local community engagement and support measures across ten of the most drought affected local council areas;
- \$270 000 for additional Rural Financial Counsellors;
- \$300 000 from the State Schools Relief program to provide families in drought affected communities with uniforms, shoes and other essential school items;
- \$960 000 to support kindergarten participation in drought affected communities;
- \$5.8 million from the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund to ensure kids in the most drought affected regions don't miss out on these important educational experiences;

- \$1 million worth of local community infrastructure projects in drought affected areas to be fast-tracked through the \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund;
- \$1.1 million to increase water supply to remote towns not connected to a secure water supply;
- \$1.15 million to support the development of a business plan for the proposed South-West Loddon Rural Water Supply Project;
- \$1.7 million for stage one construction activities for the South West Loddon Rural Water Supply project;
- \$150 000 to extend the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline to increase water supply to properties within the southern Wartook Valley which is currently without a secure raw water supply;
- \$1.2 million to undertake critical maintenance of key roads in drought affected regions to improve safety and support efficient and cost effective movement of freight;
- \$200 000 to establish a Victorian Regional Drought Coordinator; and
- Up to \$60 000 to support small business workshops and seminars for business planning and risk management.

In addition to these targeted measures, the Victorian Government announced a \$10 million fund over two years to support drought affected communities. Community consultation will occur regarding which initiatives can best support drought affected communities to recover and manage dry conditions over the short to medium term.

Minister for Families and Children comments

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 12 November 2015

REPLY:

The Government seeks to encourage and promote attitudes that reflect its commitment to inclusion for all Victorians. The Government is supporting Victorians with a disability through significant investment in a number of programs and policy reviews.

In September 2015 the Government signed a historic bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth outlining the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Victoria over the next three years.

The Victorian Government will contribute funding of \$2.5 billion per year and the Commonwealth Government will contribute \$2.6 billion per year, when the NDIS is fully implemented. This will more than double the current funding for disability support and an estimated 105 000 Victorians with a disability will have access to the supports they need by 1 July 2019. Once fully rolled out, the NDIS will represent the end of rationed services and waitlists for people with a disability and their families.

The Government supported the establishment of the Parliamentary Inquiry into the systemic failures in Victoria's disability care system. The Government will draw on this Inquiry and the Ombudsman's Investigation into Disability Abuse Reporting to ensure that robust quality and safeguard mechanisms are implemented in the context of the NDIS.

In 2015 the Government commenced development of the State Disability Plan for 2017-2020. The Plan will set out the Government's vision for a Victoria that provides people with a disability with the same opportunities and experiences afforded to everyone else. The plan will outline the continuing role for the Victorian Government, post rollout of the NDIS, in enabling people with a disability to participate and contribute to social, economic and cultural life.

The Government has pursued reforms in mainstream areas such as education, public access, transport and employment. These reforms aim to improve inclusion of people with a lived experience of disability, and include:

- investing in making Victorian schools more inclusive and equitable for students with a disability by launching the following initiatives:
 - as part of the Government’s Special Needs Plan, a new \$10 million Inclusive Schools Fund, and a comprehensive review of the Program for Students with Disabilities
 - commitment to expanding the Abilities Based Learning and Education Supports tool across Victoria
 - launch of Learning Together and Rock Solid, two new initiatives aimed at helping families with children with disabilities or additional learning needs.
- rolling out \$110 000 ‘Changing Places’ accessible bathrooms at the MCG and the Melbourne Zoo
- undertaking a review of the multi-purpose taxi program
- developing State programs to help disadvantaged people, including people with a disability, into work. These include the Back to Work Scheme, Work and Learning Centres and the Futures for Young Adults program.

MV Portland

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 24 November 2015

REPLY:

I am informed that:

The Commonwealth Government has issued Alcoa Australia (Alcoa) with a temporary coastal licence which will allow it to utilise a foreign ship with a foreign crew for its long established practice of transporting refined alumina from north-west Western Australia to Portland for aluminium smelting.

This change is due to the decommissioning by Alcoa of the MV Portland, a ship which has been performing this function for almost 30 years. The ship is operated by a contractor, the ASP Group, with a current crew of approximately forty maritime employees.

I understand Alcoa’s position is that using a foreign ship with a foreign crew will potentially provide significant cost savings, assisting with the competitiveness of the Portland smelter.

Officers from the Victorian Government Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) have been in contact with the ASP Group, which has advised that it will seek to redeploy employees where possible, and that it will meet all its obligations as an employer with regards to redundancy payments.

The ASP Group and its employees have also been offered the services of the Government’s Business In Transition Support program to help affected employees access retraining or identify new employment opportunities in the Portland region.

The Victorian Government will raise the issuing of the temporary coastal licence with the Commonwealth Government and Alcoa, and will request that the possibility of an Australian ship being available to perform this work at a competitive rate be investigated in detail, given the intent and temporary nature of such licences.

I encourage the Member to also raise his concerns with the Turnbull Government directly.

Interface Growth Fund

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 24 November 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for your question regarding the Interface Growth Fund.

This significant \$50 million investment from the Andrews Labor Government is an initial investment towards meeting the critical infrastructure needs of communities in Melbourne's diverse and fast-growing outer suburbs. This funding will enable councils to begin a program of work to deliver the types of infrastructure communities need to deliver economic benefits, provide local jobs and improve access to services for growing communities.

I was delighted to be able to announce \$5.5 million for Cardinia Shire Council to deliver the IYU Soccer Reserve and Heatherbrae Recreation Reserve Pavilion. Construction of both of these projects will commence in early 2016 with completion expected in early 2017. These facilities will provide the necessary infrastructure to support physical activity and a place for communities to come together and build a sense of community.

I will continue to work closely with Cardinia Shire Council and all other interface councils to ensure that the Andrews Government continues to deliver on its promises. I will also ensure that I visit Cardinia to inspect the projects with you.

Libraries

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Ms Symes

Raised on: 24 November 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for your question regarding applications from Mitchell Shire Council and Murrindindi Shire Council seeking funding for public library enhancements as part of the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program 2015 funding round.

I was pleased to endorse Mitchell Shire Council's application for funding of \$4250 for electricity upgrades at its libraries in Broadford, Kilmore and Seymour. This project addresses the changing needs of these communities and will provide users with greater opportunities to access study spaces and Wi-Fi whilst powering their devices.

I was fortunate to visit Kinglake library on 15 December 2015 to formally announce funding of \$139 900 to Murrindindi Shire Council. This funding will go toward the purchase of four back-up generators for three of its libraries in Alexandra, Kinglake and Yea and also to replace the existing generator at their mobile library. This will allow the Council to provide continuity of its service through times of extreme weather, emergencies or planned outages. It will also allow the Council to use these libraries to provide a safe refuge if the need arises, especially for the elderly and vulnerable in the community.

Overall, a total of 21 projects received funding as part of the 2015 funding round of the \$4.3 million Living Libraries Infrastructure Program.

City of Wyndham

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 24 November 2015

REPLY:

In response to your unsubstantiated allegations of bullying, I would advise that bullying or threatening behaviour by a councillor towards another councillor will ordinarily constitute a breach of that council's councillor code of conduct.

Breaches of a council's code should in the first instance be dealt with by council itself through processes set out in the code.

If this does not resolve the matter a councillor or group of councillors can make an application to a councillor conduct panel for a finding of misconduct.

Councillor conduct panels are the appropriate forum to hear these matters and, where it is warranted, to sanction inappropriate behaviour.

The reforms that I have introduced to the councillor conduct framework through the Local Government Amendment (Improved Governance) Act 2015 will significantly strengthen the conduct framework.

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation funding

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Wooldridge

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

I thank the member for raising the issue of health prevention and promotion in Victoria in the Adjournment debate in the Legislative Council.

As the member would be aware, through the 2014 Commonwealth Budget, the Liberal Government announced it would cease mid-stream the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health.

This decision resulted in \$90 million of investment that was to flow to Victoria to support health prevention activity being cut, and along with that the programs that funding had been and was to continue supporting.

These Commonwealth cuts had a significant impact right across Victoria, and resulted in job losses, program cessation and loss of momentum in preventative health activity.

When the \$90 million cut is combined with the \$17.7 billion in Commonwealth cuts to Victorian hospitals over the next decade, it is simply not possible for state or local governments to fill the funding gap left behind by the Liberal Government.

It is in this context that it's appropriate and timely to consider the State's role and investments in health prevention and promotion, and how the Government is best placed to meet the challenges associated with, for instance, rising rates of chronic diseases now and into the future.

The Victorian Health Promotion Fund (VicHealth) was established by the Tobacco Act 1987 with funding for the organisation to be derived from cigarette taxes.

Victoria's tobacco control regulatory landscape has changed considerably since the introduction of the Tobacco Act 1987, almost thirty years ago. So too has the prevalence and profile of smokers in Victoria, with a significant reduction in smoking rates achieved over that period.

This is a welcome development but has consequently rendered the regulatory framework through which VicHealth derived its funding, and subsequent amendments to the Act around funding no longer adequate to meet the needs of the organisation, government or community's expectations.

Earlier this year, I announced that the Andrews Labor Government will ban smoking in outdoor dining areas. The introduction of a smoking ban in outdoor dining areas will build on the strong record of previous Labor governments in implementing tobacco reform in Victoria.

Implementing this commitment will require further amendments to the Tobacco Act, and as such it is timely to examine, among other things, the legislative provisions related to the establishment of VicHealth, given as outlined, it is an element of that Act.

A consultation process has commenced and includes more than 100 key stakeholders, such as local government, hospitality industry, small businesses and public health organisations, including VicHealth.

This process is all about how, in the midst of Liberal funding cuts to health prevention, Victoria is best placed to organise its efforts, investments and the governance around health promotion and prevention into the future.

Asbestos Awareness Week

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

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

The matter raised in this Adjournment Debate does not fall within my portfolio but lies within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Finance, The Honourable Robin Scott MP.

Freedom of information

Raised with: Attorney-General

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Unit in the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR) is adequately resourced to manage the usual number of FOI requests the department receives within the statutory 45 day period, including a reasonable allowance for times when unusually high levels of requests are received.

Prioritisation of FOI requests is used to ensure that all applicants are given equal consideration when it comes to processing requests. Prioritisation was a recommendation of the Victorian Ombudsman when that office had responsibility for FOI administration and continues to be used today.

DJR has used prioritisation in the past to help manage workload. For example, in opposition Ms Jill Hennessy MP lodged ten requests within a short space of time and was asked to prioritise the order in which she wanted those requests processed. The department took this approach in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the applicant.

Western distributor

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government will partner with Transurban to build the \$5.5 billion Western Distributor Project, which includes the Monash Freeway Upgrade and upgrades to Webb Dock's access to CityLink.

The Western Distributor will deliver immediate travel time savings of up to 20 minutes a day, take 6000 trucks off the West Gate Bridge, and create 5600 new jobs.

The project will put an end to trucks rat-running through inner west streets to get to the Port of Melbourne with extended truck curfews on local roads once construction has completed.

The Government's reference business case, which was released on 8 December, shows the project will deliver a benefit of \$1.30 for every dollar invested and an \$11 billion boost to Victoria's economy.

The project's final scope and design including the length and location of the tunnel will be determined through a comprehensive planning process to be undertaken in 2016 guided by consultation with the community, local government and industry. The consultation will build on the community engagement undertaken by Transurban to date.

The project will be funded by a combination of tolling on the new Western Distributor, an extension of City link's concession and State and Commonwealth contributions.

Construction of the Western Distributor will start in 2018 and be completed in 2022.

Night Network

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

Protective Services Offices are the responsibility of Victoria Police. As such, this question should be directed to the Minister for Police, the Hon Wade Noonan MP.

Wild dogs

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to the continuation of an effective wild dog control program in Victoria, and to maintaining local community involvement in this important work.

For example, a new Mallee zone is the latest addition to the Victorian wild dog program, increasing the total number of wild dog management zones in Victoria to 16. The Mallee zone now has its own work plan that will be

reviewed annually through consultation with local community members, as occurs with the other 15 zones, including Gippsland. Ongoing community programs such as coordinated community 1080 baiting on public land also continue.

The Government supports proactive wild dog control methods such as 1080 baiting, and reactive methods such as trapping and shooting to minimise wild dog attacks on other animals.

Effectively reducing the negative impacts of wild dogs requires a strategic, proactive and cost effective approach utilising all available management practices. People can continue to shoot wild dogs even though the wild dog bounty has ended.

In terms of aerial baiting, selecting the timing and frequency to optimise effectiveness requires the consideration of many factors. The wild dog program elected not to perform aerial baiting in Autumn 2015 but instead conducted aerial baiting in Spring with additional remote baiting on foot in a steep and rugged area near Benambra. This decision took into account other needs identified during community consultation for wild dog management zone work plans; demonstrating flexibility and adaptability to local needs.

The second term of the Wild Dog Control Advisory Committee expired in November 2015. The committee played an important role in communicating the concerns of primary producers and the impacts of wild dogs to the Victorian Government. The committee has been one of government's various means of consulting community on the Victorian wild dog program.

As the expiration of the committee's term coincided with a broader evaluation of the wild dog program and its effectiveness, my department will consider the outcomes of this evaluation prior to making any further decisions around the role of the committee as part of Victoria's wild dog management program.

This evaluation is being undertaken in consultation with a range of stakeholders including committee members and relevant land managers. While the program evaluation is undertaken, my department and the Department for Environment, Land, Water and Planning will continue to seek and receive feedback from the community through the annual wild dog management zone work planning process, community wild dog control coordinators, the community engagement officer for the Wild Dog Program, and wild dog controllers.

Level crossings

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

Working closely with traders during the delivery of the Level Crossing Removal Project is a key priority for the Government.

All of the traders operating near the Ormond, Bentleigh and McKinnon project sites were invited to attend a forum on Monday 23 November 2015 at the Bentleigh Bowling Club. This meeting was hosted by the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) as an opportunity for business owners to raise questions or concerns directly with the project team. Information was also provided about upcoming works.

The forum was very well attended and a number of ideas were put forward by the traders, which they believe will assist them throughout the construction program.

Since this forum, the LXRA has met with key trader representatives and Glen Eira City Council to further discuss and implement these ideas for minimising impacts on businesses during construction.

More broadly, the project team has been meeting one-on-one with traders at all three sites for some months as well as responding to ongoing telephone and enquiries and email correspondence. Smaller trader meetings have also been held at each project site.

Trader representatives from Ormond, McKinnon and Bentleigh are also represented on the North-McKinnon-Centre Stakeholder Liaison Group, which meets monthly. Part of the role of these representatives is to provide a trader perspective on project issues (particularly in relation to minimising impacts on the local shopping precincts), and to disseminate relevant project information with their fellow traders.

The project team also provides comprehensive information about upcoming works, including project updates and construction notifications about specific work activities. Traders receive these updates via letterbox drops and can also sign up to receive them electronically. The team will continue to provide detailed information on all project activities, and will keep working with traders to deliver the significant benefits of this landmark project.

With regard to night works, after hours works are always communicated in advance, with letters mail dropped to impacted traders and residents, along with door knocks where necessary.

In terms of project changes, a new construction schedule was recently communicated which will see the amount of time to construct the projects shortened, with major road and rail closures brought forward six months to June/July 2016. This will see the project completed earlier than originally planned, in late 2016. This change follows months of careful planning, and will ultimately minimise disruption for residents and businesses. The project Alliance has been busy communicating the change in schedule to local traders to make sure they are able to make any necessary plans.

Thank you for raising this matter with me and I trust this information answers your questions.

Bushfire preparedness

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

I refer to the Adjournment Debate matter raised by you in the Legislative Council on 25 November 2015 regarding the translation of the pamphlet entitled Home Fire Safety-Practice your Home Escape Plan, Get Out and Stay Out into languages other than English.

Victoria's fire agencies research, design and produce fire safety information working with multicultural service providers and are committed to a more collaborative approach to developing resources that target multicultural communities.

I am pleased to advise that the home fire safety pamphlet co-authored by the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) is available both online and in hard copy inserts in twenty-one languages. The MFB has advised that when presenting at multicultural events, it ensures that the resources in specific languages are available in hard copy for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in attendance. In 2015, MFB completed over ninety presentations on home fire safety to over 3000 seniors including a broad range of CALD communities.

Further, the CFA reaches the Victorian CALD communities with bushfire safety advice through a number of avenues. These include, translated publications targeting specific multicultural groups, attendance at multicultural festivals and events and working with multicultural organisations to promote bushfire safety advice. CFA publications translated in over thirty languages include, Your Guide to Survival, Bushfire Warnings and Alerts, Understanding the Fire Danger Ratings and Can I or Can't I.

The CFA has also recently partnered with the University of Adelaide to examine how its toolkit for improving risk communication to the multicultural community can be practically applied.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Regional development

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

Regional Victoria's best days are in front of it. The Andrews Labor Government is helping people in Western Victoria to recover from four years of Coalition cuts to local schools, hospitals and services.

The Andrews Government has established the \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund to support major projects, create more jobs, and build stronger regional communities. Labor is investing in industries of the future and the projects we need, harnessing the strength of our communities to attract more families, create jobs and get regional Victoria back on track.

On 17 November 2015, the Government unveiled Victoria's Regional Statement, a new vision for country Victoria that will also change the way government works with the Barwon region.

Through the Regional Statement's initiatives, local communities will have a stronger voice in government decision-making by directing priorities identified by local people, straight into the heart of the Labor Government's agenda.

Victoria's Regional Statement outlines a number of initiatives such as:

- the \$34 million Regional Skills and Training Package to strengthen pathways to work;
- \$25 million to upgrade 'first and last kilometre' routes across regional Victoria;
- developing a pipeline of the ten most significant regional tourism projects to fully realise the economic potential of the state's iconic assets; and
- \$20 million for the Macalister Irrigation District.

The centrepiece of the Statement is the establishment of nine new Regional Partnerships across the state, with representatives from community, business, and all three levels of government.

The new Barwon Region, which includes Geelong, Ocean Grove, Torquay, Colac, and Queenscliff, will have its own Regional Partnership; ensuring government decisions and investments reflect the priorities of the families, workers and businesses in the region.

The Statement outlines a number of key new initiatives that will put the Government back to work for regional Victorians.

Labor is helping people get the skills they need to get the job they want. The Regional Skills and Training package is a new \$34 million program that will support local communities across all nine regions to access relevant training that leads to local jobs. In contrast, Skilling the Bay is a Geelong region program and has its own dedicated funding.

This is in addition to Labor's TAFE Rescue Fund. The Andrews Government is repairing the damage of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government's cuts and closures and get our TAFE institutes back in the black. Labor promised to invest \$1.2 billion into TAFE and training in Victoria, and that's what we are delivering on.

The Regional Rail Connectivity initiative is different to that proposed by the former government which made a commitment to provide free Wi-Fi only on V/Locity trains.

The Government looked closely at the costs and benefits of providing a free Wi-Fi service and concluded that improved mobile coverage for all passengers on these lines, regardless of train type, would provide greater benefit.

The \$18 million Regional Rail Connectivity project will deliver better reception for mobile devices along Victoria's busiest V/Line rail routes; from Melbourne to Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Traralgon.

Other regional blackspots are also being addressed in partnership with the Commonwealth. In June, the Government announced a \$21 million co-investment with Telstra to the Commonwealth Government's Mobile Black Spot Programme, securing an \$86 million investment for regional Victorian communities.

The Andrews Government is also improving the way government supports rural and regional businesses by transitioning Regional Development Victoria offices into regional business centres.

The centres will first be established in Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong and Traralgon. The centres will provide a one-stop shop for businesses looking to grow, with case management support and facilitation for regional economic development and business opportunities. They will house new trade and investment teams, economic development specialists from across state government departments, and will work with local and Commonwealth governments to access grant programs and advice.

Labor is committed to harnessing regional Victorians' input, so that Government decisions and investments reflect the local priorities of families, businesses and communities. It's about changing the way that Government works to respond to the needs and opportunities in regional communities.

The Andrews Labor Government is putting government back to work for the Barwon region with a commitment to create jobs, provide a better start for young people, and ensure a brighter future for local families and communities.

Western distributor

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

The Western Distributor project's final scope and design, including the length and location of the tunnel entrances, will be guided by a transparent and exhaustive Environment Effects Statement (EES) process, traffic modelling, and in consultation with community, local government and industry.

The EES will rigorously assess the project's potential social, community and economic effects. The issues that will be assessed include noise, air quality, traffic, especially truck traffic, traffic safety, open space and other land issues.

The EES process is rigorous and transparent and will give Victorians a genuine say on a project that is vital to Melbourne's west.

Melbourne Metro rail project

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

The Government recognises that the Domain precinct is of strategic importance to the planning and urban development of Melbourne. The new Melbourne Metro station at Domain is well positioned to serve the thousands of passengers destined for the employment and residential precinct along St Kilda Road every day, and to help address the continuing growth and redevelopment of the Kingsway precinct of South Melbourne, which is expected to see a mix of high and low density office space and high-density residential projects. The station will also provide relief to the busy St Kilda Road tram corridor and improve access to some of Melbourne's major tourism attractions such as the Shrine of Remembrance, the Royal Botanic Gardens and Albert Park.

The long term impact of Melbourne Metro on the Domain precinct is overwhelmingly positive. It will bring thousands of extra people to this important commercial and recreational area, which is great for local traders, business and visitors to our wonderful city.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority is committed to working with businesses and traders through the project's planning and delivery to understand how they operate and promote ways for them to take full advantage of the opportunities that the new Domain station will bring to the local area.

Western Victoria Region employment

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 26 November 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for raising the G21 Regional Opportunities for Work (GROW) project with me.

GROW is an initiative that seeks to address disadvantage in the greater Geelong region through social procurement and working with businesses and employers to encourage and assist people to participate in the regional labour market.

The GROW project has four key elements:

- Job creation through local procurement;
- Job creation through investment;
- Linking jobs and job seekers in targeted areas through demand-led employment brokerage; and
- A shared measurement framework

My Department, through Regional Development Victoria is in discussions with the GROW project team, led by Give Where You Live, a not-for-profit organisation in Geelong that is supported by key businesses, in relation to the implementation of the GROW initiative and how the Victorian Government may be able to assist.

I look forward to more detailed information in relation to GROW and the outcomes that it seeks to achieve, including how it will work to support regional jobs growth, reduce unemployment and address disadvantage.

Police numbers

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 26 November 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian 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.

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 police need to keep our community safe. Our continued investment in policing has seen a record \$2.5 billion budget for Victoria Police in 2015–16 to continue their important work.

The Government recently announced funding to nearly double Victoria Police's counter terrorism investigative capacity. This new investment will fund 88 counter terrorism specialists, including 40 dedicated sworn officers, as well as intelligence experts, forensic analysts, and equipment.

The Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to free up 400 police to undertake frontline duties protecting our community where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 400 custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria.

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.

As you note in your question, while the Government determines the level of funding required to resource Victoria Police, the Chief Commissioner is responsible for determining how such resources are allocated, based on assessed operational need.

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.

Consistent with previous years, Victoria Police is responding to the expected population increase during the summer period at holiday destinations throughout Victoria. I am assured by Victoria Police that local command plan for this period, especially during New Year's Eve and the holidays.

I am informed that police target local issues such as public order, liquor licensing, highway patrols and drug and booze buses during times of high tourism. Police also actively monitor CCTV where appropriate. All these targeted initiatives are crucial in ensuring there is a safe environment for all holidaying Victorians and visitors.

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

Shepparton bypass

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 26 November 2015

REPLY:

I acknowledge the concerns of the community in relation to emergency management in and between the two communities of Shepparton and Mooroopna. In the event of an emergency on Peter Ross-Edwards causeway and/or the Watt Road Bridge, or on the roads linking the bridges to these two townships, VicRoads advises me that it would work with the appropriate agencies to develop and implement a suitable and appropriate traffic management plan, as would occur with any other water crossing.

I appreciate the impact that timely decisions on funding for preliminary works to enable the bypass to be 'shovel ready/ can have on communities such as Shepparton and the surrounding area. I have met with representatives from the Greater Shepparton City Council and the Shepparton Bypass Action Group. The points raised during these discussions have provided me with an extra level of understanding of the road transport issues faced by the Shepparton community.

A reservation for the bypass was included in the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme in 2006, and a business case, including a risk based estimate for the Shepparton Bypass, was submitted to Infrastructure Australia under the Infrastructure Priority List for its consideration in 2013. However, the project was not listed to be funded as part of the Nation Building Program (2014-15 to 2018-19) in the Commonwealth Government announcement.

I am aware that the Shepparton Bypass is one of five key infrastructure projects being put forward by the Committee of Greater Shepparton. However, at an estimated cost of \$750 to \$950 million, federal funding will be required to make the project a reality.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to delivering the projects that Regional Victoria requires; the projects that we were elected to provide; projects that will deliver real economic development to our regional centres and drive efficiency improvements for our industries.

Sunbury rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 26 November 2015

REPLY:

A community forum was held in Sunbury recently to hear from residents and passengers regarding public transport. This forum was organised by the Local Member for Sunbury, Josh Bull MP, who has been advocating for better train services on behalf of his community.

Following review of feedback from the Sunbury community, I recently announced that Sunbury residents will be able to continue to use V/Line trains to travel to and from Melbourne, except for two trips in the PM peak that are currently heavily loaded. This will allow Sunbury residents to continue to travel on V/Line trains at times when trains are less busy, whilst ensuring there is capacity for passengers travelling along the Bendigo line in peak periods.

In addition to this, I was pleased to announce an additional 73 metro trains per week to Diggers Rest and Sunbury station, with all Watergardens trains after 7.00 pm extending to Sunbury station from the beginning of 2016. On top of this, Sunbury will benefit from all-night train services on Friday and Saturday nights as part of the Andrews

Labor Government's Night Network Trail in 2016. This is a significant boost in train services for Sunbury residents.

Goulburn Valley Health

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to enhancing Goulburn Valley Health and its capacity to fulfil its role as regional health services for the Hume region.

Planning for future services, by its nature, takes time to ensure that the right decisions are made. This was important work not completed by the former Liberal Government, who did nothing for Goulburn Valley Health during its four years in office.

Following detailed analysis of the region's health service needs, Goulburn Valley health completed a service plan that recognises that the level of community demand for dialysis services has significantly increased and will continue to grow.

Following completion of service planning for Goulburn Valley Health, capital planning consultants have been engaged to develop a robust and achievable masterplan and feasibility study for the Shepparton campus of Goulburn Valley Health. I am pleased to note that the feasibility study recommends a package of works that includes a new and expanded dialysis unit with significant improvement to amenity, light and views. This will form part of the Government's consideration of the redevelopment of the Shepparton campus.

In addition, the commencement of nocturnal dialysis at the Shepparton campus in July 2015 has helped alleviate some demand pressure, and the Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with Goulburn Valley Health, is committed to a range of strategies, including changes to the model of care, to improve the capacity and timeliness of renal dialysis services pending the reconfiguration of the service as part of any overall hospital redevelopment.

Glenormiston College site

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr Purcell for his continued commitment to securing a positive outcome for the Glenormiston site. I took great pleasure in being able to announce the Expression of Interest (EOI) launch and, like you, believe this process will result in the reestablishment of the site as a whole, with education as a core component.

As you are aware, I have no preconceived ideas of what a successful submission might look like, but instead, am seeking a wide variety of innovative proposals that would bring skills, training and educational opportunities to the region from domestic or international organisations.

It is heartening to hear that you are already aware of significant interest in the site. I would ask you to encourage all interested parties to submit via the EOI, which is available on Tenders VIC-the Victorian Government tenders system.

The Andrews' Government have listened to the community throughout this process and I have instructed the Department of Education and Training to continue to actively seek community input.

Gathering community expertise will be a priority in order to ensure a positive outcome for the site. The Department will provide opportunity for community engagement at every appropriate interval during the EOI process. It would be valuable to have your input at these intervals. Mr Purcell, and I would also ask you to suggest other locals who should be represented.

I look forward to reviewing all submissions and providing you with regular updates as we work to continue the long and proud history of this site into the future.

Labour hire industry

Raised with: Minister for Industrial Relations

Raised by: Mr Melhem

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is concerned about insecure work and the exploitation of workers. On 10 September 2015, I launched the Victorian inquiry into labour hire and insecure work. Professor Anthony Forsyth of the RMIT University Graduate School of Business and Law is chair of the inquiry.

The inquiry's terms of reference include examining the social impact of insecure work and assessing if the current legal framework meets the needs of Victorian employers and workers.

Submissions to the inquiry closed on 11 December 2015, and I am pleased to say that over one hundred submissions have been received, from workers, unions, employers, industry and community groups, and labour hire providers. The Victorian Trades Hall Council submission includes around 500 individual submissions. The experience of these workers shows exactly why the Victorian Government decided to hold an inquiry.

We support the enforcement action which is currently being undertaken in cooperation between Victorian and Commonwealth agencies but note that a broad national regulatory response is also needed. In addition to this the recommendations will be considered by the Victorian Government once the final report is delivered in July.

Public hearings have been held in Mildura, Dandenong and Geelong. Further public hearings will also be held in 2016. There will be a public hearing in Melton commencing Monday 22 February 2016, at the Melton City Council Chambers, 232 High Street Melton, followed by a public hearing in Ballarat on 23 February 2016 (at a venue to be determined).

Members of the public are encouraged to attend these hearings, and share their experiences, be it from the perspective of a worker, a family member, a labour hire supplier or an employer. This will provide an opportunity for workers in Melbourne's West to engage with the inquiry. I am also happy to arrange a time to meet with workers in Melbourne's West personally. Please contact my office to make suitable arrangements.

The inquiry is due to deliver its final report to me by 31 July 2016.

V/Line wi-fi provision

Raised with: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

The business case for the Regional Rail Connectivity Project found that the most efficient way to address the mobile communication needs of passengers would be to improve mobile coverage along regional routes.

I therefore jointly announced, alongside the Minister for Regional Development, the Andrews Labor Government \$18 million Regional Rail Connectivity Project to improve mobile coverage for train passengers between Melbourne and Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Traralgon.

Unlike the Baillieu/Napthine Government's plan, all passengers on all trains on these routes will benefit, along with other people in these areas seeking to access voice and data services.

The Baillieu/Napthine Government's plan only covered V/Locity services, and would not have provided voice services-so passengers who needed to make phone calls would still have been caught in the black spots. Prioritising Wi-Fi, as the previous government intended to do, would have meant passengers on non-V/Locity services, and anyone who wanted to make a phone call, missed out.

The Andrews Labor Government's commitment to improving mobile coverage along regional routes is in addition to the \$86 million project with co-investments from the Commonwealth Government and Telstra to build 109 new mobile base stations, providing mobile coverage for approximately 12 000 homes and businesses.

Monash and Eastern freeways noise reduction

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Dunn

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads advises me that it is currently reviewing its Traffic Noise Reduction Policy. Community consultation on the policy closed on 13 September 2015, and VicRoads is now reviewing the submissions and plans to publish a report on the consultation early in 2016.

In its review of the Traffic Noise Policy, VicRoads is considering all the issues that you have raised.

Should the review conclude that policy changes are required, VicRoads anticipates that a revised policy will be published in 2016.

Aurora School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

As the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education I visit many schools and it is always a pleasure to see the great work that our staff and their communities are doing to ensure that their students receive the quality teaching and support they need to maximise their learning and wellbeing outcomes.

I thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region for his suggestion that I visit the school and I will be pleased to do so when my scheduled permits. In the interim I have asked the Department of Education and Training's Director Inclusion, Access and Participation, who has responsibility for the NDIS implementation for our schools, and who is already working with Aurora School and its Principal, to visit the school in early 2016 and speak directly to the staff and the school leadership team.

Women's sports facilities

Raised with: Minister for Sport

Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

Although women are joining community sports clubs in record numbers, women's change rooms are too often rundown or non-existent. That's why as part of the Community Sport Infrastructure Fund, the Female Friendly Facilities category will provide \$10 million towards addressing this problem; because every player deserves equal facilities.

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government and we are proud of our commitment to build and upgrade women's change facilities at grounds and sports centres across the state.

Earlier this year I announced an Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation and appointed an expert advisory panel to undertake the inquiry. The panel has been 'investigating how to enhance participation by women and girls in sport and active recreation and to identify ways to increase their engagement in leadership and governance roles. I anticipate making comment about the inquiry in the near future.

Victoria's ongoing investment in sport and recreation actively seeks to ensure that both program and facility design provides benefits to all Victorians, and I am particularly proud of the focus that we have placed on providing more opportunities for women and girls.

HIV clinical trial

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Wooldridge

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to achieving the goal of the virtual elimination of HIV transmissions by 2020, embedded in the Seventh National HIV Strategy 2014-2017.

To meet this goal, the Victorian Government is prioritising a combination prevention approach for HIV which incorporates both pre and post-exposure prophylaxis.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a highly effective HIV risk reduction strategy being increasingly used by gay men and men who have sex with men to avoid HIV transmission.

The Victorian PrEP Demonstration Project is providing promising results indicating high levels of adherence in taking the medication and-significantly-decreased levels of anxiety about HIV acquisition.

The Government is working to further increase access to PrEP for people at high risk of HIV transmission.

It is critical that the Commonwealth ensures that PrEP drugs are approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use in HIV prevention and are listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to ensure longer-term affordable access.

I have written to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Treasurer on this matter advocating for listing of PrEP medication on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as soon as it is approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

As you note, I announced on 1 December, World AIDS Day, the release of Victorian guidelines for general practitioners for prescribing PrEP off-label. These guidelines are currently being developed and will provide the necessary support and guidance to doctors prescribing PrEP until it is approved for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Kilmore-Wallan bypass

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Ms Symes

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads advises me that it has met with the Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group Inc. on two occasions, to discuss the group's concerns and provide further information about the project, and that VicRoads has offered to meet with the group again in the near future.

Community drop-in sessions were held in Kilmore and Wandong on 5 November 2015, to provide the local community, particularly property owners directly affected by the bypass alignment, with an opportunity to discuss the status of the planning study and have any questions about the project answered. Further evening drop-in sessions were held in Kilmore and Wandong in the evenings of 8 and 9 December 2015, which provided further opportunity for those residents that work through the day.

On 21 December 2015, I met with representatives of the Wandong community to gain an understanding of their concerns regarding the impacts of the proposed interchange. I urge the Wandong and Heathcote Junction Community Group Inc. to continue to work with VicRoads in relation to the proposed Wandong Interchange.

V/Line wi-fi provision

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

The Government has not diverted any funds allocated to the Regional Connectivity Program. The funds have been allocated to address mobile black spots affecting regional communities and rail passengers.

The Government has made two announcements in this regard:

- On 25 June 2015 the Minister for Regional Development announced the Andrew's Government has committed \$21 million to a successful \$86 million project leveraging Telstra and Commonwealth Government co-investments, through the Commonwealth's Mobile Black Spot programme. This project will build 109 new mobile base stations providing coverage for approximately 12 000 households and businesses, many located in areas at risk of bushfire.

- On 30 November 2015 the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade and the Minister for Regional Development jointly announced the \$18 million Regional Rail Connectivity Project to improve in-train mobile coverage from Melbourne to Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Traralgon. A procurement process also commenced in December 2015.

Prioritising Wi-Fi on V/Locity carriages could only come at the expense of addressing other regional mobile black spots. By addressing in-train mobile black spots, all passengers on all trains on these routes will benefit.

The Government's preference for improving mobile coverage along regional routes is based on the business case for the project that found it would most efficiently address passenger's mobile communications needs.

Protective services officers

Raised with: Minister for Police

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

Victoria Police is working to recruit, train and deploy 1036 Protective Services Officers (PSOs) to 216 rail stations by June 2016, which I am advised is consistent with the target of the previous government. I can confirm that PSOs are currently deployed to 177 rail stations across the network.

Victoria Police advises there has been no delay to the rollout of PSOs.

To support the government's Night Network trial of 24 hour public transport on weekends, the government has provided funding to Victoria Police for an additional 109 PSOs and 62 Transit Police.

During the trial, a typical night will see approximately 160 PSOs and 70 Transit Police working across the rail network. PSOs will be stationed at 78 of the network's premium rail stations, while Transit Police will patrol all train lines throughout the night on weekends.

I am advised that there are currently 1211 PSOs employed by Victoria Police, with an additional 114 PSOs currently in training.

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

Waverley Emergency Adolescent Care

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 8 December 2015

REPLY:

Ms Crozier's adjournment matter raises a number of issues, namely the alcohol and drug rehabilitation services offered at Tandana Place at Waverley Emergency Adolescent Care (WEAC) and its associated closure.

The provision of drug and alcohol services is a matter for the Minister for Mental Health, however I can advise that at the time Waverley Emergency Adolescent Care went into voluntary administration, there were no young people receiving services at the Tandana Place drug and alcohol rehabilitation service. I can further advise that the Government invests over \$20 million per year to provide alcohol and drug services specifically for young people.

Children and young people receiving support through WEAC foster care placements continue to reside with their carer families and have transitioned to two other locally based organisations.

Prescription monitoring

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Wooldridge

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

While the former Liberal Government failed to take any real action to advance real time prescription monitoring, the Andrews Labor Government is getting on with progressing this important initiative, with considerable planning already underway.

We allocated \$300 000 in our first budget-the first Victorian Government to commit funding in this space-so we could immediately make a start on planning for a real time prescription monitoring system.

We also signed up to the Commonwealth's software to support the system-something the former Liberal Government refused to do.

We need to make sure we have the right information and communication technology requirements in place, and that the necessary steps are being taken to prepare the health workforce for the introduction of the monitoring system in their clinical practices.

All of this work is currently underway.

The introduction of real time prescription monitoring requires significant consideration and planning and we are making sure we are doing the important work to get this right.

Eastern Health MRI licence

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

The Australian Government Department of Health issues licenses for Magnetic Resonance Imaging machines. A public health service must hold a full license, for it to qualify for full funding through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) bulk-billing arrangements.

The ratio of Medicare funded Magnetic Resonance Imaging machines in Melbourne's eastern metropolitan region is six times less than the ratio in the southern, northern and western metropolitan regions. The 2012-13 Magnetic Resonance Imaging data indicates the average outpatient waiting time for Magnetic Resonance Imaging services at Eastern Health is 49 days.

Timely access to convenient and affordable diagnostic imaging services is of major importance to the local community within the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. I am aware of the vital importance to Eastern Health for a new Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine at Maroondah Hospital.

There is a growing demand for services at Maroondah Hospital. This is a result of population growth and meeting the needs of an ageing population in the east.

The lack of a fully licensed Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine at Maroondah Hospital disadvantages patients, as patients are required to either pay an out of pocket fee for diagnostic imaging services at a private facility. Otherwise they have to travel to another public hospital for these services and they are usually faced with extended waiting times.

Eastern Health is funding the building of a new Magnetic Resonance Imaging facility at Maroondah Hospital, to accommodate a \$3.2 million dollar Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine. This potentially life-saving diagnostic tool will be the only publicly-owned and operated Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

I have written a letter to The Hon Susan Ley, Australian Minister for Health to clarify timing of the next application process and in support of a licence for a Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine at Maroondah Hospital as a matter of priority.

Yarrawonga ambulance services

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

Yarrawonga Health provides a 24 hour urgent care centre service supported by general practitioners from two of the local medical clinics who are on-call 24 hours a day.

Yarrawonga Health has actually recently increased services in their urgent care centre. Yarrawonga is one of the first sites to develop an after-hours emergency department tele-health service. The tele-health service has been offered to patients presenting after-hours at the urgent care centre and allows a real time video consultation with Northeast Health Wangaratta's Emergency Department medical staff. This innovation has enhanced after hour services for the Yarrawonga community.

I am not aware of any complaints regarding the policies relating to transfer processes in place at Yarrawonga Health.

With respect to your concerns about ambulance provision in the area, the Andrews Labor Government has recently released the Ambulance Action Plan: Improving Services, Saving Lives to address the ambulance crisis that occurred under the leadership of the previous Liberal Government. It is a priority of this Action Plan to improve services and response times to rural and regional Victoria.

Port Campbell bus services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Dunn

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government recently completed consultation for the Regional Network Development Plan (RNDP), to gather information on the travel needs of Victorians in regional communities across the state.

The RNDP is the first short, medium and long term plan for public transport in regional Victoria, and will consider opportunities for bus improvements identified during the consultation. I have asked PTV to consider ways to strengthen bus routes across the Barwon South West area as part of the RNDP.

Dan Murphy's

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

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

I thank you for your report about receiving an email, purporting to be from Dan Murphy's the wine merchant, offering the chance to win a \$500 voucher. The email required you to answer a series of questions and subsequently call a number and answer a further series of questions at the end of which you would receive a "voucher".

You requested that I immediately investigate the sales practice of gift vouchers by Dan Murphy's. I asked Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) to do so.

I am advised that CAV has contacted Dan Murphy's which indicated that the promotion you received was in no way connected to them. Indeed, it would appear that this email is in fact a variation on a phishing scam, in which an email is sent offering a special promotion. The email appears to originate overseas, making identification of those responsible problematic.

You might note that Dan Murphy's said that it had, over the years, been periodically the subject of phishing scams and was keen to assure the public that whilst it promotes its products, it does not offer vouchers requiring questionnaire responses by consumers, nor does it require consumers to use 1900 premium service telephone numbers.

I understand you have at this point been unable to locate and provide CAV with the phone number you were required to use as part of the scam. If it was a premium service, i.e a 1900 number, the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman can assist in following up.

CAV has used social media to alert consumers about this type of scam and will consider incorporating education regarding this type of scam into future education campaigns.

Level crossings

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

I thank Mr Khalil Eideh, Member for the Legislative Council of Western Metropolitan Region, for his enquiry regarding the removal of the Melton Highway level crossing in Sydenham.

Community consultation and planning is underway. The tender process for this site will commence in mid -2016 and construction is expected to start in early 2007 with completion in late 2018/early 2019.

Removing the Melton Highway level crossing will slash congestion and pave the way for the expansion of the Watergardens town centre, which is expected to create over 1000 construction and ongoing retail jobs.

Autism services**Raised with: Minister for Education****Raised by: Mr Finn****Raised on: 9 December 2015****REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

There has been no reduction of funding to either Western Autistic School or Jennings Street School, and there was an overall budget increase for 2016 of \$44 284 for these schools. Both the Saturday Social Skills Program and the Arts Program have been funded through the Western Autistic School, Student Resource Package, utilising school staff, resources and facilities.

During 2014 and 2015 the Western Autistic School Council has worked through an extensive school Self Evaluation and a School Peer Review. Children involved in the program are not enrolled at Western Autistic School and therefore are not funded through the School Resource Package. However, the School Council had agreed to offer the program in 2016 on a cost recovery basis.

Subsequently, the School Council has considered the concerns raised by parents regarding this rise in program cost and the program will continue for Term One, 2016 at the current cost. During Term One the School Council will work to explore options that may be available, from community organisations and service providers for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, to offer the program into the remainder of 2016 and beyond.

Kingswood Golf Club site**Raised with: Minister for Planning****Raised by: Mrs Peulich****Raised on: 9 December 2015****REPLY:**

As you are aware, the new owner of the Kingswood Country Golf Club site has been running information sessions regarding a proposal to redevelop the golf course for a residential subdivision.

The current zoning of the golf course prohibits the development of the site for residential purposes. For a residential subdivision to occur on the site, the golf course will need to be rezoned.

I am aware of the communications released by the new owner about their intent to develop the site, however, it must be pointed out that an application to rezone the golf course has not been submitted to Kingston City Council. Any preliminary discussions held between the owner and Council has been conducted without prejudice and should not suggest that Council will support a future planning scheme amendment.

The proposed residential density, extent of vegetation removal and infrastructure provision to be provided within the golf course redevelopment will be assessed on its merits once an application has been lodged with Council and submitted to me for authorisation under section 8 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

North Road, Ormond, level crossing

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Crozier

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

The decision of the Liberal Opposition and the Member for Southern Metropolitan, Georgie Crozier, to oppose the Andrews Labor Government's removal of 50 of Victoria's worst level crossings, including the level crossing at Ormond Station on North Road, is understood.

Work on the removal of the crossing at North Road is underway and the Member for Bentleigh, Nick Staikos, has been engaging with the Ideal community via information sessions and additional meetings with traders and community groups. There is an extremely high level-of support for the Andrews Government's decision to remove this level crossing and there is concern that the Liberals are trying to prevent the removal of level crossings.

The feedback provided by the Member for Bentleigh has been assessed and the Andrews Government is providing a second access point on the south side of North Road. Continuous safe access will be provided to and from all platforms through stairs and dual lifts for each platform, including back up power supplies.

To construct the new access, some car parks will be permanently removed on a short length of Cadby Avenue. The remainder of Cadby Avenue will continue to be a two lane road with parking on either side. The Level Crossing Removal Authority has committed to assisting local traders with these changes by providing additional parking nearby during construction of the project.

Ouyen recreational lake

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 9 December 2015

REPLY:

The Ouyen Recreational Lake Project is a significant local project developed by Ouyen Inc. The Victorian Government provided a total of \$1 077 657 to the project which will provide significant recreational and economic opportunities for the local community. This includes:

- \$500 000 from the Putting Communities First Program to assist with the remediation of the Lake Ouyen site to allow recreation; and
- \$577 657 from Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWMWater) for asbestos removal and the pipeline construction.

To date, GWMWater has completed the asbestos removal and the construction of the 2.1km pipeline from the Ouyen Pump station to the lake. The pipeline under the railway line is awaiting a permit from VicTrack. Once the permit is granted, the remaining pipeline works will be completed accordingly.

As part of the project funding model, Ouyen Inc. obtained a commitment from an earthworks contractor to undertake major lake remediation works at a subsidised rate. The contractor has gone into receivership and is no longer able to complete these works causing considerable disappointment to the local community.

Therefore, Ouyen Inc. is currently working with stakeholders including the Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC), GWMWater and the community to identify alternate options to complete the works. These organisations have been invited to the meeting on 22 December 2015 to discuss options to progress the project.

I have also requested that a representative from my department attends.

Greater Shepparton public transport

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has undertaken extensive consultation to inform the development of the Regional Network Development Plan (RNDP).

Over 15 000 pieces of feedback have been received from regional Victorians, with attendance at the Shepparton workshop amongst the highest.

The RNDP will identify short, medium and long term priorities to improve public transport in regional Victoria. This includes improving train services on key corridors including Shepparton.

I look forward to working with the Member for Shepparton to improve access to public transport.

Bimbadeen Heights Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The 2015-16 State Budget allocated \$500 000 to develop a master-plan for the modernisation of Bimbadeen Heights Primary School, and on 2 December 2015 the Architectural firm of K2LD was appointed to act as Principal Consultant for the project.

Since this appointment K2LD representatives have met with the school and set in train a number of workshops with the school community to begin the planning process.

West Papua

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

As acknowledged in the Adjournment Debate, international relations in Australia are the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth recognises and respects Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua.

The Victorian Government strongly upholds democratic freedoms, which are a fundamental element of our society. Victoria respects and supports the right to freedom of expression and peaceful protest.

Victoria is proud of its West Papuan community and the contribution its members make to our State. We warmly welcome West Papuans to Victoria and continue to provide support through the Government's settlement and multicultural programs.

Edgars Road, Epping

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety

Raised by: Mr Ondarchie

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads has prepared a business case that has investigated project options and recommends a solution for the O'Herns Road Interchange Project. The State Government committed up to \$40.7 million towards the project with funding also to be sought from the Federal Government.

In addition to the State Government's commitment of a new diamond interchange connecting O'Herns Road to the Hume Freeway and 1.4 kilometres duplication of O'Herns Road, project options have also 'been investigated to consider the relative need and timing of additional local network treatments. This includes the extension of Edgars Road and the signalisation of the existing roundabout at the intersection of Epping Road, Findon Road, High Street and O'Herns Road.

VicRoads is arranging to submit the business case for consideration by the State Government. Following the State Government's review, the business case will be provided to the Federal Government for consideration of a funding contribution.

It should be noted, as a local member you failed to commit to any major road infrastructure, despite being Parliamentary Secretary to the former Liberal Premier.

Victoria Legal Aid

Raised with: Attorney-General

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

I note the Law Institute of Victoria's release of the 'Criminal and Family Law Private Practitioner Service Delivery Model' report (the Report), prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), included a recommendation for Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) to consider adopting consultative arrangements that ensure stronger representation of the Law Institute of Victoria and Victorian Bar.

Overall, the Report and its findings will be considered in the government's Access to Justice Review (the Review) which is scheduled to be concluded by my department before 22 August 2016.

The composition of the VLA Board is currently governed by the Legal Aid Act 1978 (Vic). The governance model of and the representation on the VLA Board will not be considered within the review, which is aimed at reducing the barriers to dispute resolution and improving access to legal assistance services. Under the review, the Andrews Labor Government will seek new measures to boost vulnerable Victorians' access to justice while making it cheaper and quicker to resolve everyday legal disputes.

Moonee Ponds Creek

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

As part of its functions under the Water Act, Melbourne Water is responsible for waterways within the Port Phillip and Westernport region. Melbourne Water's Healthy Waterways Strategy defines their role, in partnership with the community and stakeholders, in managing rivers, estuaries and wetlands in the region to 2017–18. The strategy focuses on investing in areas that the community values and that will protect and improve environmental values.

The Moonee Ponds Creek sits within a floodplain and the concrete channel was constructed by the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (now Melbourne Water) during the 1950s and 1960s to provide flood protection for the surrounding community.

There are a number of large infrastructure projects earmarked for the area surrounding Moonee Ponds Creek, including the development of the Arden Macaulay and E-Gate urban renewal precincts and the Metro Rail project. These provide a significant opportunity to maximise community benefit from Moonee Ponds Creek.

The relevant government agencies including the Metropolitan Planning Authority, Melbourne Water, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and local government are working closely to determine options to better integrate Moonee Ponds Creek into the surrounding urban environment as part of the major redevelopment and infrastructure projects underway.

Melbourne Water is currently investigating options to improve liveability and amenity of the creek, while not compromising its flood mitigation function. Melbourne Water will engage with the Footscray Historical Society as part of its ongoing community engagement activities.

Public transport accessibility

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

The public transport operators provide a number of forums to engage with people of all ages, abilities and circumstances to better understand the individual needs of passengers. Currently, the Public Transport Access Committee is being formed. Once established, the committee will consider more forums with community groups and individuals to improve public transport accessibility.

I thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan for raising this and look forward to working with him to deliver these forums.

Lake Connewarre aquaculture

Raised with: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Raised by: Mr Ramsay

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

I have requested that the relevant government agencies meet to further discuss management options for Reedy Lake in 2016–17. As I understand Mr Osborne has been extensively consulted by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority and I have asked them to continue to consult with all relevant affected stakeholders, including Mr Osborne.

As part of its functions under the Water Act, the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority is responsible for waterway management at Reedy Lake and Hospital Swamps.

The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority has undertaken extensive scientific investigations to determine the necessary environmental watering regime for Reedy Lake and Hospital Swamps.

Management of the water level at Hospital Swamps is consistent with past management, as recommended by the scientific investigations. Increasing water levels is not possible due to the risk of inundation of adjoining private land.

Traralgon swimming pool

Raised with: Minister for Sport

Raised by: Ms Bath

Raised on: 10 December 2015

REPLY:

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government and funding to support this objective will be provided through a range of initiatives.

In the 2015-16 State Budget, the Government confirmed an allocation of \$100 million to the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund. This includes a Better Pools category that provides grants of up to \$3 million.

I encourage Latrobe City Council to continue to liaise with Sport and Recreation Victoria regarding the development of the Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 10 February 2016

Budj Bim master plan

Raised with: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 16 April 2015

REPLY:

The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape is an exceptionally significant place to the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners, who are represented by the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Budj Bim includes evidence of one of the world's largest and oldest aquaculture systems, which the Gunditjmara people constructed on the Budj Bim lava flow, enabling the systematic trapping and farming of eels for over 6600 years.

This aquaculture system illustrates the ingenuity of the Gunditjmara people and their complex interrelationship with their environment.

The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape has been identified as a potential world-class international tourist destination. This has been recognised in several Government strategies, including the Victorian Aboriginal Tourism Development Strategy 2013-2023, the Great Ocean Road Destination Management Plan, the Great South Coast Regional Strategic Plan 2014-19, and the Budj Bim Master Plan, which presents a staged approach to developing Budj Bim as a sustainable tourist destination. The development of Budj Bim as an Aboriginal cultural tourist destination would result in significant economic and social benefits for the regional community, especially its Traditional Owners.

In August 2015, the Premier Daniel Andrews met with the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners at Lake Condah and announced that Budj Bim is Victoria's priority place for World Heritage listing and that the Government will ensure that Budj Bim is provided the required infrastructure to facilitate the expected growth in tourism to the region.

More recently, in December last year, environment Ministers from all States and Territories agreed to the proposal to include Budj Bim on Australia's Tentative List of potential World Heritage nominations. This is an important and necessary step for World Heritage listing.

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria is presently in consultation with officers of the Commonwealth to progress the Budj Bim World Heritage nomination. The Government is currently exploring opportunities to implement the Master Plan and facilitate the anticipated growth in tourism and employment opportunities for south west Victoria.

Princess Mary Club

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Women

Raised by: Ms Patten

Raised on: 25 November 2015

REPLY:

The Princess Mary Club building was built in 1926 and provided safe accommodation for young women arriving in Melbourne from rural and regional areas who were seeking to enter the workforce. The service operated until 1988.

On 1 December 2015, Melbourne City Council approved an application to demolish the building located at 130 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to promoting gender equality and women's leadership, and continues to provide ongoing support and funding to the Queen Victoria Women's Centre. The Centre is located on the historic Lonsdale Street site of the former Queen Victoria Hospital. Government funding is allocated to maintain the iconic heritage building, promote women's financial independence, create connections for women and support a range of women's organisations.

On 27 November 2015, I launched a consultation paper for Victoria's first ever Gender Equality Strategy to highlight the link between violence and attitudes towards women, and to present the key challenges in achieving gender parity. The consultation paper can be found on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website at <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/gender-equality-have-your-say>.

The strategy will guide the Andrew Labor Government's actions and priorities for achieving equal social, civic and economic participation for all women in Victoria. Community organisations and members of the public are encouraged to share their experiences and ideas for strengthening gender equality in Victoria, with submissions due by 18 March 2016.