

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

23 June to 10 August 2017

(Extract from book 13)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 10 November 2016)

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

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Sullivan, 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 Barber, Mr Bourman, #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — #Mr Barber, #Ms Crozier, #Mr Elasmr, Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, Mr Morris, Mr Mulino, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Mr Somyurek, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

Fire Services Bill Select Committee — Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Rich Phillips, Ms Shing and Mr Young.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, 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 Elasmr and Mr Melhem. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Garrett 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 O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan.

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

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

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

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

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Ms Patten, 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 — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

Council — Acting Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

President:

The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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

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The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁶	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ²	Western Metropolitan	AC	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	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁷	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ³	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmarr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁴	Northern Victoria	ALP	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 ⁵	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	SFFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Appointed 16 April 2015

² DLP until 26 June 2017

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁴ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁵ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁶ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁷ Appointed 13 October 2016

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AC — Australian Conservatives; ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;

DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;

LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;

SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; VILJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers and received by Hansard in the period shown.

23 June to 10 August 2017**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 8 February 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to addressing crime in Victoria, and ensuring that all Victorians feel safe. We are working closely with Victoria Police to ensure that they have the powers and the resources they need to prevent crime in our communities, and hold perpetrators to account.

The Government has announced a comprehensive strategy to prevent, detect and disrupt crime in Victoria. The Community Safety Statement, released in December 2016, outlines the range of new investment, powers, tools and capabilities that Victoria Police will be equipped with to stabilise the crime rate and begin to reduce the level of harm being caused in the community.

The unprecedented \$2 billion commitment outlined in the Community Safety Statement is the biggest boost to frontline police in Victoria's history, and it is crucial to dealing with the growing demand on police services.

As announced by the Chief Commissioner of Police on 27 April 2017, the first 300 frontline police began to roll out into Melbourne's growth suburbs from May 2017.

The South Eastern Metropolitan Region will receive 50 additional frontline police to prevent, detect and disrupt crime.

These 50 additional frontline police will be distributed across the Dandenong Police Division, with 31 and 10 police deployed in the Casey and Greater Dandenong Police Service Area, respectively. Eight police officers will be deployed to the Divisional Criminal Investigation Unit and one police officer will join the Division Crime Scene Services. These extra police will greatly strengthen local police responses in the area.

The rollout of the 300 new police is just the start of the biggest boost to police resources in the State's history. There will be a total of 3135 additional police to hit the beat over the next five years as part of this Government's record investment.

Victoria Police has developed a new and sophisticated staff allocation model, in consultation with The Police Association, so we know how many police are needed and where. It will also help police predict how many will be needed in the future — so they can start planning for them now.

As I have previously advised, Victoria Police operations and tasking are determined by the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police. Victoria Police have advised that there are number of ongoing operations that are targeting identified high risk areas or hotspots in the South Eastern Metropolitan Region.

I am advised that identified high risk areas are targeted by the Frontline Tactical Unit and the Criminal Investigation Unit. The Frontline Tactical Unit focuses on responding to public order and street crime issues, whilst conducting targeted operations and overt patrols. Victoria Police advise that these targeted operations have resulted in a reduction in offences being committed. These operations will be ongoing, alongside frontline police officers who are concentrating on providing a visible police presence to deter offenders from committing crimes.

All 15 individuals who escaped from the Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre in the January incident were arrested by Victoria Police within 24 hours.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Asked on: 22 March 2017

ANSWER:

The Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, is the Andrews Government's lead Minister for volunteering policy, supported by Gabrielle Williams, Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers.

The Minister has advised me that, earlier this year, the Federal Department of Social Services announced that a new funding program, Strong and Resilient Communities, would replace their Strengthening Communities grants program from 1 January 2018. This new program did not include volunteer management funding, causing great concern for our State's volunteer support services.

Volunteering Victoria, along with Volunteering Australia and other State peaks conducted an advocacy campaign to retain dedicated funding for volunteer management. The Andrews Government supported these efforts with a joint letter from the Minister for Families and Children and Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers to the federal Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter.

I am pleased to advise that as of 13 July 2017 Volunteering Australia has announced that funding for the volunteer management program will be reinstated, with funding available from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2021.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 2 May 2017

ANSWER:

I acknowledge the local community's concerns about the potential environmental, amenity and economic impacts of this basalt stone quarry proposal on rural land at 320 Mooleric Road, Ombersley. After considering the report of the independent Advisory Committee that was appointed to consider the views and technical evidence of all parties, and the planning merits of the proposal, I recommended to the Governor in Council that a planning permit with strict conditions, as recommended by the Advisory Committee, should be granted for the MCG Group's proposed quarry.

On 6 June 2017, the Governor in Council made an order on the matter, including directing Colac Otway Shire Council to issue planning permit PP169/2014-1, subject to 87 specified conditions. The proponent, MCG Group, the council, and all other parties have been informed of this determination. The Advisory Committee final report and recommended conditions was made available on the Planning Panels Victoria website on 7 June 2017.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 2 May 2017

ANSWER:

The claims in the question are incorrect and the changes to the zones are being misrepresented.

The reformed residential zones get the balance right in providing for appropriate development opportunities in sensible locations, while respecting Melbourne's valued neighbourhood character through the application of a newly created mandatory garden area requirement. The previous rules had allowed development from boundary to boundary.

The changes also provide councils with the ability to specify neighbourhood character objectives in schedules to all residential zones to better inform the preferred development outcomes sought by councils and the broader community.

The “two dwelling on a lot” cap has been removed from the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ). There was no such cap on the General Residential Zone (GRZ). However, the minimum garden area requirement will now apply for new development in both zones.

Depending on lot size in the NRZ and GRZ, new proposals will need to provide a minimum 25-35% garden area. This will result in developments that align with the green and open character that is highly valued in our local neighbourhoods.

Lots that are larger than 1000 square metres are what proverbially are called “quarter acre blocks” and are now relatively rare. Standard house blocks range from 500-700 square metres and the common practice of splitting blocks for dual occupancy results in blocks of 300-400 square metres.

It is estimated that there are around 148 000 residential lots in the NRZ zone in the eight municipalities nominated, of which just over 5% of lots had an area greater than 1000 square metres. A number of these will have limits on redevelopment due to heritage overlays and other factors.

We now have a consistent residential zones regime that treats everyone fairly across Victoria, regardless of your postcode.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 9 May 2017

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is working with the Campaspe Shire, local community members and a working group to explore the creation of a new network of bicycle touring routes in the area.

There is a formed legal public road 50 metres west of the illegal track that can be used for vehicles, including firefighting appliances, and bicycles to access and enjoy the forest.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Melhem
Directed to: Minister for Industrial Relations
Asked on: 9 May 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to eliminating violence against women and delivering gender equality. On 5 December 2016, Victoria’s first Gender Equality Strategy Safe and Strong was released, initiating landmark reforms to deliver gender equality, and address sexism and violence against women.

The reforms and initiatives specific to women in the workplace include:

- the introduction of a Gender Equality Act to establish equal rights and influence social norms;
- gender audits across government and the public sector to identify how factors — like culture, policies, systems and practices — promote or work against gender equality;
- the establishment of the Equal Workplaces Advisory Council (the Council);
- scholarships to encourage young and emerging women leaders;

- the creation of a series of business cases with key partners on employer-sponsored early childhood education and care and flexible work arrangements; and
- promoting women's cultural activities, art and media.

As Minister for Industrial Relations, I am particularly excited about the Council which sits in my Industrial Relations portfolio. The Council will:

- identify government action that will promote the achievement of gender equality including addressing gendered occupational segregation;
- identify, promote and publish best practice examples of where initiatives are working to promote gender equality in the workplace, across the Victorian public sector and the private sector; and
- consider issues and linkages relating to pay equity, equality and productivity, building human resources capacity and achieving equitable outcomes for men and women.

All of which will work towards ensuring equality for women workers across Victoria and in the Western Metropolitan Region.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Young
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 10 May 2017

ANSWER:

Parks Victoria conducted three community roundtable group meetings in January to February 2017 to consider the views of stakeholders on managing horses in Barmah National Park.

Parks Victoria is considering the views raised during these stakeholder consultations in the development of the strategic action plan for the management of the horses. The aim is to reduce the impact of horses and prevent long-term and severe degradation in this park and its Ramsar-listed wetlands.

Parks Victoria is now finalising a draft Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan which will be made available for broader public comment in mid-2017.

I will be visiting Barmah National Park later this month and will be meeting with key stakeholders and hearing their concerns on these matters.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Eideh
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 10 May 2017

ANSWER:

I understand your constituents' concerns about youth crime in Melbourne, particularly in relation to violent crimes such as home invasions and carjacking. I can assure your constituents that the Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring community safety and protecting Victorians. The Government continues to support Victoria Police in our joint effort to reduce crime in western Melbourne. We are working together to address the root causes of crime and increase public safety.

Efforts to address youth offending and victimisation requires a careful balance of prevention, enforcement and support. Addressing the underlying drivers of offending is a critical aspect in reducing the incidence of offences

committed by young people. This undertaking requires coordination of efforts across Government, as well as proactive, intelligence-led initiatives undertaken by police.

The number of youth offenders has substantially decreased in the last five years. From 2013 to 2017 there has been close to 1700 fewer youth offenders aged 10 to 17 years, and 2800 fewer young offenders aged 18 to 24 years. Whilst there has been a significant decrease in the number of youth offenders, those young people that are committing crimes are doing so with more frequency and severity than Victoria has experienced in recent years.

Victoria Police is maintaining its strategic response to this issue, and has established a range of localised operations to target these types of offending. These operations have been set up to address networked offending, carjacking and home invasion offences and the significant impact they have on victims, and to date have been responsible for more than 630 arrests since May 2016.

Additionally, in December 2016, I announced that the Andrews Labor Government is investing \$10 million over two years to help tackle youth crime through three streams of funding to support appropriately tailored community-led interventions to address youth offending.

Funding for the Youth Crime Prevention Grants program includes \$6.5 million across eight priority communities with higher crime rates and higher proportions of recidivist youth offenders. The funding includes Hume and Wyndham in the western region.

Additionally, the Government's Community Safety Statement released in December 2016, outlines how the Government is taking action to respond to the unacceptable increase in young recidivist offenders committing serious violent crimes. This includes introducing longer maximum sentences in the Children's Court and stronger and more intensive measures to supervise and monitor young people in the Community.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 10 May 2017

ANSWER:

The Murrumbeena Police Station was vacated by Victoria Police in 2005, when uniformed staff were transferred to Caulfield Police Station. Following this, the building was used on an ad-hoc basis by specialist Victoria Police units. In 2013, under the previous government, the premises were vacated.

The residents of Murrumbeena continue to receive a 24-hour policing response across the entire Glen Eira Police Service Area (PSA). Both the Caulfield Police Station and the Oakleigh Police Station service the Murrumbeena area and both stations operate a 24-hour counter service to the public.

I also note that the Murrumbeena train station is patrolled by Protective Services Officers each night from 6:00pm until the last scheduled train service. In addition, the Transit Police Command run operations to target public order 'hot spots' on the public transport system, including in Murrumbeena. All main transport hubs are also regularly patrolled by local police to provide a visible policing presence to deter criminal activity.

Victoria Police and the Andrews Labor government consider adequate resourcing for all areas a top priority.

This is why we released the Community Safety Statement outlining our historic investment, which will boost police numbers right across the state. In total, the Andrews Labor Government is funding 3135 additional frontline police, including 415 specialist family violence officers, over the next five years to support police respond to crime in our communities.

In line with the Government's commitment in the 2016-17 budget to recruit 300 additional frontline police, the first 300 frontline police began to roll out into Melbourne's growth suburbs commencing May 2017.

Victoria Police has developed a new and sophisticated staff allocation model, in consultation with The Police Association, so we know how many police are needed and where. It will also help police predict how many will be needed in the future — so they can start planning for them now.

The Andrews Labor Government will continue to support Victoria Police and ensure that it has the power and resources it needs to reduce harm in the community and keep Victorians safe.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Eideh
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 24 May 2017

ANSWER:

As confirmed on 22 May 2017 by the Hon Natalie Hutchins MLA, the Victorian Government's 2017-18 State Budget has secured funding to develop business cases to improve the capacity and safety of the Calder Freeway, between the M80 and Diggers Rest, and to investigate the building of the Calder Park Drive Interchange (overpass), duplicating Calder Park Drive and a grade separation.

In addition to developing the business cases, VicRoads will continue to monitor this location for safety and operational improvements for all road users.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 24 May 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that pedestrians are experiencing difficulties when crossing Ballarat Road, near Perth Avenue in Albion, as well as motorists turning into Ballarat Road from Perth Avenue wishing to travel towards the city, especially during peak hour.

I understand that VicRoads has commenced an investigation of possible treatment options along Ballarat Road between Adelaide Street and Holt Street (near the M80 Ring Road), and includes the intersection at Perth Avenue.

VicRoads expects to make a recommendation before the end of 2017.

VicRoads will continue to monitor the safety of pedestrians and all road users using the Ballarat Road corridor.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Finance
Asked on: 24 May 2017

ANSWER:

WorkSafe is Victoria's independent regulator of occupational health and safety and is responsible for regulation of asbestos under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 which includes Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007. The Regulations include requirements for the keeping of relevant asbestos registers, the use of appropriate controls in relation to asbestos exposure and the licensing of asbestos removalists. WorkSafe enforces these requirements through its occupational health and safety inspectorate.

WorkSafe received a report of asbestos contaminated soil which had been dumped in an open section of Bicentennial Park in Chelsea and inspectors attended to make inquiries on 6 December 2016. Kingston City

Council had engaged independent hygienists and qualified asbestos removalists to oversee planning for removal works at the park. Control plans were developed in consultation with the Environment Protection Authority, City of Kingston and project managers. An extensive written control plan was prepared by these parties. Signs and barricades, including fencing, were set up to prevent unauthorised access. Air monitoring was conducted and a hygienist was on site at all times to supervise works.

The remaining asbestos contaminated soil was removed on 9 January 2017. A process was developed by the council which includes specific training for the relevant employees to ensure that the correct soil is used at specific sites. WorkSafe has concluded that the issue was dealt with appropriately and no further action is required.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 May 2017

ANSWER:

I would first like to thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan and the Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure for his hard work to improve transport for people in Melbourne's East.

I also want to commend him on how actively he engages with those communities, such as at Heatherdale, that benefit from the removal of level crossings.

Two of the old Heatherdale Station signs were installed by the project team at a local kindergarten and the children took much interest in watching the level crossing removal project unfold at Heatherdale Road, Mitcham. Additionally, a third station sign has been gifted to the Heatherdale Action Community Group.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 May 2017

ANSWER:

A planning scheme amendment (PSA) for the Ormond Station development (or IDO) was submitted in late 2016-early 2017. Commercial negotiations for this project have not been finalised and will not progress until the Minister's decision on the planning scheme amendment and subsequent planning controls are released.

The various commercial processes for the Commercial Road (Osborne Street) and Chapel Street sites, are yet to be finalised. In accordance with State Government policies, commercial arrangements are reviewed by the Valuer General's and Land Monitor's offices and provide the base for commercial negotiations.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 May 2017

ANSWER:

I once again thank the Member for Western Metropolitan for his continued interest in the Andrews Labor Government's plan to remove the dangerous and congested level crossing at Buckley Street, Essendon.

The Liberal Party's continued opposition to the removal of level crossings across Melbourne, including at Buckley Street, Essendon, is well understood by the community.

It remains a delivery commitment of the Andrews Labor Government as part of 50 level crossing removals across the network.

It will return 78 minutes of traffic flow during peak travel times to road users, improve reliability for rail users and safety for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

The Government has a responsibility to govern for all Victorians and will continue to refuse the requests from the Liberal/National Opposition to stop the removal of these congested death traps.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 25 May 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to delivering the best possible facilities for the Eltham North sporting clubs that use this wonderful reserve. That's why my department, Sport and Recreation Victoria has been working with Nillumbik Shire Council and the sporting clubs to design and deliver not one, but two pavilions at Eltham North Reserve.

We have been working with the sporting clubs to develop plans to support the participating, coaching and volunteering that make these clubs great.

The Government has committed to providing \$2 000 000 towards this important local project—an upgrade of the existing pavilion, scout and community hall to a compliant and accessible facility, comprising of:

- separate cricket and soccer social rooms
- four large multi-use change rooms
- shared amenities
- upgraded scout facilities.

With funding from Nillumbik Shire Council, and the State Government, I understand this project will begin soon and deliver a generation of benefits for Eltham North cricketers, footballers and scouts.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 25 May 2017

ANSWER:

According to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, this particular Freedom of Information request is currently being processed by the Department's FOI team.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 25 May 2017

ANSWER:

The Caulfield to Dandenong Level Crossing Removal Project will provide a 17 kilometre shared path for commuter and recreational cyclists and pedestrians. Over 12 kilometres of shared path will be built, joining existing paths to create a continuous route from Caulfield to the EastLink trail.

The path will link with other cycle and walking paths and connect new community spaces and transport interchanges along the rail corridor, making it easier to access important medical, work and university destinations.

The upgrade of the path beyond the EastLink trail towards Dandenong is not part of the Level Crossing Removal Project's current scope.

The Andrews Labor Government has established Active Transport Victoria and will work with VicRoads and the TAC to prioritise and invest in infrastructure that keeps cyclists and pedestrians safe through the \$100 million Safer Cyclists and Pedestrians Fund.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Level Crossing Removal Authority and North East Link Authority will only use the material for the intended purposes.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that if the below criteria are met, the motor vehicle duty exemption is applied both to the initial registration and on a transfer when going into the name of the incapacitated person or their representative.

I understand that if the vehicle is to be registered in the name of an incapacitated person or the parent or legal guardian of an incapacitated person, who is a minor; or a person who is a relative of or a carer for an incapacitated person, the vehicle must be:

- specially converted to provide wheelchair access to and egress from the vehicle; and
- be capable of carrying at least one occupied wheelchair, and is used for conveying an incapacitated person whose mobility is seriously impaired.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Melhem
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Premiers' Reading Challenge is a key Victorian Government initiative to support children and young people's reading skills, and highlight the importance of reading for literacy development. While the Challenge is well-known in schools I am keen to encourage families and parents to be more involved in supporting children's reading from birth, during and beyond school.

Research that shows reading to children from birth promotes brain development, language learning and results in better literacy and spelling in later years. Reading to children also stimulates them to read books themselves and further develop their cognitive skills.

The frequency of reading to children at a young age has a direct causal effect on their schooling outcomes, regardless of their family background and home environment. Reading to children three to five days per week (compared to two or less) has the same effect on the child's reading skills at age four to five as being six months older. By age four, the reading skills of a child who has been read to every day are a year ahead of those read to just twice a week.

The campaign follows a successful launch which has already included coverage in major metropolitan newspapers. A state-wide campaign with the theme Share a Book Today began on 18 June and includes advertising across radio, social media and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse newspapers which targets parents and grandparents of young children. The Share a Book Today campaign aims to remind parents of the benefits of reading to their children from birth. The campaign's messages focus on 'sharing a book' to encourage parents who are not confident readers themselves that sharing a book is just as important as reading confidently.

As at the 4 July 2017 there are 4426 children, 973 parents or guardians and 145 services registered for the early childhood Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge.

I thank the Member for his interest in this matter and his long standing advocacy for ensuring children in his Western Metropolitan Electorate develop strong literacy and cognitive skills to help them get the best start in life.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

Periodic external cleaning of all classic fleet trains, including those servicing Shepparton, are due to commence shortly.

The 2017-18 State Budget commits \$43.5 million to upgrade the Shepparton line and introduce new coach services as part of the Government's commitment to improve public transport in regional Victoria.

Upgrades include a new train stabling facility at Shepparton, and a crossing loop near Murchison East, enabling more services to and from Shepparton from 2020. Funding for the necessary rail improvements will become available in 2018-19, as set out in the May 2017 Budget papers.

The Shepparton Community and local Member Suzanna Sheed have been effective advocates for improved public transport for their community.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

I thank Mr Morris for his interest in the Mair Street upgrades, revitalising this corridor will improve safety and traffic flow, encourage more use of active transport such as cycling and walking and give Ballarat the infrastructure it needs to grow.

I direct Mr Morris to my announcement to which he refers, which clearly states final concept plans will be presented to the community for feedback in the middle of the year before any construct works commence.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is making significant investments in Public Transport across the Northern Metropolitan region.

The \$600 million Mernda Rail Extension Project which is scheduled to open in early 2019, will deliver eight kilometres of new rail line, including three state-of-the-art stations at Marymede, Mernda and Hawkstowe. The project will also include a train stabling yard at the end of the line.

The \$395 million Hurstbridge Line Upgrade will duplicate the track to enable faster, more frequent and more reliable services for Melbourne's north east. Two dangerous and congested level crossings at Grange Road, Alphington and Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna will also be removed as part of this massive project.

Once the infrastructure improvements are completed, then consideration will be given to the timetable and Operating plan for the South Morang and Hurstbridge group.

Furthermore, the Government is committed to improving the signalling system used on the metropolitan rail network to allow more trains to run more often. The High Capacity Signalling trial will be undertaken using X'trapolis trains on the South Morang line.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Eideh
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria has confirmed that the site at 93B Furlong Road has been cleared of asbestos.

In assessing this issue, requiring clean up, and verifying the results of the clean up, EPA utilised statutory remedial notices and undertook site inspections. In 2016 when the dumping of waste occurred at 93B Furlong Road, EPA ensured that any material containing asbestos (or potentially containing asbestos) was safely contained while it was on the site. EPA then required the clean-up and removal of material containing asbestos by a qualified asbestos removalist. To confirm that all material containing asbestos had been cleared from the site, EPA then sought verification by a qualified occupational hygienist, consistent with standard industry practice.

Brimbank City Council has also carried out their own inspection of the area surrounding the site, and have confirmed that there was no evidence of asbestos or any other dumped waste beyond the site boundary. As construction continues on site, WorkSafe Victoria as the lead regulator will ensure any potential future concerns are addressed.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Treasurer
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Mount Gellibrand Wind Farm is supported under the Andrews Labor Government's Renewable Energy Certificates Purchasing Initiative. The aim of this initiative is to promote new renewable investment in the State of Victoria by leveraging the Victorian Government's purchasing power. The Government decided to utilise this purchasing power to acquire Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGCs) directly from renewable projects at competitive rates compared to LGC costs charged by electricity retailers. This practice is commonly used by private companies with large electricity consumption patterns and aligns with Governments economic practise of value for money. This aims to provide the dual benefit of bringing forward new renewable energy projects at no net additional cost to government agencies (and hence taxpayer's funds).

Mount Gellibrand is one of two successful wind farms selected through a competitive tender process under Stage one of the Renewable Energy Purchasing Initiative. The contracted LGC price cannot be disclosed as it is subject to commercial confidentiality. The Mount Gellibrand wind farm has a generation capacity that is expected to power over 60 000 homes, resulting in over \$250 million in capital investment and supporting over 100 construction jobs and approximately 10 ongoing full time equivalent jobs over its operating life. The Victorian Government's support for the first stage of the project (66 MW) is unlocking the full investment potential of the entire wind farm (132 MW) at no additional expense to Government.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 6 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) is currently reviewing the community feedback from the initial pre-draft consultation process for the Jacksons Hill Master Plan. This consultation was held during March of this year.

The VPA understands the importance of the Jacksons Hill precinct for the local Sunbury community and has developed a strong suite of principles which are guiding the development of the draft master plan. These include protecting and celebrating the heritage values of the site and strengthening the education, community and arts that the site already offers.

The public exhibition of the draft master plan is expected to commence in the coming months and will provide the community with a further opportunity to have its say. Following the review of any submissions received, the master plan will be finalised later this year. You can review a report that summarises the first round of community consultation on the VPA's website.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Water
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

Blue-green algae (BGA) events are a common seasonal occurrence and a natural component of most aquatic systems. The BGA event in Lake Carramar is being managed by Melbourne Water in accordance with its risk management plan and with the Victorian Governments BGA Circular 2016-17.

The Department of Health and Human Services advises not to make contact with algae affected water when guideline values are exceeded. BGA warning signs have been erected at Lake Carramar. Melbourne Water undertakes regular testing of the lake water. The BGA warning sign is still in place and will be removed once monitoring results are below the threshold value of 4 mm³/L for at least two weeks.

Melbourne Water advises that residents at Lake Carramar are interested in exploring options for the use of bore water to flush the lake, and improve water quality. On 21 June 2017, the Essential Services Commission released its final decision on the Quiet Lakes bore flushing tariff proposal. The Commission approved Melbourne Water's application for a bore flushing and monitoring tariff and this option is currently being further investigated.

Melbourne Water is engaging a consultant to undertake a feasibility study to identify and assess engineering modification options to allow through flow to Lake Carramar. The study is expected to be completed in about eight weeks.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that it funded and installed four new electronic speed limit signs on 17 July 2017, outside the Eastern Ranges School on Dorset Road in Ferntree Gully. I understand that these solar-powered LED flashing lights illuminate 40km/h during school hours and replaced the existing static signs.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Minister for Planning has been the responsible authority for the Prahran Public Housing Estate since 2011, which includes the following properties:

- The Horace Petty Estate at 267-271 Malvern Road and 1-23 Surrey Road, Prahran;
- The Bangs Street Estate at 1-21 Bangs Street, Prahran;
- The Essex Street Estate at 2-16 Essex Street, Prahran; and
- King Street Estate at 25-27 King Street, Prahran.

At this stage, I have no plans to reconsider this arrangement.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

This matter does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities. Please redirect this question to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

The decision of how and where resources are deployed is appropriately a matter for the Chief Commissioner of Police. However, I can assure you that the Community of Ballarat continues to receive a 24 hour response as part of the Victoria Police's Western Region Division 3, which has seen a 3 per cent increase in police resources overall since November 2014.

I also want to reiterate that the Government is committed to ensuring that Victoria Police has the resources it needs to respond to crime and keep Victoria safe, including in Ballarat.

The Government has shown its commitment to police resourcing through our Community Safety Statement. The Statement outlines the Government's \$2 billion investment to equip Victoria Police with new resources and capabilities to prevent and reduce the level of harm being caused in the community. This is an unprecedented investment in Victoria Police and responds to the growing demand on police services.

Central to the Community Safety Statement is boosting of police numbers right across the state. In total, the Andrews Labor Government is funding 3135 additional frontline police, including 415 specialist family violence officers, over the next five years to support police respond to crime in our communities. These extra 3135 police, which are on top of attrition, are the lynchpin of the Victoria's first-ever Community Safety Statement, which you can find at: www.vic.gov.au/community-safety-statement-2017.html.

It is the biggest boost to frontline police in Victoria's history, and it is crucial to dealing with the growing demand on police services, particularly the challenges of repeat youth offenders, increasing aggravated burglaries, high-volume crime such as car theft, and family violence.

Victoria Police has developed a new and sophisticated staff allocation model, in consultation with The Police Association, so we know how many police are needed and where. It will also help police predict how many will be needed in the future—so they can start planning for them now.

The Government's separate \$148.6 million commitment for 400 police custody officers is also freeing up police so that they may be deployed back to frontline duties. Specifically, Ballarat Police Station currently has 17 police custody officers.

I would also like to stress that incidents of car rammings of Victoria Police vehicles is completely unacceptable and highlights some of the risks that our police officers face day to day in protecting our community. The Chief Commissioner of Police is currently considering what operational changes Victoria Police could implement to minimise the opportunity for this type of behaviour.

The Government continues to work closely with the Chief Commissioner about what resources and powers Victoria Police need to address crime, particularly emerging crime trends.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

Victorians today have numerous ways to purchase and top up their myki cards.

The myki Retail Network has now grown to over 800 myki retail outlets across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

In addition to the retail channel, public transport customers are further supported through the ability to buy and top up via:

- PTV Call Centre (1800 800 007)
- PTV website (ptv.vic.gov.au)
- myki Machines (located at train stations, some tram stops and some bus interchanges)
- Ticket office windows at staffed train stations
- On board buses

Public Transport Victoria is exploring new options for additional myki purchase and top up options as well as looking at how best to serve Melbourne's growing northern suburbs.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

I once again thank the Member for Western Metropolitan for his continued interest in the Andrews Labor Government's plan to remove the dangerous and congested level crossing at Buckley Street, Essendon.

The Liberal Party's continued opposition to the removal of level crossings across Melbourne, including at Buckley Street, Essendon, is well understood by the community.

It remains a delivery commitment of the Andrews Labor Government as part of 50 level crossing removals across the network.

It will return 78 minutes of traffic flow during peak travel times to road users, improve reliability for rail users and safety for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

The Government has a responsibility to govern for all Victorians and will continue to refuse the requests from the Liberal/National Opposition to stop the removal of these congested death traps.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 7 June 2017

ANSWER:

Thank you for your question Mr . Ramsay.

The Princes Highway West duplication works are progressing well. The project remains on schedule and on budget.

Our Contractors will always look to source rock and soil locally and they are currently actively working to achieve this outcome.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 8 June 2017

ANSWER:

I thank the member for his question and note his ongoing advocacy for his constituents in Western Victoria. In regards to the particulars of the issue you raised, the question would be best addressed to the Federal Government. However, we agree that actions of the then Minister for Trade and Investment raises significant concerns about the integrity of Ministers within the Liberal Federal Government and represents a breach of the community's trust.

The Victorian Labor Government is committed to representing the whole state and that means government focus shouldn't just be confined to the Melbourne.

Our Labor Government has created over 50 000 regional jobs throughout Victoria which is nine times more than the 5600 jobs created under the former Coalition Government. Under our Government, regional unemployment in Victoria has decreased and sits below the national average.

It should be noted that China is Victoria's number one trading partner, with goods exports reaching \$6.5 billion in 2014-15, as well as the state's largest source market for international tourists and international students. The Labor Government has worked hard to encourage business opportunities for all Victorians.

In 2016, Victoria reaffirmed the Victoria-Jiangsu relationship at the 16th biennial meeting of the Victoria-Jiangsu Joint Economic Committee. Victorian regional cities were represented at the first ever Victoria-Jiangsu Regional Cities Alliance dialogue event including Ballarat, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and representatives from the Committee for Geelong and Committee for Gippsland.

Victorian regional city leaders used the dialogue to highlight the high quality food and agricultural products, unique tourism experiences and world class universities and vocational education and training providers in their respective cities.

In June this year, ten businesses from the Latrobe Valley and broader Gippsland area recently met face-to-face with some of China's biggest companies as part of a Victorian Government trade mission that will help the region's economy to diversify and grow.

This Government's priority is always about protecting and creating local jobs.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Elasmar
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 8 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to increasing participation in sport and recreation by Aboriginal Victorians.

The programs recently announced will provide opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged people within the Aboriginal community to engage in sport and recreation activities.

The benefits to Aboriginal Victorians include health improvements, social cohesion, community engagement and cultural strengthening.

These initiatives will help to bridge cultural divides through sport and recreation activities and create more accessible and inclusive grassroots sports and recreation opportunities for Aboriginal young people.

Through a grants process there will be opportunities for the Aboriginal community in the Northern Metropolitan Region to remove barriers to participation; cultural and recreational focussed camps for young Aboriginal people particularly those in Out Of Home Care; more participation opportunities through clubs and State Sporting Associations; and cultural awareness education program for sporting clubs with a particular focus on junior clubs.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 8 June 2017

ANSWER:

The referral to the Australian Minister for the Environment under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) was made by the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority (MMRA) in August 2015. The referral is publicly available on the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy's website and contains the detail provided to the Commonwealth about the project. The referral appropriately addressed the relevant Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) protected by the EPBC Act. Since the referral was lodged with the Commonwealth, the St Kilda Road and Environs Place (including the Domain Parklands and the Shrine of Remembrance) has been included, on an interim basis, on the National Heritage List. The Commonwealth Minister for the Environment is now assessing whether it should be permanently included. Under the EPBC Act, the inclusion of the St Kilda Road and Environs Place on the National Heritage List does not affect the validity of the earlier referral and decision (as per Section 158A of the EPBC Act).

Through the environmental management framework, that I approved, MMRA continues to work to reduce and manage the construction impacts of the entire project, including those on St Kilda Road.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 8 June 2017

ANSWER:

This question refers to financial assistance for victims of crime, which does not fall within my portfolio.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 8 June 2017

ANSWER:

As is often the case, your assertions, and those of your Liberal and National colleagues, are riddled with error.

The particular event to which you refer saw some of Australia's leading energy innovators visit the Latrobe Valley to take part in a stakeholder renewable energy roundtable. The Roundtable brought together more than 150 renewable energy and new energy technology stakeholders with the aim of identifying projects that could be successfully established in the Latrobe Valley to boost jobs and economic growth in the region.

At the Roundtable, my colleague, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio, announced a consultation paper seeking feedback from local businesses, industry and the wider community to inform a Latrobe Valley New Energy Jobs and Investment Prospectus. We would welcome Mr Northe and yourself to provide feedback along with any other member of the local community. The consultation paper can be found at <http://lva.vic.gov.au/new-energy-prospectus/>.

The consultation paper is the first step in working with the community, local industry and experts to identify challenges, as well as ideas on how to showcase what the Valley has to offer.

In addition to this, the Andrews Labor Government set up the Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) as part of a \$266 million package to support the workers and families affected by the closure of Hazelwood. The LVA was established to deliver new jobs and provide extra support to the Valley's communities. This includes providing tailored advice and opportunities to retrain or find new employment through the Worker Transition Service.

From day one of the announcement, workers and businesses affected by the forthcoming closure have been able to walk in to the Latrobe Valley Authority's (LVA) office in Morwell to access a range of support. Services at the LVA include;

- employment services, skills and training, counselling and financial advice delivered in partnership with the Gippsland Trades and Labour Council and other service providers;
- subsidised training in job seeking, resilience, and language, literacy and digital literacy;
- tailored support for supply chain businesses to help them identify new opportunities for the future and develop a business transition plan;
- the Back to Work program being extended to businesses who employ workers in the Latrobe Valley.

The LVA is also helping to secure the economic future of the Valley by bringing together local people, councils, industry, education providers and governments. In addition the LVA has been working with around 100 businesses to establish or expand their presence and create new jobs.

The LVA is also engaging with more than 100 local organisations to make sure the Latrobe Valley continues to be a great place to live, including upgrading the Latrobe Regional Gallery and expanding the Boolarra Folk Festival.

Despite all this, you and your colleagues continue to create further uncertainty around the workers' futures. No one will ever forget that when the people in the valley needed you most you abandoned them. The former Liberal Minister for Mental Health & Community Services was more interested in her preselection battle in Kew, as it took a month for her to bother visiting the Valley when it was on fire.

Unlike the Victorian Coalition, the Labor Government will stand with the workers at Hazelwood, their families and their community.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 8 June 2017

ANSWER:

The West Gate Freeway will remain toll-free for cars. Tolls are proposed to only apply for cars when using the West Gate tunnel, Hyde Street ramps and the city access.

Heavy vehicles (trucks) will be tolled on the West Gate Freeway. This means that trucks would pay a toll regardless of their choice between the tunnel and the West Gate Bridge, and there is no incentive to avoid the tunnel.

We are working with industry to look at innovative tolling solutions for Port shuttle trips, including multi-trip discount incentives, tolling caps and night-time discounts.

We are designing a tolling structure for the West Gate Tunnel Project that makes the best possible use of the road network. The final structure is subject to ongoing negotiations between the Victorian Government and Transurban.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 8 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government wrote to the Commonwealth seeking approval for the Metro Tunnel Project proposal in 2015.

The Commonwealth advised the State in September 2015 that the Metro Tunnel Project would not be a controlled action under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. This allowed the project to proceed without the need for a Commonwealth approval.

The emergency National Heritage listing put in place by the Federal Minister in February 2017 does not override the Commonwealth's previous approval for the project in 2015. There was no requirement for the State to seek further approval from the Federal Minister for the works.

On 27 April 2017, approval was given for the removal of eighteen heritage listed trees and other preliminary works in St Kilda Road for the Metro Tunnel Project. Of the eleven trees removed to date, eight are elms of varying condition. The approval to remove these trees was issued under the State Heritage Act 1995, by the independent Executive Director of Heritage Victoria. I have therefore not been in contact with the Federal Minister on this matter.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that properties along the western side of Hyde Street, south of Francis Street, are partially affected by a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO), which has been in place since 1 March 1955. I understand that the Mobil Terminal has also been in place for many years.

VicRoads advises me that the retention of the PAO is considered necessary to account for future network connectivity requirements and continued population growth.

I understand that representatives from VicRoads met with you and some Hyde Street residents on 1 June 2017 to discuss the issue and to clarify mechanisms by which properties can be acquired or purchased by VicRoads. VicRoads is also responding to requests for meetings with individual owners to discuss their particular circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government has guaranteed minimum funding of \$1 billion over eight years for upgrade and repair of arterial roads in rural and regional Victoria.

As part of the \$1 billion commitment for rural and regional arterial roads, in 2017-18, the State Government has allocated \$260 million for repairs and resurfacing that will benefit deteriorating arterial roads in rural and regional Victoria. Even though local roads are not part of this investment both rural and regional communities will significantly benefit from improved road infrastructure.

In addition, the Federal Government provides direct funding to local councils for the maintenance of local roads and bridges. These programs include the Roads to Recovery Programme and the Bridge Renewal Programme.

The Federal Government also provides funding for the "Black Spot Programme" aimed at improving road safety across the nation with a key focus on safety on local roads. Further, the Federal Government has other funding sources such as the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Programme and Regional growth fund that Councils may be able to tap into to support investment in local infrastructure managed by Councils.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Mulino
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

I would like to thank the Member for Eastern Victoria for his question and for his strong advocacy for the Growing Suburbs Fund and its benefits for his constituents.

The Growing Suburbs Fund is positioned to respond quickly to the pressures experienced by interface communities by bringing forward local infrastructure projects that will make a big difference in the day-to-day lives of outer suburban families.

I am pleased to advise that applications for eligible 2017-2019 projects will be received through a single application round which opened on 23 June 2017 and will close on 10 August 2017.

Following this, my department will undertake a robust assessment process which will include consulting widely across government before announcements are made in November 2017.

I look forward to working closely with local members and local governments to deliver these outstanding community facilities.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

Since June 2016, 95.4 per cent of Ballarat line services arrived at their destination within 10 minutes of their scheduled time.

With more than 424 000 passenger trips taken on the Ballarat line during May alone, trains are occasionally stopping at stations longer than scheduled to allow passengers to board and depart services.

To combat the huge growth in passenger numbers along the Ballarat line, the line is being transformed as part of the Ballarat Line Upgrade, which will improve the overall reliability of train services.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Melhem
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

The \$70 million Children's Facilities Capital Program (CFCP) is open to all Victorian communities and is a competitive grants program, supporting local solutions for local early years infrastructure needs. Of this funding, \$10 million has been committed to address early years demand in high growth areas, and a further \$10 million to co-locate early-years infrastructure on school sites.

The Western Metropolitan Region contains several councils identified as high growth areas: Hume, Melton and Wyndham. These councils are specifically encouraged to apply for CFCP funding.

CFCP supports the provision of high quality early years programs for children and their families by increasing infrastructure capacity to deliver kindergarten programs for children in the year before school. It also promotes integrated service delivery in one location where families can access early childhood education and care, health and development and family services. It seeks to improve access to local and responsive early childhood services for children from vulnerable and/or disadvantaged families and through the establishment of early childhood infrastructure on or near school sites.

I encourage all eligible new and existing early childhood service providers in the Western Metropolitan Region and across the state to apply for these grants.

Further information about the program (including the guidelines and how to apply) can be found on the Department for Education and Training website.

I thank the Member for his interest in these grants and strong advocacy for early childhood services on behalf of families in his Western Metropolitan Electorate.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Community Safety Statement, released in December 2016, outlines the range of new investment, powers, tools and capabilities that Victoria Police will be equipped with to stabilise the crime rate and begin to reduce the level of harm being caused in the community, including funding for 3135 additional frontline police.

As announced by the Chief Commissioner of Police on 27 April 2017, the first 300 frontline police began to roll out into Melbourne's growth suburbs from May 2017. The South Eastern Metropolitan Region will receive 50 additional frontline police to prevent, detect and disrupt crime.

The Andrews Labor Government's 2016-17 State Budget included \$19.4 million of new funding to continue and expand the Community Crime Prevention Program.

Crime prevention begins at a local level, and this funding is ensuring our communities are well supported through local grants programs and initiatives to help them tackle local crime issues.

The Public Safety Infrastructure Fund provides grants of up to \$250 000 to Victorian councils to implement urban design initiatives and technology, such as lighting and CCTV, to improve safety in public places.

I encourage council to consider applying for funding in consultation with police, traders and the local community. The 2017-18 round of Public Safety Infrastructure Fund grants is scheduled to open for applications shortly.

Further information is available on the Community Crime Prevention website at <http://www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au/>.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of the Queenscliff Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade and the volunteers who selflessly devote their time and skills to service and promote the safety and well-being of the Queenscliff community. The CFA is aware of the Queenscliff Brigade's need for a new water pumper and I encourage the brigade to continue to work with the CFA on progressing this matter.

In late 2016, the Victorian Government launched the Emergency Services Volunteer Sustainability Grants Program, which works to ensure emergency management volunteers can continue their crucial work in supporting their communities. The Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) provides grants to emergency service volunteer groups, including those who serve the CFA, for operational equipment, vehicles, trucks, tankers, watercraft, trailers and minor facility improvements. For further information on how to apply for a grant under these programs, please visit www.emv.vic.gov.au/how-we-help/grants-awards.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 20 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Member for Southern Metropolitan has strongly advocated to delay and prevent the construction of the Metro Tunnel project. The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with delivering the most important infrastructure project in Victoria.

The Member for Southern Metropolitan's understanding that there is no plan for compensation or relocation for residents around Domain station is incorrect.

Comprehensive Residential Impact Mitigation Guidelines for Construction have been developed through the independent Environment Effects Statement and are available at www.metrotunnel.vic.gov.au.

Any residents seeking advice should contact the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority (MMRA) on 1800 551 927 or via the website.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Shing
Directed to: Minister for Creative Industries
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

I am delighted that the Latrobe Regional Gallery, in collaboration with The Magritte Foundation Belgium, will be showing the world-class exhibition Rene Magritte: The Revealing Image Photos And Films from 19 August 2017.

The State Government, through Creative Victoria, is proud to support the Latrobe Regional Gallery through its Regional Partnerships program, and the Magritte exhibition with Government backed insurance through its Indemnification Scheme for Victorian public galleries and museums. Other Gippsland and regional Victorian galleries, museums, and performing arts centres are encouraged to apply for funding support through these and other Creative Victoria Regional Development and Touring programs. Details are available at www.creative.vic.gov.au.

It is pleasing that the Latrobe Regional Gallery has joined Victoria's successful network of regional galleries in leading cultural tourism.

The Member may also wish to consult further with the Minister for Tourism and Major Events on this matter.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

There has been no decision to rezone the Keysborough Golf Club land.

The Victorian Government in partnership with Golf Victoria released the Planning for Golf in Victoria Discussion Paper on 22 June 2017. Golf clubs and operators, industry, local government, land managers and the Victorian public are invited to make a submission by 14 August 2017.

A planning decision framework for golf course land development proposals is proposed in the discussion paper.

A planning scheme amendment that has the effect of altering or removing any controls over the subdivision of any green wedge land to allow the land to be subdivided into more lots or into smaller lots than allowed for in the planning scheme involves an authorisation process requiring my approval and ratification by both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The Government has committed to maintaining the Urban Growth Boundary that is reflected in Plan Melbourne 2017-2050.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government stands with the workers of the Latrobe Valley and their families — across Hazelwood employees, Australian Sustainable Hardwood, Carter Holt Harvey and all the supply chain businesses who work every day to provide for their families and communities. We put them and the Latrobe Valley first.

I can confirm that since November 2014, employment in the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland region has grown by 9200 jobs. The array of services and assistance the Labor Government provides to small businesses in these areas is designed to build their resilience and support business growth.

We have established the Latrobe Valley Authority, with an office in Morwell, to oversee program implementation and work to assist small businesses. This includes the establishment of a new Economic Growth Zone in the Latrobe Valley to create local jobs and grow local businesses.

To help local businesses grow we expanded the Back to Work Scheme, which provides businesses with up to \$9000 for each unemployed person living in the Latrobe Valley or retrenched worker from the Hazelwood power station they hire and train.

The Labor Government has allocated \$3.2 million to Destination Gippsland for a new marketing program that will showcase the best of the region's produce and agriculture, including food and wine, that visitors to the region can experience.

In addition, the centrepiece of the \$1.45 billion Regional Rail Revival package of major upgrades across regional Victoria is the \$435 million upgrade of the Gippsland Line. This upgrade will enable more frequent, safe and reliable services and create more than 400 jobs, with a project office in the Latrobe Valley.

Further, I have engaged directly with businesses in the Latrobe Valley to understand their specific business needs and best way the government can assist them. The Victorian Small Business Commissioner, Judy O'Connell has also directly engaged with businesses in the Latrobe Valley and is supporting local businesses and those affected in the supply chain in a number of ways, including through the creation of a central resource hub for businesses in the Latrobe Valley.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Eideh
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that the project is on schedule and expects it to be completed by September 2017.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Young
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

Visitation rates at Winton Wetlands have been steadily increasing since the commencement of the restoration project in 2013.

Visitor numbers were approximately 5000 in 2014, 16 000 in 2015 and over 26 000 in 2016. Visitor numbers in 2017 are over 15 000 to date and forecast to top 30 000 for the year.

The increasing visitation numbers have been supported and enabled through Winton Wetlands Committee's focus on the construction of roads and paths, graphics, the Hub building, car parks, toilet blocks and camp grounds.

More recently, events and artworks have added interest to the reserve.

The award-winning Hub has been particularly popular, is well patronised by locals and is increasingly being used as a venue for events.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Level Crossing Removal Authority has engineered the design of Carrum and Seaford level crossing removal projects to avoid any impact to regional groundwater and therefore the Ramsar listed Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands. This decision was taken by the Level Crossing Removal Authority following advice from their technical advisors. This advice is that the project does not impact on the regional groundwater and therefore presents no impact on the Edithvale Seaford Wetlands.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Pennicuik
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

To introduce the new governance structures for Caulfield Racecourse Reserve, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is working through a range of complicated legal matters. These include the removal of the current Crown Grant, which is an outdated method of delegated management. It is important that due diligence is followed to ensure the long-term solution is sustainable and doesn't unduly impact the rights of the various parties affected by the new governance structures and the proposed legislation. We are still fully committed to implementing the new governance arrangements as soon as possible.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government greatly appreciates the work of our Victoria State Emergency Services (VICSES) volunteers, including those of the Cobram VICSES Unit, who dedicate their time and skills to keep the community safe.

The Government is helping to keep Victoria safe with extra support for those who serve our State during emergencies. The 2017-18 Victorian Budget provides \$112.6 million to upgrade facilities and invest in new equipment and training for emergency services across the State. VICSES will receive \$34.3 million for new trucks, boats and trailers and to modernise its buildings.

In a significant reform, \$14.9 million will cover the costs of VICSES units located on council land, where the council agrees to offer the VICSES unit a long-term lease, giving them more certainty about their future. Where councils offer these long-term leases, the Government will cover these charges and maintain the upkeep of the facility. This will cut costs for local councils and give VICSES units the security they deserve.

I understand that the Cobram VICSES unit has limited resources and facilities provided in Cobram. I encourage the Cobram VICSES Unit to continue to work with the VICSES Head Office to address these issues.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 21 June 2017

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Western Metropolitan for asking about the Andrews Labor Government's program of level crossing removals. I also note his continued refusal to stand up for the people of the west and support the removal of these dangerous and congested level crossings.

Removing these level crossings is all about saving lives, reducing congestion and improving the transport network.

Work to remove the level crossing at Kororoit Creek Road, including the partial duplication of the Altona Loop is now underway, with the project due for completion by the end of 2018. The level crossing at Ferguson Street will be removed by 2022.

The dangerous level crossing at Ferguson Street has claimed the lives of two school aged children and caused serious permanent injuries to a cyclist, who was hit and dragged along by a train.

Locals know that separating the road and rail line at Ferguson Street will keep the hundreds of school children who use this crossing each week safe.

Removing these two dangerous level crossings will significantly increase safety and better protect all members of the Williamstown community, regardless of whether they cycle, drive, walk or catch the train.

The need for more targeted traffic data, including modelling of forecast future volumes, will be assessed at the planning and development phase of the Ferguson Street project.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority will continue to work with other bodies such as the West Gate Tunnel Project and VicRoads to optimise the traffic benefits of our level crossing projects.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government earlier this year began work on the \$395 million Hurstbridge line upgrades, including the removal of two level crossings, duplicating the track between Heidelberg and Rosanna and rebuilding Rosanna Station.

In response to the advocacy by the local Member for Eltham, the 2017-18 Budget provides approximately \$5 million for planning and development for the second stage of the Hurstbridge line upgrade, with a focus on addressing the single track between Greensborough and Eltham.

We recognise the rail trestle bridge at Eltham is both of significant heritage value, and a beloved asset for the local community.

As these investigations continue, the importance of the trestle bridge will be of utmost consideration and these planning works ensure the community's views regarding the heritage listed bridge are at the forefront of the Level Crossing Removal Authorities works.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Metro Tunnel is a massive project and will create some unavoidable disruption while it is built. The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority (MMRA) has been consulting with the Oxford Scholar Hotel since 2015 about the project and its construction.

MMRA supported the Oxford Scholar Hotel on a day-to-day basis in a number of ways, including by limiting the time of works, wayfinding signage, sealing windows, upgrading air filters, moving services and assisting with new food offers to attract customers.

The decision to close the Oxford Scholar Hotel was a business decision made by the publican, Mr Wulf and his partners. Had the hotel kept operating, the MMRA would have continued to work with Mr Wulf to provide support for the business.

There is no legislative basis for compensation to be paid to Mr Wulf. Compensation is only available under the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 where land is partially or wholly acquired for a project.

However, a range of support measures are available to non-acquired businesses under the Business Support Guidelines for Construction and were offered to Mr Wulf.

The Metro Tunnel Project will continue to work with local businesses on a case-by-case basis to reduce and manage impacts where possible in line with Business Support Guidelines developed for the Project.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is removing all nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong. These level crossings are among the most dangerous and congested in Victoria. These level crossings are down for over 80 minutes during the two hour morning peak but it is acknowledged that the Member for Southern Metropolitan has strongly advocated against the project.

The project has created around 2000 jobs across a wide variety of occupations and skills with a wide variety of unions and employer bodies involved.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

The previous Liberal Government did not remove a single level crossing on the Frankston line. In contrast, the Andrews Labor Government is getting rid of thirteen, with three already gone. The Victorian community, including Frankston train line commuters, remain very aware that the Liberal Party continues to oppose the removal of level crossings. It is acknowledged that the Member for South Eastern Metropolitan has been a strong advocate against the removal of level crossings but the Government is committed to delivering on our election commitments to get rid of these dangerous and congested death traps.

The Government has announced that an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) will take place in relation to the removal of level crossings at Edithvale and Bonbeach due to the potential impacts on the nearby wetlands. The Commonwealth Government will also conduct its own assessment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act (EPBC).

The EES process will include a public submission process where all interested parties can put forward their views for independent consideration.

More details on the removal of Victoria's 50 worst level crossings and the upcoming EES process can be found at www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Metro Tunnel Project has been through a robust and independent 12 month Environment Effects Statement planning process, which included detailed assessments of the potential environmental, social, economic and planning impacts.

As part of this process, measures to protect residents from unreasonable construction impacts such as excessive noise were developed and signed off by an independent panel of environmental and planning experts.

These measures state that, if certain noise levels are reached, varying mitigation measures should apply. This is standard practice on recent large construction projects, including Regional Rail Link.

The protection measures also state that, in some cases, alternative accommodation must be offered.

Noise modelling undertaken as part of recent works in Domain showed noise levels would not reach the level and frequency required to trigger this offer. Residents were instead offered respite in the form of earplugs and movie tickets.

Residents who had special circumstances were assessed on a case-by-case basis, and offered alternative accommodation accordingly.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Victoria Government's Regional Rail Revival program has committed \$110 million to the Surf Coast Rail Upgrade Stage 1. This includes developing the Torquay transit corridor by reserving the land required for future transport services and paving the way for the rail duplication to Waurn Ponds by providing a second platform.

A business case is currently being developed by Transport For Victoria for the track duplication to Waurn Ponds.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Shepparton Bypass is an important project for the Goulburn region and I am supportive of any acceleration to that project that may be possible. I understand that the Shepparton Bypass Project Business Case is High Value High Risk and developing a robust business case will require extensive data collection, detailed designs along with community and industry consultation. A land acquisition strategy and land acquisition is also required to progress this project to construction.

VicRoads is working with the Greater Shepparton City Council to accelerate the program and complete a robust business case as quickly as possible.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 22 June 2017

ANSWER:

There was over 13 months of extensive engagement and consultation with the community and stakeholders on the proposed expansion of the Melbourne Regional Landfill. This included an independent planning panel which considered an extensive amount of evidence, all written submissions received and further oral submissions from local residents.

My decision was based on the recommendations of the panel and advice received from my department. It is consistent with the findings of the panel, although I have approved a smaller area than recommended by the panel. The approval is consistent with that granted by the Environment Protection Authority.

The planning permit is subject to strict conditions which will protect the amenity of neighbouring residents. It ensures that the expansion is limited and strictly regulated.

The planning permit and associated documents can be viewed online at www.planning.vic.nov.au/ravenhall and are available for public inspection during office hours at Melton City Council or by appointment at my offices.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 23 June 2017

ANSWER:

The government is committed to working with affected land owners across Victoria to reduce the economic, social and environmental impacts of wild dogs in Victoria. The government is also committed to achieving greater gender diversity on committees and boards.

Appropriately qualified females were encouraged to express interest in the member positions of the Wild Dog Management Advisory Committee. The open and competitive expression of interest process resulted in 21 expressions of interest from well-qualified and experienced candidates, including one expression of interest from a female candidate.

The appointed members bring an appropriate mix of credentials to the committee to provide me with strategic advice on minimising the negative impacts of wild dogs.

As of 27 June 2017, the gender balance for appointments to committees in the Agriculture Portfolio was 53 per cent female and 47 per cent male.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Gepp
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 23 June 2017

ANSWER:

Congratulations on your recent elevation to the Legislative Council. I wish you well and know the people of Northern Victoria will have another strong voice in our Parliament alongside Jaclyn Symes MLC.

I thank you for your interest in the Inclusive Schools Fund. The Fund creates innovative school environments based on inclusive best practice and Universal Design Principles. It allows schools to consider this in the context of facility planning and design for students with disabilities.

In March, I was delighted to award \$200 000 from the Fund to Swan Hill Specialist School to develop the middle-years yard. I am aware of the fantastic work that takes place at the school and look forward to watching to this inspirational project take shape.

This project is currently at the tender stage and a builder is expected to be appointed imminently. Typically, Inclusive Schools Fund projects are completed within three months.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 23 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government has provided an unprecedented investment in education with over \$2.5 billion for school infrastructure over the last three state budgets. This figure represents the largest and most ambitious investment in school infrastructure in Victoria's history.

Across the Southern Metropolitan electorate, Labor has provided more than \$257 million for school infrastructure in our first three years in government. This compares to the mere \$38 million provided under the former Liberal government's first three budgets.

Victoria is experiencing unprecedented population which is leading to pressure at existing schools. We require 90 000 new students places over the next 5 years.

The former government failed to invest in new schools and thankfully Labor continues to deliver new schools to keep up with population growth. As a result of our significant investment, we are now delivering 56 new schools across the state.

The lack of planning and investment by your former government means we have a lot of catching up to do. This is a challenge that our Government does not shy away from.

While the Government has invested considerably over the last three years in upgrading schools it is a ongoing challenge is to responsibly balance and prioritise the needs of more than 1500 government schools, all in varying condition. We know that many schools have capital or maintenance requirements. The needs of all schools will be considered when determining priorities for the capital works program, and the Government will continue to use all available data, including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, when allocating resources in future state budgets.

In the neighbourhoods around South Yarra Primary School, the Andrews Labor Government is currently building the new South Melbourne Ferrars Street Primary School to open Term 1, 2018 and the South Melbourne Park Primary School to open Term 1, 2019. These two schools will create more than 1000 new government primary school places in the area and alleviate enrolment pressures from surrounding schools.

The Department's enrolment projections indicate that South Yarra Primary School is expected to have 465 students by 2021. The demographic demand forecast of the school's local catchment (based on the current local market share for government primary schools) forecasts that there will be 686 primary school aged students within the school's catchment in 2021. Our investment in South Melbourne Park will mean we can meet the future growth, with South Melbourne Park being able to accommodate 550 new students when it opens in 2019. This combined with Ferrars Street Primary School will mean there is room to accommodate 1050 student places in the local area.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 23 June 2017

ANSWER:

Structural inspections on bridges and culverts are carried out on an annual basis. The reeds at the site were cut down in March and left to regrow to allow herbicide control at the most opportune time in the plants' growing cycle. Over the coming months, the regrowth will be sprayed.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Attorney-General
Asked on: 23 June 2017

ANSWER:

The Government announced the establishment of an Expert Panel on Terrorism and Violent Extremism Prevention and Response Powers on 18 June 2017. The Panel will report to Government within weeks on reform options to the powers, guidance and protections available to Victoria Police. A more detailed report on wider reforms across the entire justice system will follow in the months afterwards.

The Panel has a broad remit to examine relevant laws and practices. The Government expects that the Panel will make recommendations in the short term that can be quickly implemented to ensure the balance of laws, powers and obligations is appropriate to counter the current threat environment. In addition, the more considered detailed report will examine broader issues. Those issues are not limited and the Panel is able to examine laws such as those governing licensed security guards to identify any weaknesses or areas for improvement.

Matters relating to licensed venues fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. The licensing of crowd controllers falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Police.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 23 June 2017

ANSWER:

I would first like to thank the Member for Eastern Victoria's interest in the Andrews Labor Government's project to remove the dangerous and congested level crossing at Clyde Road, Berwick.

The selection of a design option to remove a level crossing depends on the unique characteristics of each site, the benefits and impacts of the various options and feedback from the community and stakeholders, such as local councils, businesses and residents.

The level crossing at Clyde Road in Berwick is one of the 50 this government has committed to removing, and it is scheduled to be removed by 2022. At this stage, the Level Crossing Removal Authority is still in early planning and no decisions have been made regarding designs at this site. Residents, local business and the local council will all be kept informed of progress at the site and given opportunity to provide feedback.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 23 June 2017

ANSWER:

I once again thank the Member for Western Metropolitan for his continued interest in the Andrews Labor Government's plan to remove the dangerous and congested level crossing at Buckley Street, Essendon.

The Liberal Party's continued opposition to the removal of level crossings across Melbourne, including at Buckley Street, Essendon, is well understood by the community.

It is unfortunate that the Member for Western Metropolitan is so poorly informed on the Andrews Labor Government's plan to safely separate Buckley Street and the network's second busiest train line that will return 78 minutes of traffic flow during peak travel times to road users, improve reliability for rail users, make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

His constituents have had the opportunity to provide feedback into the removal of this dangerous and congested level crossing through numerous channels, from several public information sessions held in 2016, to the online community information hub, to the Essendon Info Hub at 20 Russell Street, to trader and community sessions, Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG) meetings, and the Planning Scheme Amendment survey. These — and many other channels — will continue through the life of the project as work will get underway at Buckley Street later this year, with the boom gates expected to go by the end of 2018.

The Government has a responsibility to govern for all Victorians and will continue to refuse the requests from the Liberal/National Opposition to stop the removal of these congested death traps.