

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

6, 7 and 8 September 2017

(Extract from book 15)

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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
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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 (until 23 August 2017)	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, Ms Hutchins, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula 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 Bath, Ms Patten and Mr Somyurek. (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon 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*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and 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 Gepp 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 Elasmar, Mr Melhem, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Purcell, 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

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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
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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	V1LJ
Elasmar, 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; V1LJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.

Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.

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

Headings reflect the portfolio of the minister answering the question.

Wednesday, 6 September 2017

Special Minister of State

11 027. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister for State: In relation to claims from the Minister’s Office from 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016 for mobile phone expenses totalling \$12 525.26 —

- (a) what proportion of these charges relate to the Minister’s phone;
- (b) what proportion of these charges relate to Ministerial Staff phones; and
- (c) what is the monthly charge for the Minister’s phone and devices.

ANSWER:

- (a) The proportion of charges that relate to the Minister's phone for the period was \$3,390.82.
- (b) The proportion of charges that relate to Ministerial Staff phones for the period was \$9,134.44
- (c) The monthly charges for the Minister's phone and devices are as follows:

Month	Mobile Phone Expenditure
Aug 2015	\$694.87
Sep 2015	\$122.78
Oct 2015	\$124.97
Nov 2015	\$142.26
Dec 2015	\$148.59
Jan 2016	\$619.96
Feb 2016	\$213.74
Mar 2016	\$230.79
Apr 2016	\$210.37
May 2016	\$219.39
Jun 2016	\$201.86
Jul 2016	\$234.60
Aug 2016	\$226.64

Note: The expenditure report which was run for the period 1 September 2015 to 31 August also included mobile phone expenditure for August 2015 that was paid in September 2015.

Attorney-General

11 063. MS HARTLAND — To ask the Minister for Corrections (for the Attorney-General): In Victoria, payment of toll road fines is enforced through the criminal justice system, rather than through a civil debt recovery system —

- (1) how much revenue is generated by the payment of toll infringements;
- (2) how much does the state spend on penalising non-payment of tolls through the issuing of infringements and their enforcement;
- (3) what percentage of Sheriffs Officers’ time is spent dealing with people who have toll infringements;
- (4) what percentage of the Magistrates’ Court time is spent hearing toll offences;

- (5) what percentage of government-funded legal assistance services' time is spent providing casework and representation to clients with toll fines;
- (6) what percentage of the Infringements Court's time is spent administering and determining toll infringements;
- (7) what percentage of Victoria Police's time is spent issuing, reviewing and prosecuting toll offences; and
- (8) will the Government calculate the cost of enforcing road tolls through the criminal justice system before agreeing to extend the collection of CityLink tolls.

ANSWER:

As reported in 2017-18 Budget Paper 5, page 167, for the 2016-17 financial year, revenue from toll road evasion fines was reported as \$171 million, and for the 2017-18 financial year it was \$169 million.

The infringements system involves multiple agencies including Victoria Police, Infringement Management and Enforcement Services, courts and local councils. The system enables people to pay their fines without having to go to court, in particular, by enabling road users to seek review of infringements, to pay in instalments, or to have special circumstances considered. This reduces the overall cost to the State of enforcing infringements and leads to better outcomes for Victorians.

Victoria, like other Australian States including New South Wales and Queensland, pursue unpaid tolling amounts by making it an offence to drive on a toll road without paying the appropriate tolls. The system enables people to drive on toll roads without physical barriers and recognises the difficulties tolling companies would face in pursuing court action to collect small amounts of unpaid tolling debts.

The requirement to pay a toll fee is publicised and, in accordance with the current legal framework, people who do not pay to use these roads are subject to enforcement action, commencing with an infringement. If a toll road user continues to ignore outstanding fines, the Magistrate's Court may order Sheriff's officers to execute a warrant.

Given the complexity of the infringements system, the extraction of toll specific enforcement data relating to Victoria Police, Sheriff's officers, the Infringements Court, or processing times, is not possible. The Government does not collect data about the time spent on managing toll infringements and offences as a component of the broader infringements system.

Consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation

11 316. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation): In relation to the Rooming House Outreach Program —

- (1) why has the program's funding been cut;
- (2) what factors influenced the decision to cut the program's funding; and
- (3) how will the Minister ensure people living in registered and illegal rooming houses be given advice and support in the absence of this program.

ANSWER:

Tenancy and Consumer Program 2017-21

In 2016, Consumer Affairs Victoria conducted an extensive review of tenancy funded services which resulted in the development of the Tenancy and Consumer Program 2017-21 (the Program), for vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians. The review was conducted in consultation with funded agencies and examined ways to ensure best practice service for the specialist tenancy and consumer services in the future. The Program includes an increased commitment to place based services, with a total of 22 full-time equivalent tenancy workers being funded to support vulnerable tenants across the state.

Under the Program, which is administered by Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV):

- investment is increasing in the first year by \$1.1 million, including an additional 9.3 full time equivalent staff delivering place based services
- services will be available to all private tenants who are vulnerable, regardless of where they live in Victoria, including those residing in registered or unregistered rooming houses. This change reflects a strong preference for a high quality and consistent state-wide tenancy assistance service
- there is a strong focus on integrated place-based services and a dedicated expert Tenancy Central Service which will provide increased training for tenancy workers, expert secondary consultations and a strong advocacy service for all Victorian tenants
- access to rooming house advocacy services for vulnerable and disadvantaged tenants has been extended from metropolitan Melbourne to the entire state.

Rooming House Outreach Program

The Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP) is a highly specialised outreach service, tailored to the needs of vulnerable residents of registered and unregistered rooming houses in metropolitan Melbourne.

The RHOP will no longer form a part of the CAV's new Program due to the Program's focus on a state-wide service delivery model.

However, the outreach support to tenants of private rooming houses previously delivered through the RHOP will continue to operate under the administrative oversight of the Department of Health and Human Services, with a particular focus on vulnerable tenants.

Families and children

11 328. MS CROZIER — To ask the Minister for Families and Children: In relation to Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) and the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), could the Minister please advise as at 1 June 2017, have all children who were receiving ECIS in areas which have moved to the NDIS, transferred to the NDIS and are they receiving services.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

In the Bilateral Agreement Between the Commonwealth and Victoria for Transition to a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) signed on 16 September 2015 (the Bilateral Agreement), it was agreed that Victoria will transfer its current Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) programs to the NDIS during the transition period, according to an agreed transition schedule.

Under the Bilateral Agreement, ECIS is identified as a defined program meaning all ECIS clients satisfy NDIS disability access requirements and further evidence of eligibility is not required. Existing ECIS clients who do not meet NDIS eligibility requirements on the basis of residency, continue to receive Department of Education and Training (DET). funded ECIS services under continuity of service obligations within the Bilateral Agreement.

In Victoria, each defined program including ECIS, transfers into the NDIS, according to a schedule. Planners contact the family to facilitate this first planning. I have been concerned at delays by the NDIA in contacting families and in developing individual plans and have written to the Federal Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter on a number of occasions about this. DET is working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on a strategy to follow up with people in instances where the NDIA has been unable to bring them into the scheme. In North Eastern Melbourne Area which has transitioned to the NDIS, the vast majority of children have had their planning undertaken by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and are linked in with service providers. As at 1 June 2017, there were still a small number of children who were being planned for or required additional follow up. The State continues to fund services for children until they have an NDIS approved plan, so there is continuity of service provision. The Andrews Labor Government has also provided \$7.2 million over two years in the 2017/18 Victorian budget to ensure more children continue to access ECIS until they transition to the NDIS.

Emergency services

11 352. MS CROZIER — To ask the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Emergency Services): What amount did the Country Fire Authority invoice the Department of Health and Human Services or to the Department of Justice and Regulation for the CFA attendance at the Malmesbury youth justice facility on —

- (1) 2, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 22, 24 and 25 January 2017;
- (2) 5, 6, 11, 17 and 24 February 2017;
- (3) 11, 16, 18, 21, 22, 26 and 27 March 2017;
- (4) 8, 13, 14 and 15 April 2017;
- (5) 1, 6, 11, 14, 16, 24 and 31 May 2017; and
- (6) 3 and 6 June 2017.

ANSWER:

The Country Fire Authority has only invoiced for the false alarm call outs at the Malmesbury Youth Justice Facility. Fees range from callout to callout depending on the complexity of the incident as outlined in the CFA Regulations 2014.

Consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation

11 380. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation): In relation to the Access to Justice Review as it applies to Consumer Affairs Victoria —

- (1) will the Government establish a compulsory conciliation service at Consumer Affairs Victoria for car disputes;
- (2) is the Government considering establishing a compulsory conciliation service at Consumer Affairs Victoria for car disputes; and
- (3) what would be the process, time frame and scope of the consideration to establish a compulsory conciliation service at Consumer Affairs Victoria for car disputes.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government response to the Access to Justice Review was published on 23 May 2017 on Government’s community engagement platform at engage.vic.gov.au.

As noted in the response, further consideration is being given to Recommendation 5.8, which proposes an approach to facilitating earlier and cheaper resolution of motor vehicle disputes.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 400. MS DUNN — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the Review of Performance Targets for Bushfire Fuel Management on Public Land completed by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management in May 2015, the Government’s response to this review, released in November 2015 which indicated a change to ‘Risk Based Management’, and current practices in the Tambo and Snowy River districts —

- (1) why is the new policy not currently being applied in East Gippsland;
- (2) is the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning implementing an area-based goal and an asset protection model in tandem;
- (3) what pre-burn and post-burn assessments are being carried out to monitor effects on ecosystems, habitat, fauna and flora, biodiversity and ecological vegetation communities.

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is applying a ‘Risk-Based Approach’ to fire management across Victoria. Under our integrated, risk-based approach, fuel management such as planned burning is conducted in all parts of the landscape, including around towns and assets and in the back country.

The strategic reduction of fuels, via the implementation of a risk-based management policy, will ensure that the likelihood of fires starting, spreading and impacting on people, property and environment is significantly decreased. Modelling shows that we can significantly reduce risk through fuel management in remote areas. Knowing where fires are likely to start means we can reduce fuel loads and stop small fires from building momentum and spreading. This stops them from becoming major bushfires and gives our fire agencies greater opportunity to control these fires before they impact our communities.

DELWP continues to report on the amount of fuel management it delivers, while also reporting on the risk reduced as a result of these actions, and the impacts on our environment and communities.

As part of the fire operations planning process individual planned burns are assessed for flora and fauna values. This helps to identify high ecological value sites so appropriate mechanisms can be put in place to ensure minimal impact. Ecological monitoring is also undertaken post-burn, including the use of remote cameras to detect fauna to confirm minimal impact on ecosystems, habitat, flora and fauna, biodiversity and ecological values.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 401. MS DUNN — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the Review of Performance Targets for Bushfire Fuel Management on Public Land completed by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management in May 2015, why are mature and maturing forests that are in the process of becoming less fire-prone and areas of old growth with rainforest gullies not excluded from planned burning.

ANSWER:

The minimisation of bushfire’s impact on human life is given priority over all other considerations in fuel reduction for bushfire management on public land.

There is currently no scientific consensus that mature and maturing forests are becoming less fire prone.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 403. MS DUNN — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): What is being done to protect hollow-bearing habitat trees, protected by the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988, during planned burns.

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) has conducted research on the impact of planned burning on hollow bearing trees to inform planning and operations.

A research report “Reducing the effect of planned burns on hollow bearing trees, Fire and Adaptive Management Report No. 95” can be found on the DELWP website and has been shared widely within the organisation.

Following this research DELWP has continued to investigate the effectiveness and efficiency of the physical removal of vegetation around the base of a tree using rake-hoes. The research indicates that rake-hoe intervention is effective at the scale of individual trees, but is not a logistically feasible means of reducing impacts at the landscape scale.

Hollow-bearing trees near a planned burn boundary are protected from burn ignition where possible, and the scale and intensity of the planned burn is managed to minimise impact. However, planned burns can cover very large areas, and hollow-bearing trees away the boundary are not always physically protected.

Deliberate removal of hollow bearing trees can occur in some situations, if trees are assessed as a hazard to fire fighter safety on the boundary of plan burn control lines or to infrastructure, such as powerlines and main access roads through the forest. Where possible efforts are made to retain these trees, for example, by trimming to remove the hazard.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 404. MS DUNN — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the serious health effects of the smoke from planned burns on many residents, such as those with reduced lung capacity and respiratory problems such as asthma, being trivialized through instructions to stay indoors, even though the pollution may persist for weeks, why are the Environment Protection Authority Victoria minimum requirements with regard to air pollution ignored in this case.

ANSWER:

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) considers the interests of sensitive communities and infrastructure (such as age care facilities, hospitals, schools, roads, telecommunication facilities and other critical infrastructure such as airports) during the planning, scheduling and delivery of planned burns.

This consideration must be in the context of ensuring all possible measures are taken to reduce the frequent and potentially devastating consequences of bushfire. Planned burning, supported by other fuel management techniques such as slashing, is the most effective mechanism to reduce the ever present bushfire risk in our fire adapted ecosystems. Smoke impacts from bushfires can be far more devastating for communities than planned burns.

During the scheduling of planned burns, weather conditions are assessed to ensure the impact on communities and infrastructure are minimised. This includes choosing conditions, wherever possible, such as wind direction, that will carry the smoke away from the identified sensitivity.

Planned burning can only be undertaken safely and effectively when the weather conditions are stable and the fuel moistures are suitable. It is during those stable weather patterns that smoke unfortunately does accumulate in some communities, due to the lower wind strengths and reduced ventilation in the atmosphere.

FFMVic works with the Bureau of Meteorology to identify when there may be periods of smoke accumulation. A smoke forecasting model is used to identify periods and locations of smoke accumulation and every practicable step is taken to ensure Environment Protection Authority (EPA) minimum standards are met.

Planned burn notifications are undertaken to allow community members to undertake any necessary steps they may need, should they have pre-existing medical conditions. The Department of Health and Human Services also provide support to communities who are sensitive to the effects of smoke so that they can have effective plans in place.

FFMVic is working actively with the EPA to improve risk communications with communities potentially impact by smoke.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 405. MS DUNN — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to guests at accommodation establishments deciding to return home prematurely as conditions were unbearable due to the smoke from planned burns, why are the interests of tourism operators and the local economy not considered when implementing planned burns.

ANSWER:

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) gives serious consideration to the interests of tourism operators and the local economy during the planning, scheduling and delivery of planned burns.

Individual business operators as well as regional and peak bodies (such as regional business and tourism boards in Victoria) are engaged regularly so that FFMVic staff maintain awareness of significant local events and their sensitivities, as well as upcoming burn delivery windows.

Wherever possible, burns are scheduled to reduce the impact on local events and peak tourism periods, and in every instance where some impact may be possible effective notifications are provided, including a system where operators can register for automatic notifications.

In Victoria, most school holidays and public holidays will only see quite limited and localised planned burning delivery, hence the potential impacts are low. The main exception to this is during March and April, with the occurrence of Easter and school holidays, and to a lesser extent Labour Day and Anzac Day public holidays.

Planned burning can only be undertaken safely and effectively when the weather conditions are stable and the fuel moistures are suitable. The alignment of these critical components is usually during March and April, when periods of stable weather and decreasing fire danger prevail, and fuel moistures are able to sustain appropriate fire behaviour and spread.

It is not possible to defer all burns from this period and still deliver the required scale and extent of planned burning to reduce bushfire risk to an appropriate level and maintain healthy and resilient ecosystems in our natural and built environments. Hence some impact from planned burns must be expected during this priority period for burn delivery, which will provide for reduced bushfire impacts and consequences in future years.

Public transport

11 407. MS DUNN — To ask the Minister for Agriculture (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to the new timetable for tram routes 57, 58 and 59, tram drivers receiving abuse from passengers due to delays or short-shunting, which from reports by drivers, did not occur prior to the changes and drivers considering resigning and suffering anxiety due to the pressure and abuse from passengers, will the Minister reinstate the previous timetable, which provided customers a better service and reduced the stress and risk for tram drivers.

ANSWER:

The new tram Route 58 allows more passengers to connect with the west of the CBD and the hospital precinct, and provides greater capacity for trams along the busy St Kilda Road/Swanston Street corridor.

To provide more room for passengers, larger trams and additional low-floor trams are being deployed to Route 58. This allows passengers to use low-floor trams to access the hospital precinct for the first time. As with any new timetable, we have been carefully monitoring service performance on Route 58. Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and Yarra Trams will continue to monitor Route 58, and will work with VicRoads to investigate options to improve performance and reduce the need for short shunting.

The 2017-18 State Budget provides for 50 additional tram services on routes 57, 59 and 58, and for additional Parkville bus services to minimise disruptions that may occur because of the construction of the Metro Tunnel.

Driver safety is of utmost importance to PTV and Yarra Trams, and every effort is made to keep drivers safe.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 452. MR DAVIS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the waste levy collected for the Environmental Protection Authority by municipal councils in recent years, how much was collected by each of Victoria's 79 municipalities in the financial years —

- (1) 2015-16 and
- (2) 2016-17.

ANSWER:

The total Municipal and Industrial levy cash collected in Victoria by the Environment Protection Authority was \$199.5 million in 2015/16 and \$211.0 million in 2016/17.

These levies were collected directly from licenced landfill levy operators on a quarterly basis as permitted under the Environment Protection Act 1970 rather than the municipal councils. The levy collected by the operator may relate to municipal waste collected from many different municipalities. As such, a breakdown by each municipality is not available as there is not a direct connection between the landfill levy operator and the 79 municipalities within Victoria.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 453. MR DAVIS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the waste levy collected for the Environmental Protection Authority by municipal councils in recent years, how much is expected to be collected in each of Victoria’s 79 municipalities in the 2017-18 financial year.

ANSWER:

The total Municipal and Industrial levy cash collections in Victoria by the Environment Protection Authority for 2017/18 are estimated to be \$208.3 million.

The methodology for the estimation incorporates total anticipated municipal and industrial tonnage across Victoria, however, a breakdown by municipality is not available as EPA does not collect the levy directly from municipal councils.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 454. MR DAVIS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the waste levy collected for the Environmental Protection Authority by municipal councils in recent years, what is the mean (average) impost amount collected from residential ratepayers in each of Victoria’s 79 municipalities in the financial years —

- (1) 2015-16;
- (2) 2016-17; and
- (3) 2017-18.

ANSWER:

Municipal and Industrial levies are collected directly from licenced landfill levy operators on a quarterly basis as permitted under the Environment Protection Act 1970 rather than the municipal councils. The levy collected by the operator may relate to municipal waste collected from many different municipalities.

As such, a breakdown by residential ratepayer for each municipality is not available as there is not a direct connection between the landfill levy operator and the 79 municipalities within Victoria.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 455. MR DAVIS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the waste levy collected for the Environmental Protection Authority by municipal councils in recent years, what is the mean (average) impost amount collected from business ratepayers in each of Victoria’s 79 municipalities in the financial years —

- (1) 2015-16;
- (2) 2016-17; and
- (3) 2017-18.

ANSWER:

Municipal and Industrial levies are collected directly from licenced landfill levy operators on a quarterly basis as permitted under the Environment Protection Act 1970 rather than the municipal councils. The levy collected by the operator may relate to municipal or industrial waste collected from many different municipalities.

As such, a breakdown by business ratepayer for each municipality is not available as there is not a direct connection between the landfill levy operator and the 79 municipalities within Victoria.

Planning

11 460. MS WOOLDRIDGE — To ask the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Planning): What consultation did the Government undertake with residents who are affected by Ministerial Amendment GC48.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government is committed to protecting the Yarra River from inappropriate development which encroaches on the landscape and environmental values of the Yarra River corridor.

The Yarra River Protection Ministerial Advisory Committee recently (YRMAC) undertook extensive public consultation to inform its recommendations relating to the future management and protection of the Yarra River. Feedback from the 270 face-to-face conversations and more than 190 submissions, and numerous past processes, have confirmed the community's desire for stronger planning controls.

Amendment GC48 (the amendment) introduced 2 new interim planning controls replacing 11 inconsistent controls found across 6 planning schemes which were developed in partnership with local government and a range of key stakeholders.

These controls ensure that development outcomes are appropriate within the natural environment and enhance the river environs for the benefit of current and future residents and visitors.

Interim planning controls were required immediately to manage current and ongoing development pressure in accordance with state planning policy which recognises the Yarra River as a State significant natural asset.

An interim period of four years has been provided to allow sufficient time for:

- State and local government to consult with local communities and monitor the operation of the controls over a period of time to determine whether further refinement and improvement is required;
- the establishment of new governance and management arrangements recommended by the YRMAC to have an involvement in developing planning strategies as per government's policy commitment; and
- exhibition of a full planning scheme amendment process to occur and the establishment of an independent planning panel/advisory committee to review community submissions prior to final controls being introduced.

Transitional provisions have been included in all planning controls to ensure fairness and consistency in their application.

Roads and road safety

11 462. MS WOOLDRIDGE — To ask the Minister for Agriculture (for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety): Does VicRoads plan to do any upgrade or maintenance work on the bridge in Bridge Street, Eltham.

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that it regularly inspects the bridge on Bridge Street in Eltham and recently inspected it in February 2017. I understand that VicRoads observed that it is structurally in good condition and that no maintenance or upgrade work is required.

Agriculture

11 463. MS WOOLDRIDGE — To ask the Minister for Agriculture: Does the Government propose to give increased support to managing the impacts of feral animals in urban fringe areas such as Nillumbik, which is experiencing a significant emerging problem with feral deer.

ANSWER:

There are currently six species of deer present in Victoria. These species are declared as game under the Wildlife Act 1975, as they provide a valuable hunting resource for the community. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, is responsible for the management of wildlife.

The Andrews Labor government is committed to protecting Victoria from the negative impacts of invasive animals, including deer, while maximising the benefits of safe, sustainable and responsible hunting. In 2016-17, the Government allocated \$5.3 million to support the development and delivery of the Sustainable Hunting Action Plan 2016-2020 to promote responsible game hunting in Victoria.

The plan seeks to maximise the benefits of hunting and game management by setting a clear strategic direction for the sector and by improving coordination between government agencies and stakeholders. A deer management strategy will be developed under the plan and will be released for public consultation.

Finance

11 478. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Finance): How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Budget allocation of staff is reported as per past practice.

It is ironic that the member has asked fishing questions to Ministers including questions about female employment, given the Coalition only has three women sitting on the front bench in each house of Parliament.

The Andrews Labor Government is proud to stand in contrast to the Coalition on its record of hiring and promoting women into leadership positions.

This is demonstrated by our Government's policy to ensure women are better represented on boards — with a requirement of reaching 50 per cent representation. This pledge has increased the number of women appointed to paid boards in Victoria from 38 per cent to over 50 per cent in just two years.

In addition, Victoria's first female Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford announced funding from the 2017/2018 Victorian Budget to re-establish the much loved Victorian Rural Women's Network. It speaks volumes that the former Coalition Government cut this vital service.

Minister Neville, Victoria's first female Minister for Police, recently honoured Madge Connor, Victoria's first policewoman, to recognise her role as a pioneer for women in the force. In 2017, Victoria Police is proud to have more than 4000 women serving as police officers, and many more public servants, Protective Services Officers and Police Custody Officers. A third of all police recruits are female and the current recruitment drive for 3135 new police encourages women to sign up, as part the Labor Government's push through the Community Safety Statement to improve gender equality within Victoria Police.

These are just some of the many examples of our Labor Government's commitment to pursuing the interests of all Victorians.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 480. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

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Small business, innovation and trade

11 484. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade: How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

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Consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation

11 487. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation): How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

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Finance

11 500. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Finance): How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

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Energy, environment and climate change

11 502. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

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Small business, innovation and trade

11 507. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade: How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

Please see answer to Question number 11484.

Consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation

11 510. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation): How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

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Finance

11 523. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Finance): How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

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Energy, environment and climate change

11 525. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

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Small business, innovation and trade

11 529. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade: How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

Please see answer to Question number 11507.

Consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation

11 532. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation): How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2016.

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Finance

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Energy, environment and climate change

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Small business, innovation and trade

11 551. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade: How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

Please see answer to Question number 11529.

Consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation

11 554. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation): How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2016.

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Finance

11 567. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Finance): How many new employees commenced work within your ministerial office (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

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Minister Neville, Victoria's first female Minister for Police, recently honoured Madge Connor, Victoria's first policewoman, to recognise her role as a pioneer for women in the force. In 2017, Victoria Police is proud to have more than 4000 women serving as police officers, and many more public servants, Protective Services Officers and Police Custody Officers. A third of all police recruits are female and the current recruitment drive for 3135 new police encourages women to sign up, as part the Labor Government's push through the Community Safety Statement to improve gender equality within Victoria Police.

These are just some of the many examples of our Labor Government's commitment to pursuing the interests of all Victorians.

Energy, environment and climate change

11 569. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Special Minister of State (for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change): How many new employees commenced work within your ministerial office (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Budget allocation of staff is reported as per past practice.

It is ironic that the member has asked fishing questions to Ministers including questions about female employment, given the Coalition only has three women sitting on the front bench in each house of Parliament.

The Andrews Labor Government is proud to stand in contrast to the Coalition on its record of hiring and promoting women into leadership positions.

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These are just some of the many examples of our Labor Government's commitment to pursuing the interests of all Victorians.

Small business, innovation and trade

11 573. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade: How many new employees commenced work within your ministerial office (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

Please see answer to Question number 11551.

Consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation

11 576. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Small Business Innovation and Trade (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation): How many new employees commenced work within your ministerial office (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

Budget allocation of staff is reported as per past practice.

It is ironic that the member has asked fishing questions to Ministers including questions about female employment, given the Coalition only has three women sitting on the front bench in each house of Parliament.

The Andrews Labor Government is proud to stand in contrast to the Coalition on its record of hiring and promoting women into leadership positions.

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.

Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.

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

Headings reflect the portfolio of the minister answering the question.

Thursday, 7 September 2017

Police

- 11 064. MS HARTLAND** — To ask the Minister for Corrections (for the Minister for Police): In Victoria, payment of toll road fines is enforced through the criminal justice system, rather than through a civil debt recovery system —
- (1) how much revenue is generated by the payment of toll infringements;
 - (2) how much does the state spend on penalising non-payment of tolls through the issuing of infringements and their enforcement;
 - (3) what percentage of Sheriffs Officers' time is spent dealing with people who have toll infringements;
 - (4) what percentage of the Magistrates' Court time is spent hearing toll offences;
 - (5) what percentage of government-funded legal assistance services' time is spent providing casework and representation to clients with toll fines;
 - (6) what percentage of the Infringements Court's time is spent administering and determining toll infringements;
 - (7) what percentage of Victoria Police's time is spent issuing, reviewing and prosecuting toll offences; and
 - (8) will the Government calculate the cost of enforcing road tolls through the criminal justice system before agreeing to extend the collection of CityLink tolls.

ANSWER:

As reported in 2017-18 Budget Paper 5, page 167, for the 2016-17 financial year, revenue from toll road evasion fines was reported as \$171 million, and for the 2017-18 financial year it was \$169 million.

No data is retained on the state's spend on penalising non-payment of tolls through the issuing of infringements and their enforcement, nor is data recorded on the time spent dealing with tolling infringements by Victoria Police, or Sheriff's Officers.

Matters relating to the Magistrates' Court, the Infringements Court, and legal assistance services should be directed to the Attorney-General as the responsible Minister, and I understand you have also directed this question to him.

Negotiations and legislation in relation to the West Gate Tunnel fall within portfolio responsibilities of the Treasurer and should be directed to him.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Friday, 8 September 2017

Families and children

11 252. MS CROZIER — To ask the Minister for Families and Children: In relation to the number of children in Out-of-Home care, as at 31 March 2017, how many children were living in —

- (1) Residential care;
- (2) Foster care; and
- (3) Kinship care.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Data relating to the number of children and young people in out of home care, including by quarter, is available on the Department's website.

In March 2015, the Andrews Labor Government announced \$43 million for Targeted Care Packages which aim to move children out of residential care and into home-based care.

A further \$19 million was allocated in October 2015 with a view to preventing children and young people coming into residential care in the first place. The 2017-18 budget allocated \$17.3 million in funding for a further 100 Targeted Care Packages.

As at 30 June 2017, 386 young people have moved from residential care into home-based care and are now with foster carers, extended family or their parents.

Families and children

11 264. MS CROZIER — To ask the Minister for Families and Children: In relation to unallocated cases in child protection, as at 31 March 2017, how many Indigenous children in child protection did not have a cultural case plan.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to keeping Aboriginal children in out of Home Care connected to their culture, that is why we provided \$16.5 million in the 2016-17 budget to better support Aboriginal children and families, including a stronger focus on the recruitment of Aboriginal carers. This included an additional \$5.33 million over two years to support the implementation of a new model of cultural planning. This includes an on-line portal and the employment of a state-wide co-ordinator and 18 cultural planners who will deliver quality cultural plans for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, with a focus on culturally appropriate placements.

All children whose cases are substantiated by child protection are overseen by a senior child protection worker. As such, there is always someone responsible for ensuring the needs of vulnerable children and young people in the system are met.

In the 2017-18 Budget, this government provided funding to further implement section 18 of the Children Youth and Families Act 2005.

Previously, this government has provided the following:

- an investment of \$5.29 million over two years to enhance the recruitment of, and support provided to, Aboriginal kinship and foster carers through: a local grassroots Aboriginal foster care recruitment campaign by Aboriginal organisations; providing local support for Aboriginal kinship and foster carers; 88 additional Aboriginal kinship care cases being contracted to local agencies for case management.
- an additional \$3.608 million over two years to increase the capacity of the Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice and Support Service (ACSASS).
- \$880 000 to progress section 18.
- \$880 000 for a transition team that will implement a strategy to transition support services for Aboriginal children and young people who are involved in child protection to Aboriginal organisations
- \$687 000 to improve access to Targeted Care Packages for Aboriginal children and young people
- \$340 000 for a Return to Country program to help Aboriginal children in care stay connected to their culture
- \$220 000 to provide more support to Aboriginal children and young people leaving care

Corrections

11 429. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many prisoners escaped prison custody in the 2016-17 financial year.

ANSWER:

This data will be reported publicly in the forthcoming Department of Justice and Regulation Annual Report for 2016-17, which is due for release later this year.

Corrections

11 430. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many cells at the Melbourne Assessment Prison are not compliant with the Corrections Building Design Review Project.

ANSWER:

I am advised that there are two accommodation units that are not yet compliant. Extensive work for the remaining units is scheduled to begin next year.

Corrections

11 431. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many microwaves in the male prison system were supplied for use in cellular accommodation during Ramadan in —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's

time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

The practice of providing prisoners who are participating in Ramadan with microwaves in their cells to heat their meals after sunset has been in place for approximately a decade, particularly in those facilities that have an early lockdown or restricted regimes.

Corrections

11 432. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many microwaves in the female prison system were supplied for use in cellular accommodation during Ramadan in —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

The practice of providing prisoners who are participating in Ramadan with microwaves in their cells to heat their meals after sunset has been in place for approximately a decade, particularly in those facilities that have an early lockdown or restricted regimes.

Corrections

11 433. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many microwaves were bought for use in cellular accommodation during Ramadan in —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

The practice of providing prisoners who are participating in Ramadan with microwaves in their cells to heat their meals after sunset has been in place for approximately a decade, particularly in those facilities that have an early lockdown or restricted regimes.

Corrections

11 434. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many used microwaves were supplied for use in cellular accommodation during Ramadan in —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

The practice of providing prisoners who are participating in Ramadan with microwaves in their cells to heat their meals after sunset has been in place for approximately a decade, particularly in those facilities that have an early lockdown or restricted regimes.

Corrections

11 435. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: What was the total cost to purchase microwaves for use in cellular accommodation during Ramadan in —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

The practice of providing prisoners who are participating in Ramadan with microwaves in their cells to heat their meals after sunset has been in place for approximately a decade, particularly in those facilities that have an early lockdown or restricted regimes.

Corrections

11 436. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: What was the total cost for the provision of specialised food supplied to those prisoners observing Ramadan in —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

Corrections

11 437. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many new prison officers were employed by Corrections Victoria in the following periods —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

Information regarding the number and classification of Corrections Victoria staff can be found in the Department of Justice and Regulation Annual Report.

Corrections

11 438. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many prison officers left employment with Corrections Victoria in the following periods —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

I have previously provided advice on the number of prison officers who left employment with the Department of Justice and Regulation for 2015 and 2016 (refer to Question on Notice 11291).

I can also advise that between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2017, 88 prison officers left their employment with the Department.

The reasons for the departure of these officers include resignation, retirement and expiration of fixed-term contracts.

The Andrews Government has also embarked upon an extensive recruitment program in the Community Corrections System, as well as further continuous recruitment throughout the completion of the Harper reforms.

Corrections

11 441. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many deaths in custody were there in the 2016-17 financial year.

ANSWER:

This data will be reported publicly in the forthcoming Department of Justice and Regulation Annual Report for 2016-17, which is due for release later this year.

Corrections

11 442. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many perimeter wall breaches were there in the Victorian corrections system during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

This data is reported publicly in the Department of Justice and Regulation Annual Reports.

Corrections

11 443. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many drug overdoses were there in the Victorian corrections system during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

‘Drug overdoses’ is a generalised and colloquial description of occurrences where people have taken an excessive amount of drugs which can have a range of outcomes including intoxication or even death.

While prisons record all incidents where prisoners are observed to be affected by drugs, there is no discrete recording process for ‘drug overdoses’.

Corrections

11 444. MR O’DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many WorkCover claims were made by prison officers during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the number of WorkCover claims made by custodial staff in public prisons are as follows:

- 273 in 2015;
- 242 in 2016; and
- 130 between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2017.

The welfare and safety of staff are of the highest priority.

Staff have the opportunity of making a claim for workplace injuries through WorkCover, and if an absence from work is necessary, prison management will work with staff and the WorkCover authorities on a suitable return-to-work plan.

Following a major or traumatic incident in prison, staff are debriefed, and are encouraged to access the Employee Assistance Program, which provides free and confidential counselling.

Corrections

11 445. MR O’DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many sexual harassment claims were made by prison officers during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that complaints that have proceeded to formal investigations were as follows:

- 8 in 2015;
- 3 in 2016;
- 5 between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2017.

Corrections

11 446. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many prison officers were sexually assaulted during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

This question requests data on proven cases of sexual assault against prison officers and therefore should be referred to the Minister for Police.

Corrections

11 447. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many prisoners were physically assaulted during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that a search of prison incident records has found:

- 1423 allegations of assault on prisoners by prisoners in 2015;
- 1952 in 2016; and
- 1109 between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2017.

It is important to note that the severity of these incidents is very wide ranging, including assaults where prisoners are not injured (e.g. shoving or bumping), to assaults where prisoners receive injuries requiring medical treatment. I am advised that the vast majority of prisoner assaults are minor in nature.

Corrections

11 448. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many prison officers were physically assaulted during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

The safety of all prison staff is of the highest priority. This Government has a zero tolerance stance towards occupational violence. That's why the Andrews Government passed laws in May 2016 to ensure that correctional officers are considered in the same way as other emergency services workers when assaulted in the course of carrying out their job.

All assaults are referred to Victoria Police for investigation.

I am advised that a search of prison incident records has found:

- 335 allegations of physical assault on staff by prisoners in 2015;
- 359 in 2016; and
- 165 between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2017.

Corrections

11 449. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many hours of work associated with Prison Industries occurred inside the Victorian corrections system during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

However, I can advise that in accordance with the Corrections Regulations 2009, prisoners are required to work or participate in educational, treatment or rehabilitation programs for 30 hours per week (6 hours per day), unless they are on remand (who may in fact work if they choose to), unable to work due to illness, disability or age, or if they are accommodated in a restricted regime.

Work and training undertaken in prison is important for prisoners to gain skills to assist them to gain employment upon release; it provides structured engagement during their imprisonment; and the range of community work and environmental projects at prisons provides prisoners an opportunity to repay their debt to the community.

Corrections

11 450. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many prisoners refused to participate in work programs (Prison Industries) in the Victorian corrections system during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

I am advised that this information is not able to be systematically extracted from available databases, other than by a manual search of individual records. With this in mind, it would be an unreasonable burden on the Department's time and would require an unnecessary diversion of Departmental resources as pursuant to Legislative Council Standing Order 8.12.3.

Corrections

11 451. MR O'DONOHUE — To ask the Minister for Corrections: How many hours of external community work have been conducted as part of Landmate and other programs by prisoners in the Victorian corrections system during —

- (1) 2015;
- (2) 2016; and
- (3) 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017.

ANSWER:

Data on Landmate community work is not able to be systematically extracted for calendar year. Nevertheless, I am advised that:

- 499 days of Landmate work were completed in 2015/16 financial year; and
- 704 days of Landmate work were completed in 2016/17 financial year.

Training and skills

11 457. MS WOOLDRIDGE — To ask the Minister for Training and Skills: When will details of the initial learning programs for the Banyule-Nillumbik Tech School be finalised and made available to potential students.

ANSWER:

Learning programs and curriculum related matters for Tech Schools in Victoria are a matter for the Minister for Education.

Training and skills

11 458. MS WOOLDRIDGE — To ask the Minister for Training and Skills: How many students are anticipated to enrol in the Banyule-Nillumbik Tech School when it opens next year.

ANSWER:

Enrolment projections for Tech Schools in Victoria are a matter for the Minister of Education.

Training and skills

11 492. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Training and Skills: How many full time equivalent ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

Budget allocation of staff is reported as per past practice.

It is ironic that the member has asked fishing questions to Ministers including questions about female employment, given the Coalition only has three women sitting on the front bench in each house of Parliament.

The Andrews Labor Government is proud to stand in contrast to the Coalition on its record of hiring and promoting women into leadership positions.

This is demonstrated by our Government's policy to ensure women are better represented on boards — with a requirement of reaching 50 per cent representation. This pledge has increased the number of women appointed to paid boards in Victoria from 38 per cent to over 50 per cent in just two years.

In addition, Victoria's first female Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford announced funding from the 2017/2018 Victorian Budget to re-establish the much loved Victorian Rural Women's Network. It speaks volumes that the former Coalition Government cut this vital service.

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Training and skills

11 515. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Training and Skills: How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2017.

ANSWER:

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Training and skills

11 559. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Training and Skills: How many female ministerial staff (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) were working within your ministerial office, as of 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

Budget allocation of staff is reported as per past practice.

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Training and skills

11 581. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Training and Skills: How many new employees commenced work within your ministerial office (including those working on secondment from departments or agencies) between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2016.

ANSWER:

Budget allocation of staff is reported as per past practice.

It is ironic that the member has asked fishing questions to Ministers including questions about female employment, given the Coalition only has three women sitting on the front bench in each house of Parliament.

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