

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

7, 8 and 9 March 2017

(Extract from book 5)

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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)

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Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, 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 Elasmarr, Mr Finn, 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 Eideh, #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 Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, 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.

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 Elasmarr and Mr Melhem. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe and Ms Ryall.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): Ms Bath and Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Ms Blandthorn, Mr J. Bull, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto.

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

Council — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

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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 ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
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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	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
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁴ Appointed 12 October 2016

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 7 March 2017

South Eastern Metropolitan Region constituent

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Mrs Peulich
Raised on: 22 November 2016

REPLY:

I was moved to hear the circumstances outlined by the Member's adjournment contribution regarding Abby Walsh. As the Member would be aware, proton beam therapy is currently not available in Australia, and the process to access this type of treatment is through the Commonwealth Government's medical overseas treatment program (MTOp).

I'm advised that MTOp uses a clinical expert panel put forward by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) to make the clinical determination of a patient's eligibility for funding under the program. The suitability is determined by the panel on a case by case basis on the information provided to it and their clinical judgment of what, if any benefits, proton treatment may have over conventional radiation therapy.

It appears that in the case of Abby Walsh there were some difference in the opinions of the treating clinicians involved in Abby's care and those making the determination on the benefit of proton therapy for her cancer type / location. As this is a Commonwealth program, I will seek to make representation to the Commonwealth Minister for Health as to what avenues might be available to assist the family in accessing optimal care for Abby.

The Victorian Government understands that ready access to proton beam therapy is becoming a significant issue to the community and as you may be aware the Government is currently working on making this type of treatment available locally. Our Government has committed \$50 million to this endeavour. The distressing nature of this 12-year-old girl's situation is a good example of why this form of treatment is under active investigation by the Government as we seek to make available the best cancer treatment options for Victorians.

I will raise the matter with the Commonwealth Minister for Health and wish Abby and her family all the best with her treatment.

National disability insurance scheme

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 23 November 2016

REPLY:

People on the Disability Support Register are already planned to be one of the first groups to enter the NDIS in each area.

Further, the Victorian Government has recognised (from the very beginning) that some people have a more immediate and pressing need for support. Therefore, approximately 1000 people on the Disability Support Register with an urgent need for support will be provided with the opportunity to transition to the NDIS within the first year of transition, that is, up to July 2017, regardless of where they live.

People identified for early entry will be notified in writing by the Department of Health and Human Services; their details will then be provided to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to assist with their transition. The NDIA will then make contact via telephone to commence the access and planning processes.

Until an area transitions, people with an urgent need for support or in a crisis or emergency situation will continue to be assisted by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Homelessness

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Mr Elasmar
Raised on: 6 December 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian Government will provide a \$109 million package to help 19 000 people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, including young people, rough sleepers, veterans and people experiencing chronic homelessness over the next five years. The package will:

- respond early to ensure people do not become homeless
- provide localised and person centred responses
- better support people to sustain long term housing, and achieve independence.

My department has commenced working with the sector on the allocation of the new funding and how we implement these initiatives to better meet the needs of people who are, or are at risk of homelessness.

This year, the government has already invested in a range of initiatives to benefit the Northern Metropolitan Region. For example, the \$23 million Rapid Housing — Homelessness initiative, which will grow housing options across the state for people experiencing homelessness, will deliver 41 additional properties; 19 purchased and 22 head leased in the Northern Metropolitan Region.

We are testing new ways of working at three launch sites, which includes the Hume Moreland area in the Northern Metropolitan Region. The focus is how to streamline access to housing and homelessness assistance and deliver more effective and individualised responses. We are also creating a new supported housing facility for women and children in Melbourne's north.

In addition, in January, I announced an additional \$9.8 million for the Towards Home Initiative to rapidly rehouse for rough sleepers in inner Melbourne, and includes \$3.2 million in flexible packages for targeted support packages for over two years. This package will deliver access to transitional housing, guaranteed pathways to permanent housing and person-centred case management.

As part of Towards Home, the government will also provide 30 new modular and retractable homes on public land in Northern Metropolitan Region to rapidly rehouse rough sleepers. A further 40 transitional housing units across the city and suburbs will be dedicated until the new permanent housing is in place at the end of June 2017.

Tony Nicholson, CEO of Brotherhood of St Laurence, has been appointed as the new Coordinator in Chief for Rough Sleeping, providing leadership and strategic policy direction for Towards Home and the Rough Sleeping Response Taskforce.

The government is also investing \$20 million to transform vacant land in Preston into new social housing. This funding will deliver 68 public housing properties as a priority, with construction commencing in mid-2017.

We have also allocated \$10 million to contribute to VincentCare's redevelopment of its crisis accommodation facility in North Melbourne, and a further \$3.5 million for Melbourne City Mission's Frontyard Integrated graded Youth Service. Each of these initiatives will build capacity in the northern metropolitan region.

Simonds Stadium redevelopment

Raised with: Minister for Industrial Relations
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 6 December 2016

REPLY:

The Government is aware of an industrial action being taken place at Simonds Stadium involving the Constructions, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and Kane Constructions.

Victorian employers and employees are covered by the Commonwealth Fair Work laws. While this is a matter for the employer and its workers, our door is always open if either party would like to discuss the issues.

This Government encourages parties to use the services of the Fair Work Commission to resolve issues that cannot be settled at the workplace level. The Commission has an important role as independent umpire to assist parties in dispute.

Housing affordability

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins
Raised on: 7 December 2016

REPLY:

The Victorian Government believes that all Victorians have a right to safe, affordable and secure housing.

Housing affordability is a significant issue that extends beyond first home buyers. I assure the Member that the government understands the importance of unlocking the housing market for first home buyers. We know that first home buyers renting longer means tougher rental market conditions for tenants, and more people entering the social housing and homelessness systems.

The issues of affordable home ownership sit across a number of Ministers, including the Treasurer, the Minister for Consumer Affairs and the Minister for Planning. That is why I am working with my Ministerial colleagues to produce a comprehensive housing strategy to tackle housing affordability. This statement will recognise the need for a clear co-ordinated government approach to issues associated with affordability, access, choice and social housing supply. As part of this statement, the government is reviewing the appropriateness of current policies affecting housing affordability across the entire housing spectrum. I look forward to the release of this strategy in the near future.

The Member would also be aware the government has already invested over \$626 million in additional housing investment, including funding in order to:

- help more people at risk of or experiencing homelessness to access a broader range of integrated housing and support services
- support more people through enhanced private rental assistance
- deliver new social housing properties where they are needed most, and
- redevelop ageing properties to provide better quality homes for people in urgent need of housing.

This significant investment underlines the government's resolve in ensuring every Victorian can access safe, secure and affordable accommodation.

Upper Ferntree Gully height limits

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 7 February 2017

REPLY:

I am aware of the concerns that have been raised in relation to Amendment C141 and the height limits proposed for the Upper Ferntree Gully Activity Centre as part of this amendment.

As you mention, Knox City Council resolved to abandon the amendment at its meeting of 23 January 2017. This is primarily a matter for the council. I understand that the council will debate a rescission motion on 27 February. I will consider any amendment on its merits, if required to do so.

Ryans Reserve

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Ondarchie
Raised on: 9 February 2017

REPLY:

Thank you for raising the future of 510 Swan Street in Richmond with me and concerns about the local provision of netball facilities. 510 Swan St, Richmond is owned by the Department of Education and Training (DET), and has been leased to the City of Yarra. This site has not been used for educational purposes in decades, and has been determined surplus to education requirements.

The Department of Health and Humans Services (DHHS), together with DET, have been working towards a land swap arrangement that will facilitate additional land at the new Richmond High School site and also provide new housing opportunities at the Swan Street site.

To ensure on-going support and provision of netball facilities in Richmond, a number of new projects will be funded through the Victorian Government's Inner City Netball Program. These projects include:

- A development of three courts, with lights, at Melbourne Girls College, which will make the courts accessible to the community outside school hours.
- Sports lights at the three outdoor courts at the new Richmond High School site, which will make the courts accessible to the community outside school hours, and will complement the indoor court.
- A development of two courts, with lights, at Richmond West Primary School, which will make the courts accessible to the community outside school hours.

In total, eight new outdoor courts, with lights, will be made available to the local community outside school hours. Joint Use Agreements are being developed between the schools and Councils to ensure that access arrangements for local netball clubs and associations are in place as soon as the courts are completed.

The Victorian School Building Authority has been working closely with the netball associations that utilise the courts at 510 Swan Street. Arrangements are being made for these associations to use the four proposed courts at Richmond High School as soon as possible.

As part of the land swap, DET requested that the site be rezoned, and I referred the proposal to the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to consider and to make recommendations on the proposed changes to the planning provisions for the Swan Street site.

Following submissions from the local council, the community and interested parties, the Advisory Committee has recently submitted its report to me. I will now carefully consider the report before making a decision on the proposal. All parties that have made a submission to the Advisory Committee will be notified once I have made my decision on this matter.

Commercial passenger vehicle industry

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 21 February 2017

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is providing \$494 million in assistance to the existing taxi and hire car industry and funding this assistance via a \$2 per trip levy.

In his adjournment, the Member for Western Victoria, has requested that both the levy be removed and the financial assistance increased. His policy will require over half a billion dollars but the Member for Western Victoria has decided to not mention where this funding will come from.

The Victorian Taxi Association, which represents many regional operators including in Ballarat, has said that the most important aspect in relation to the legislation before the Parliament is that it passes into law as soon as possible.

The \$2 levy replaces licencing costs and there is no reason that fares will increase. This is especially true for the many elderly or mobility impaired passengers who qualify for the Multi-Purpose Taxi Program.

School capital works

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 21 February 2017

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education and Training works closely with schools to plan and implement infrastructure projects, achieving positive outcomes for the school and community. It is the Department's responsibility to ensure that staff and students have access to safe and secure learning facilities and that building works undertaken on school sites are constructed to appropriate standards. To this end the Department mandates that all building works undertaken on school sites must be done by a commercial builder.

The Department's threshold for the management of infrastructure projects is based on the need for projects to have strong measures in place to mitigate risks and promote a safe and healthy school environment.

Where possible, and at the preference of the school, the Department devolves responsibility to manage projects to schools. Before undertaking any self-funded building works or improvements valued at over \$50 000 school councils must first seek approval from the Department. This policy exists to protect the school community from risk and ensure that the school seeks the advice and support of the Department before undertaking potentially high risk work. Schools are able to select builders to undertake self-funded work.

All school infrastructure projects that receive funding from the Department must meet the level of governance and probity required to ensure that public funds are spent effectively and efficiently. For projects valued under \$200 000 schools are required to obtain three quotes for works and may lead the process for selecting and engaging builders. For school infrastructure projects valued over \$200 000 the Department provides a robust and strong governance framework through the Project Management Framework. This framework ensures that schools do not need to accept the risks of taking on projects that do not match their financial delegation. For these projects schools may lead the selection of builders, however the ultimate decision to engage builders will rest with the Department.

The Department considers that increasing the threshold for school managed projects to \$400 000 would result in an undue transfer of risk to school councils and principals given the scope of works generally involved with a project of this value.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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COUNCIL

Tuesday, 7 March 2017

I understand that school leaders can be capable facility and project managers. However, projects of a more complicated nature can take valuable time away from a school leader's core business — teaching and learning — and can involve many unforeseen risks. The Department's policies on project management are well established and based on practical experience in effectively managing project risk.

The Department's procurement and project management models acknowledge that projects of differing cost and complexity will have different requirements. Strong and effective guidelines promote safe school environments, ensure that builders with proven track records are used and promote value for money in projects.

I trust this information is of assistance.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 8 March 2017

Heathcote water supply

Raised with: Minister for Water
Raised by: Ms Symes
Raised on: 7 February 2017

REPLY:

I thank the member for raising this adjournment matter, and for her strong advocacy on behalf of the Heathcote community.

As you noted, Heathcote experienced issues with its drinking water in early January 2017 due to a naturally occurring manganese identified in its raw water source.

Coliban Water has confirmed that the issue has been rectified and the quality of water supplied to Heathcote has returned to normal. To address this issue, Coliban Water established an incident management team, adjusted the source water and treatment process, conducted extensive network flushing and kept the community informed via their website, social media, direct mail outs and community visits.

However, Coliban Water acknowledges that it needs to perform better in the way it manages the Heathcote drinking water supply, and has committed to advising Heathcote residents of when changes in source water are being made. Coliban Water is currently working through the logistics of how this can be done efficiently and effectively, and is investigating a solution to address the variability in the quality of Heathcote's drinking water.

My office has raised your request with Coliban Water, and I understand that Coliban Water has contacted you to arrange for yourself and some town representatives to visit the treatment plant on 10 March 2017. Coliban Water has told me they are looking forward to hosting the visit so that interested community members can see how the town's water is treated

Community legal services

Raised with: Attorney-General
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 22 February 2017

REPLY:

The funding of legal assistance services is the shared responsibility of the Commonwealth and State Governments. Historically, Victoria has provided a significant majority of that funding. For instance, Victoria provided over 60 per cent (\$405.1 million) of the \$672.2 million provided by the State and Commonwealth Governments to Victoria Legal Aid and community legal centres in the five years 2011-12 to 2015-16.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting the vital work done by our legal assistance service providers. This is in stark contrast to the Commonwealth Government, which is cutting funding for community legal centres by approximately 30 per cent from 2017-18.

In June 2015, the Government entered into a new five-year National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance (NPALAS), effective from 1 July 2015. The NPALAS governs the Commonwealth's funding for Victoria Legal Aid and, for the first time, community legal centres. The NPALAS allocates Commonwealth base funding for community legal centres over five years from 2015-16. The NPALAS also allocated guaranteed minimum funding to 14 community legal centres for the first two years only, 2015-16 and 2016-17. Eastern Community Legal Centre

is one of the 14 community legal centres that was guaranteed minimum funding as it had been the recipient of additional funding from the Commonwealth that was rolled into the NPALAS.

In 2016-17, Eastern Community Legal Centre is receiving State funding of \$882 985. Eastern Community Legal Centre has also been successful in State Government funded grants rounds over the past two years, having received \$251 925 in additional funding.

In 2016-17, Eastern Community Legal Centre will receive \$436 662 in Commonwealth funding (excluding Social and Community Services Equal Remuneration Order funds). In 2017-18, Commonwealth funding for Eastern Community Legal Centre will decrease to \$196 409-this is a significant loss of \$240 253.

I recently met with Mr Michael Smith, Chief Executive Officer of Eastern Community Legal Centre on 21 February 2017 to discuss the effect the Commonwealth Government's funding cut will have on the community legal centre and its service in the Yana Ranges.

The Commonwealth Government's cuts will impact many community legal centres across Victoria, including the Eastern Community Legal Centre, with some Victorian community legal centres losing over 50 per cent of their Commonwealth funding from 1 July 2017.

I have previously raised with the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Senator the Hon. George Brandis QC, the significant impact that this loss of funding will have on the ability of Victorian Community Legal Centres to deliver their vital services.

Since coming to office, the Victorian Government has invested heavily in community legal centres with an additional \$5.7 million provided in the last two years through a series of grants programs. This package includes: \$2 million over two years through the Community Legal Centre Assistance Fund; \$2.4 million to the Family Violence Duty Lawyer Fund; and \$1.3 million for the Community Legal Centre Family Violence Fund.

The grant funding has helped community legal centres deliver a range of legal assistance services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians across the state including family violence-related services to keep women and children safe and other services to assist members of our community who are experiencing homelessness, mental illness, infringement and debt matters, and those living in rural and remote areas.

The Victorian Government will continue to advocate for more funding from the Commonwealth Government and deliver support to where it's needed most.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 9 March 2017

Western Metropolitan Region TAFE funding

Raised with: Minister for Training and Skills
Raised by: Mr Melhem
Raised on: 7 February 2017

REPLY:

On 14 February this year, I attended the launch of the Sunshine Skills Hubs project at Victoria University's Sunshine campus.

This project is \$35 million investment, of which the Victorian Government is investing \$10 million from the TAFE Rescue Fund. The University is funding \$20 million towards the hub, and the Ian Potter Foundation is contributing \$5 million.

The Sunshine Skills Hub will include a state-of-the-art health and community services centre of excellence, an innovation and incubation hub, as well as student service facilities including cafeteria, gymnasium and bookshop.

It was a pleasure to meet a number of people on the day and listen to their passion for high quality and innovative training education — and importantly, the types of innovative solutions to meet the growing demands of their community and industry needs.

After the launch I toured the \$44 million Trades Building — a state-of-the-art industry training facility that is home to Victoria Polytechnic's construction program. I was also shown the planned site for Sunshine Skills Hub.

In addition, the institute will receive almost \$800 000 for new state-of-the-art TAFE teaching tools — including paramedic pods and health simulation equipment—thanks to the Government's Specialised Teaching Equipment initiative.

The Andrews Labor Government is standing by its commitment to save TAFE and restore Victoria's training system ensuring access to high quality, industry relevant training for all Victorians.