

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

8 and 9 August 2017

(Extract from book 13)

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

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 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
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Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Sullivan, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

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

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — #Mr Barber, Mr Bourman, #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

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

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh.

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Elasmr and Mr Melhem. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Garrett and Ms Ryall.

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

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁶	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ²	Western Metropolitan	AC	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁷	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ³	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmarr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁴	Northern Victoria	ALP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Appointed 16 April 2015

² DLP until 26 June 2017

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁴ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁵ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁶ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁷ Appointed 13 October 2016

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AC — Australian Conservatives; ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;
DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;
SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; VILJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

CONTENTS

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

TUESDAY, 8 AUGUST 2017

<i>Growing Suburbs Fund</i>	4093
<i>Cowes police station</i>	4093, 4107
<i>Greater Geelong City Council</i>	4094, 4103
<i>Community safety</i>	4094
<i>Residential tenancies legislation</i>	4095
<i>South Eastern Metropolitan Region crime</i>	4095
<i>Police numbers</i>	4096
<i>Barmah National Park</i>	4097
<i>Family violence action plan</i>	4098
<i>Country Fire Authority Ballan training facility</i>	4098
<i>Geelong convention and exhibition centre</i>	4099
<i>M80 ring-road upgrade</i>	4099
<i>Rental bidding</i>	4100
<i>Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade</i>	4100
<i>Bannockburn emergency services precinct</i>	4101
<i>Gippsland technical school</i>	4101
<i>Geelong Citizens Jury</i>	4102
<i>Kensington railway station</i>	4103
<i>Wyndham City Council</i>	4103
<i>Fox control</i>	4104
<i>Shepparton rail services</i>	4104, 4123
<i>Energy efficiency programs</i>	4105
<i>Poker machines</i>	4106
<i>Swan Street Bridge upgrade</i>	4107
<i>Family violence</i>	4108
<i>Mernda rail extension</i>	4108
<i>Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network</i>	4109
<i>Heatherdale railway station</i>	4109
<i>Drug driving</i>	4110
<i>Gippsland offshore wind farm</i>	4110
<i>Kindergarten funding</i>	4111
<i>Tram priority signalling</i>	4111
<i>Victorian Institute of Sport</i>	4112, 4119
<i>Domain railway station</i>	4112
<i>Latrobe Special Developmental School</i>	4113
<i>Hume drug rehabilitation centre</i>	4113
<i>VicRoads Sunshine office</i>	4114
<i>Taxi and hire car industry</i>	4114
<i>Wyperfeld National Park</i>	4115
<i>Tram timetables</i>	4115
<i>Country Fire Authority regional integrated stations</i>	4115
<i>Midland Highway upgrade</i>	4116
<i>Swimming pool safety</i>	4116
<i>Plastic bag ban</i>	4117
<i>Melbourne Regional Landfill</i>	4118
<i>Metung Road, Metung</i>	4119
<i>Future Voices</i>	4120
<i>Yarragon primary school site</i>	4120
<i>Police resources</i>	4121
<i>National disability insurance scheme</i>	4121
<i>Sudanese community</i>	4122
<i>Level crossing removal</i>	4123
<i>Coal industry</i>	4123

<i>Pakenham Hills Primary School</i>	4124
<i>Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union secretary</i>	4124
<i>Commercial passenger vehicle industry</i>	4125
<i>Metropolitan partnerships representation</i>	4126
<i>South Melbourne Park Primary School</i>	4126
<i>Port Phillip police numbers</i>	4126
<i>Sunbury police station</i>	4127
<i>Building industry regulation</i>	4128

WEDNESDAY, 9 AUGUST 2017

<i>Caulfield-Dandenong line elevated rail</i>	4129
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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 8 August 2017

Growing Suburbs Fund

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Mr Mulino
Raised on: 24 November 2016

REPLY:

Thank you for raising the matter regarding the approval of funding from the 2016-17 Growing Suburbs Fund. I note that you have been a strong advocate for projects in your electorate.

The Growing Suburbs Fund is a significant investment from the Andrews Government towards meeting the critical infrastructure needs of communities in Melbourne's diverse and fast growing interface local government areas.

The 2017/18 budget provides an additional \$50 million over 2 years, bringing the total of the Victorian Government investment to \$150 million.

The fund recognises the important role local government plays in creating liveable communities and is positioned to respond quickly to the pressures experienced by interface communities by bringing forward local projects that will make a big difference in the day-to-day lives of outer suburban families.

I can confirm that more than \$8.29 million will support a total of 12 projects within the Eastern Victorian electorate. This includes \$2 525 000 towards four projects in the Yarra Ranges Shire; \$1 695 124 towards six projects in Mornington Peninsula Shire; and \$4 070 000 towards three projects in Cardinia Shire.

I am pleased that in 2016-17, 20 projects, representing an investment of \$34.2 million, will be directed towards shared community facilities. This equates to 72% of the overall fund and will leverage \$52.3 million in additional investment by other sources such as the Commonwealth and local government, not-for-profit organisations and sporting clubs.

I look forward to being able to work closely with local members and councils to deliver these outcomes for interface communities.

Cowes police station

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 7 March 2017

REPLY:

I am advised by the Office of the Chief Commissioner that construction of the new Cowes Police Station is expected to be completed by March 2018.

I can assure you that Victoria Police continues to provide a 24-hour policing response to the Cowes and Phillip Island community. There has been no reduction or change to service delivery, as rostering is being co-ordinated between Cowes and San Remo, to provide maximum coverage in the area.

During construction, counter services have been operating every Wednesday at the Bass Coast Shire Council Offices in Cowes. The availability of counter service times is published in local newspapers, and on Victoria Police's Eyewatch Facebook pages.

Victoria Police are preparing and planning for the summer period, to ensure that they will continue to provide a visible presence for the safety of residents and tourists.

Greater Geelong City Council

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 21 March 2017

REPLY:

I welcome your request that the Victorian Electoral Commission be engaged consistent with their role and legislative responsibilities as it relates to the City of Greater Geelong.

You will be pleased to note the following extract from the VEC's report to me on the recent community consultation on a new electoral structure for the Greater Geelong City Council.

"In April 2017, the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP, asked the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to consult with the Geelong community on a new electoral structure for the Greater Geelong City Council."

Details of that report are publically available here: <https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/Reviews/geelongrr.html>

I note with interest your contention concerning the role of the VEC in light of the previous government's policy as represented in the City of Greater Geelong Amendment Bill 2011 to legally restrain the VEC from reviewing the directly elected Mayor model when it undertook the scheduled Electoral Representation Review and Subdivision Review in 2015 and 2016.

Community safety

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 21 March 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has announced a comprehensive strategy to prevent, detect and disrupt crime in Victoria. The Community Safety Statement, released in December 2016, outlines our commitment to boost police numbers right across the State.

As you are aware, the Government is funding 3135 additional frontline police over the next five years to support police respond to crime in our communities. These extra 3135 police, which are on top of attrition, are the lynchpin of the Victoria's first-ever Community Safety Statement.

The Government is already delivering on its promise with the first 300 additional frontline police having been deployed to Melbourne's growth suburbs in May 2017. Wyndham, Brimbank, Hume, Moreland, Whittlesea and Casey will receive significant resources over the next 12 months, and these extra police will greatly strengthen local police responses in those areas.

Recruitment of the additional police has been scheduled over the next four years, and planning for their deployment is on track. Work is also underway at the Victoria Police Academy to accommodate the new recruits.

Residential tenancies legislation

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 22 March 2017

REPLY:

The Government has been conducting a public review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to ensure that regulation of Victoria's rental sector meets the needs of both tenants and landlords. Changes recommended as part of the review are expected to be introduced into Parliament in 2018.

Detailed consideration of the economic and social impacts of any proposed changes will inform the development of the final reform package.

More immediately, the Government is proposing a small package of amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 so that the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants under that Act will apply to all tenancy agreements irrespective of the length of term of the tenancy. Currently, the Act only applies to tenancy agreements where the term of the tenancy is not more than five years in length.

These amendments will not impose any financial or social burden on the landlords or upon the community in general. Where a landlord and a tenant do agree to enter into a tenancy for a period of more than five years, the Government's proposal will mean that both parties will have available to them all the protections of the Act.

A landlord has always been able to agree to offer a rental property for a term of more than five years and this will not change.

The Government intends that landlords will retain the freedom to choose a length of tenancy for their rental property that best suits their individual circumstances.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region crime

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mrs Peulich
Raised on: 22 March 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to working with Victoria Police to ensure that they have the powers and resources they need to prevent crime in our communities, and hold perpetrators to account.

I am aware of the Mayor of Greater Dandenong's concerns regarding police resourcing in the City of Greater Dandenong, and I have responded to the Mayor's letter on 6 April 2017.

I can assure the Mayor of Greater Dandenong that the Dandenong Police Division will receive extra police resources and personnel.

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

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

These extra police will greatly strengthen local police responses in those areas selected; however, it is important to stress that this is just the start of delivering on our promise to keep Victorians safe. We have 2729 more police yet

to be allocated across the state, plus 100 Protective Services Officers to help provide an even safer public transport network.

I am advised that Victoria Police target their operations to address challenges specific to the Greater Dandenong Local Government Area, which is serviced by the Dandenong and Springvale Police Stations. In addition to general duties patrolling units, specialist units such as the Criminal Investigation Unit, Crime Scene Services, Highway Patrol, Family Violence Unit, Divisional Intelligence Unit and Prosecutions Unit also play a role in ensuring that Greater Dandenong is being effectively policed.

I am advised Victoria Police has implemented various local policing initiatives in the Dandenong area to target volume crime and recidivist offenders, including Operations Secure, Shadow, Screen, Sumatra and Lookout. These operations have implemented a number of initiatives, including providing an intensive police presence to address theft, deter anti-social behaviour and hoon driving in high risk areas, and disrupt drug trafficking in identified hotspots.

Another local initiative, the Offender Processing Unit (OPU), has been designed to take on the processing responsibilities, including interviews of offenders and the related paperwork, allowing frontline police to get back on the road to where they are needed most.

In addition to the important work being done by police, the Andrews Labor Government has funded 97 Community Crime Prevention (CCP) projects in the South Eastern Metro Region, with grants totalling \$2 864 758. This funding is designed to assist evidence-based, community-led crime prevention initiatives, including graffiti prevention, CCTV installation, improved lighting, mentorship programs, intervention programs, and various security upgrades. Other projects focus on young people and other vulnerable groups, such as Koori and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

Please be assured that I continue to work closely with the Chief Commissioner of Police to tackle the complex law and order challenges we see today, to give Victoria Police the resources they need to keep our community safe now, and into the future.

Police numbers

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr Morris
Raised on: 2 May 2017

REPLY:

There has been no reduction in frontline police. The community of Ballarat continues to receive a 24-hour police response as part of Western Region Division 3, which has seen a 3 percent increase in police resources overall since November 2014. The decision of how and where resources are deployed is appropriately a matter for the Chief Commissioner of Police.

In relation to comments on the rates of high volume crimes such as aggravated burglary in the Ballarat area, I have been advised by Victoria Police that aggravated burglary is a high priority for the Division, as are all high volume crime categories. The Western Region Division 3 has a High Volume Crime Team that, amongst other functions, is comprised of Burglary, Recidivist Offenders, Response, and Drug teams. Police units are tasked on a daily basis to target this kind of offending, dependent upon intelligence.

Police ran a number of specific operations during 2016 and 2017, specifically targeting high volume crime categories. These operations resulted in over 90 arrests in connection with the offences of aggravated burglary, burglary, theft, and handling stolen goods from the reporting period of 31 October 2016 to 30 April 2017. These operations have been highly successful in disrupting these offences in the Ballarat and surrounding areas.

The issue of police resourcing is complex but it is also essential to have a comprehensive investment package that will ensure Victoria Police is better able to work effectively with the community to meet the law and order challenges facing Victoria.

The Andrews Labor Government has shown its commitment to police resourcing through our Community Safety Statement. The statement outlines the Victorian Government's \$2 billion investment to equip Victoria Police with new resources and capabilities to prevent and reduce the level of harm being caused in the community.

The Statement is an unprecedented investment in Victoria Police and responds to growing demand on police services.

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

The first 300 of those officers were began to be deployed in April 2017 in Melbourne's high demand and high growth suburbs but it is important to stress that this is just the start. We have 2729 more police yet to be allocated across the state, plus 100 Protective Services officers to help provide an even safer public transport network.

The Andrews Labor Government is absolutely committed to ensuring Victoria Police in every municipality has the resources and powers it needs to reduce harm in the community and keep Victorians safe, including in Ballarat.

The Government will continue to work with the Chief Commissioner to tackle the complex law and order challenges we see today, to give Victoria Police the resources they need to keep our community safe now, and into the future.

Barmah National Park

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Mr Young
Raised on: 9 May 2017

REPLY:

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), together with Parks Victoria, has been reviewing the supply of firewood across Northern Victoria, including areas around Barmah National Park. Firewood is a limited resource. The Barmah Island area that is adjacent to Barmah National Park has been made available as a firewood resource with harvesting operations taking place to produce firewood for the Autumn 2017 collection season. DELWP will continue to work with local communities to consider alternative supply and access to more sustainable forms of energy.

Parks Victoria undertakes annual fire prevention works and programs to control invasive plants and animals. Parks Victoria works closely with partner agencies to promote tourism in the area surrounding the park.

Parks Victoria conducted three community roundtable group meetings from January 2017 to February 2017 to consider the views of stakeholders on feral horse management in the Barmah National Park. The consultation focused on management actions required to reduce the impacts of horses on the Ramsar-listed wetlands and protect this significant ecological asset. Parks Victoria is now finalising a draft Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan which will be made available for broader public comment in mid-2017.

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

Family violence action plan

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Raised by: Mr Melhem
Raised on: 9 May 2017

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Western Metropolitan for raising the government's Primary Prevention Strategy Free from Violence with the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Hon. Fiona Richardson MP.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recognised the need for a state-wide Primary Prevention Strategy to address negative attitudes and behaviours that drive gendered violence. Our government is working to implement every single one of the Commission's 227 recommendations, and this Strategy provides the necessary blueprint of how we will change engrained attitudes and behaviours over time.

Similar to other world-leading prevention initiatives, such as anti-smoking campaign led by VicHealth, we are utilising public awareness campaigns and targeted prevention programs to stop gendered violence before it starts. A key part of this work is the creation of a prevention agency with dedicated and enduring funding, that will drive state-wide programs that will prevent family violence.

While the prevention agency is being established, our government is supporting communities to strengthen local partnerships to coordinate and drive family violence prevention activities. As part of the Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention Grants program, the Minister was pleased to provide Women's Health in the West \$135 000 to strengthen targeted prevention action in your community.

Country Fire Authority Ballan training facility

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services
Raised by: Mr Morris
Raised on: 9 May 2017

REPLY:

The closure of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) Training Facility in Fiskville created an immediate gap in the State's capacity and capability for training firefighters and other emergency management volunteers and staff.

The Victorian Government decided to close the Fiskville training facility in 2015, after tests showed that firefighters were exposed to dangerous chemicals that likely caused cancer, confirming what many firefighters had suspected for decades.

As promised by the Victorian Government and publicly announced by me on 15 May 2017, the Victorian Government has purchased land for a new Victorian Emergency Management Training Centre (VEMTC) in Ballan. The Victorian Government has worked hard to secure this 35 hectare site and can now get on with building this World-class training facility. This new training facility in Ballan will help boost jobs in the region and provide economic benefit to the local community

The 2016-17 Victorian Budget provided \$46.2 million to address the shortfall caused by the closure of the CFA Training Facility in Fiskville, with over \$31 million going to the purchase of land and the establishment of the new training facility in Ballan. The new VEMTC in Ballan will be an environmentally safe facility featuring hot fire and multi-purpose training pads as well as firefighting props and specialist training capability. It will be available to our fire agencies as well as members of Victoria State Emergency Service and other emergency service organisations.

The design and planning for the VEMTC in Ballan will commence without delay and construction is expected to commence in the first half of 2018.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Geelong convention and exhibition centre

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 9 May 2017

REPLY:

The Government recognises the importance of a proposed convention centre for Geelong and the Surf Coast — however we need to get the project right.

This project has been much talked about and with a bit more hard work, we believe we can make the vision a reality for Geelong.

The Government has now considered the initial business case, however there needs to be more work undertaken to ensure the project matches the vision of the Geelong community.

I have recently met with a number of Geelong business and community leaders and with Deakin University.

We discussed the convention centre, its needs and future.

The Government remains committed to the development of the business case and working with the community to achieve the best possible outcome.

M80 ring-road upgrade

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Mr Eideh
Raised on: 10 May 2017

REPLY:

The M80 Ring Road upgrade is a \$2.25 billion project that, when finished, will deliver widening and improvements along 38 kilometres of freeway from the Princes Freeway, Laverton North to the Greensborough Highway, Greensborough.

Three sections of the M80 Ring Road have been upgraded, with construction on the Sunshine Avenue to Calder Freeway section underway and expected to be complete by late 2018.

\$700 million has been provided in the 2017-18 State Budget to complete the remaining three sections of the M80 Ring Road upgrade.

This includes widening and improvements on the remaining three sections from the Princes Freeway to the Western Highway, from Plenty Road to Greensborough Highway and between Sydney Road and Edgars Road.

The section from the Princes Freeway to the Western Highway is the first of the remaining sections to be upgraded.

The 7.9 kilometre upgrade in this section involves widening from three lanes to four lanes in each direction, upgrading interchanges at Boundary Road and Fitzgerald Road to improve access for freight from Laverton North and upgrading the Princes Freeway and M80 Ring Road interchange to provide new ramps to reduce weaving and provide better connections between these major freeways and the West Gate Freeway and future West Gate Tunnel.

Expressions of interest for this section have been requested and construction is expected to begin in early 2018.

The upgrade of the 2.4 kilometre section from Plenty Road to Greensborough Highway will include an extra lane in each direction and upgrades to interchanges at Greensborough Highway and Plenty Road to provide better connections.

The 4 kilometre upgrade between Sydney Road and Edgars Road will include an extra lane in each direction and new separate carriageways between Edgars Road and Sydney Road to remove the dangerous weaving that currently exists.

Construction is scheduled to begin in these sections by 2019.

A freeway management system, including overhead speed limit and lane use signs, ramp signals, CCTV and variable message signs, will also be installed in each section to improve traffic flow and safety.

All remaining sections of the M80 Ring Road are expected to be complete by late 2021.

Rental bidding

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Raised by: Mr Barber
Raised on: 10 May 2017

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is currently reviewing the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA). Information and updates about the review are published on the Fairer Safer Housing website, available at: engage.vic.gov.au/fairersaferhousing.

The Victorian Government is committed to residential tenancy laws that balance the interests of all participants in the rental sector, and rental bidding was one of issues raised for consideration in the most recent public options discussion paper Heading for Home. Specifically, Option 7.8A sought comment on a proposed requirement that rental properties be advertised at a fixed price, and that the practice of requesting rental bids be prohibited. Option 7.8B contemplated further prohibiting landlords and agents from accepting rental bids, even where they may be offered without solicitation.

The options discussion paper was published to facilitate public input into potential reform options, and does not represent a settled Victorian Government position on what legislative changes should be made to the RTA. The submissions received from stakeholders are currently being considered by the Government in the development of a comprehensive reform package. This package will form the basis of new legislation for residential tenancies, to be considered by the Victorian Parliament in 2018.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade

Raised with: Special Minister of State
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 11 May 2017

REPLY:

While my portfolio has responsibility for administering integrity and accountability legislation, it is outside the scope of my role to make determinations about ministerial conduct.

All Ministers are subject to the Members of Parliament (Register of Interests) Act 1978 and also must act in accordance with the Ministerial Code of Conduct and their oath of office. Ministers and Members of Parliament are ultimately accountable to Parliament.

Bannockburn emergency services precinct

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services
Raised by: Mr Morris
Raised on: 11 May 2017

REPLY:

The Victorian Government appreciates the advocacy provided to our emergency services organisations by the Golden Plains Shire Council including Mayor Des Phelan and the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Rod Nicholls regarding the establishment of an emergency services precinct in Bannockburn.

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) ensures that emergency services agencies work together when considering new developments, upgrades or extensions in the same area.

EMV held a multi-agency discussion with the relevant stakeholders to determine requirements and intentions in a number of regional locations where EMV has been approached by local government to encourage co-location. The discussion also examined the viability of an emergency services complex in Bannockburn as recommended by the Golden Plains Shire Council. This discussion failed to identify any operational imperative for the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Victoria State Emergency Services to relocate from existing facilities in Bannockburn and situate within a single complex in the short term.

However, I am pleased to advise that in December 2017, the CFA will take over the lease of the piece of land currently leased by the Golden Plains Shire Council, to ensure the site remains secure as land is always difficult to obtain for new developments.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Gippsland technical school

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 24 May 2017

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Tech Schools are shared high-tech learning environments with innovative education programs linked to local schools and the school curriculum. Secondary students will access Tech Schools to amplify their learning of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

The learning programs will deliver real world learning to students supplementing the resources standalone schools provide, particularly with high-tech equipment, to connect students to the skills and jobs of their future. A Tech School Director will lead each Tech School in collaboration with participating schools, local government and industry partners via a Tech School Committee.

The Tech School is owned and operated by the host institution — Federation Training — to the ultimate benefit of local students and teachers from the eight participating partner schools. This includes giving secondary school students an opportunity to experience tertiary and industry-level settings from an early age.

To ensure as many voices as possible are heard in the development of the Tech School, the host is collaborating closely with the Tech School Committee, which is playing a vital role in bringing the needs and priorities of the community to the fore. The Gippsland Tech School Committee is comprised of representatives of many organisations:

- A representative sample of partner schools
- A representative sample of industry partners, including Agribusiness Gippsland
- The Local Learning and Employment Network

- The Latrobe Valley Authority
- Latrobe City Council
- The host
- The Department of Education and Training regional office.

The Gippsland Tech School will provide STEM based learning programs to eight participating schools in Gippsland and have a food and fibre; health; new energy, and advanced manufacturing industry focus.

Federation Training, the Committee and partner schools are developing these programs in line with the Tech Schools Learning Programs Design Framework, which was developed after extensive consultation with Tech School stakeholders, hosts, directors, initiative stakeholders, subject associations and expert bodies. The combination of a strong central framework that informs local planning will ensure learning programs that are unique to the Gippsland Tech School, and able to meet the needs of the partner schools.

In terms of the infrastructure, the new Gippsland Tech School will be located in the western half of the main building of Federation Training's Morwell campus. The architects have completed the design, which includes a remodelling and refurbishing of the existing space to provide a range of learning spaces including a design studio, hi-tech skills lab, multi-media lab and discovery centre.

These learning spaces will be fitted with high tech equipment (including 3D printers and robotics) to support the delivery of the Tech School programs and the application of STEM to real world problems. They will be state-of-the-art facilities in which to teach the learning programs that the community has helped to design.

Construction has now commenced of the new Gippsland Tech School at Federation Training with the Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing turning the first sod on Friday 23 June 2017. Construction will be complete and the facility will open for student programs to commence in 2018.

Geelong Citizens Jury

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 24 May 2017

REPLY:

The Member would be well advised to avoid demeaning jury members in future. Using Parliament to call people names is very disappointing and I suggest the Member apologise.

The New Democracy Foundation is politically bi-partisan and independent. Its brief was to allow a representative group of Geelong's citizens to arrive at a model that would best serve their needs in terms of representation and governance. No pre-conceived outcome was ascribed in the brief or in any materials and information provided to the jury.

New Democracy Foundation's research committee, patrons and official supporters include former Coalition Premiers, Senators and leaders. Many eminent Australians on the conservative side of politics in our nation are advocates of the New Democracy Foundation.

The New Democracy Foundation was commissioned to undertake the Geelong Citizens' Jury because it is the pre-eminent organisation in Australia in conducting large scale, complex citizens' juries in local government environments. This is a highly specialised field in which New Democracy Foundation is a unique provider.

This investment in democracy for Geelong is a sound investment. It ensured that we could deliver an independent, professional process which placed Geelong citizens in the driver's seat in determining how they would like to be governed in the future.

Kensington railway station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Barber
Raised on: 24 May 2017

REPLY:

Effective as of 27 August 2017, there will be one extra service on the Craigieburn line in the AM peak and the PM peak.

Presently, there are no plans to introduce staff to Kensington. Authorised Officers are deployed at particular stations to assist with crowd management as required. Melbourne Metro Trains (MTM) have indicated that train drivers make announcements, where possible, instructing passengers to move further into carriages to ensure passengers embark and disembark safely.

In addition, MTM have also advised that they have recently introduced a remote in-system announcement system that operates from their Control Room. This enables staff to monitor station platforms and make announcements to passengers asking them to move further into the carriage in instances where many other passengers are waiting to board.

MTM have investigated the number of instances of customer injuries at Kensington Station, and there have not been any reported injuries in the past 6 months as a result of over-crowding or platform congestion.

Greater Geelong City Council

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 24 May 2017

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Western Victoria for his question.

I have been advised that the matter raised in this question is currently before the courts. As such, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on this matter.

Wyndham City Council

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 25 May 2017

REPLY:

The Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate has publicly confirmed it is investigating matters related to Wyndham City Council's general election held in 2016.

As I have previously stated to the Member for Western Metropolitan, it would not be appropriate for me to comment further while the investigation is being conducted.

Fox control

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture
Raised by: Mr O'Sullivan
Raised on: 25 May 2017

REPLY:

The Fox and Wild Dog Bounty rewards eligible Victorian hunters who present acceptable body parts at 22 scheduled collection centres. The program pays hunters \$10 for each fox scalp and \$120 for each wild dog skin piece.

Since its inception in 2011, the bounty has paid out over \$5.57 million in rewards and collected over 550 000 fox scalps and 2100 wild dog skin pieces.

The Fox and Wild Dog Bounty has been consistently advertised and promoted across the state with information made available to the community, landholders and hunters through a wide range of mediums since 2011. Agriculture Victoria widely promotes the bounty at key times of year to coincide with activities including; the resumption of bounty collections in Autumn, on-farm pre-lambing fox management and the summer suspension of bounty collections. Information is readily available and accessible on the Agriculture Victoria website or by calling the Agriculture Victoria Customer Service Centre. Regional hunter and community groups, such as Landcare, continue to promote the bounty through their communication networks.

Hunters and farmers have become familiar with the operation of the bounty system since 2011 and Agriculture Victoria has not received any hunter feedback or criticism regarding a lack of information or publicity. Departmental staff continue to see first time applicants submitting fox scalps at collection centres. The 12 412 applications for reward from hunters since the program inception indicates significant continuing participation across Victoria.

A network of 22 bounty collection centres continues to operate. The Rainbow collection site was temporarily withdrawn when the wild dog bounty was suspended in 2015 as it was solely a wild dog collection centre. This site has now been re-instated.

The average number of fox scalps submitted for bounty reward is approximately 105 000 per financial year. The cumulative figures at May 2017 for 2016-17 shows that 62 233 fox scalps have been collected for reward. It is likely that the total number of fox scalps collected this financial year will be lower than the 105 000 long term average. This is attributable to seasonal conditions, where extended wet and warm periods over much of the state have led to reduced hunting efforts. Farmers have also redirected their effort to on-farm activities such as harvesting and sowing operations due to favourable conditions. In addition, hunters can stockpile body parts and submit them for collection at a later date. This leads to variations in monthly collection figures and makes final returns difficult to predict.

Effective fox management requires an integrated approach, using all available management practices including poison baiting, trapping, exclusion fencing, fumigation and appropriate animal husbandry. Hunting can play an important role in supporting an integrated fox and wild dog management approach.

Shepparton rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 6 June 2017

REPLY:

This matter does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities. Please redirect this question to the Minister for Police.

Energy efficiency programs

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Mr Eideh
Raised on: 6 June 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government understands the pressures that Victorian business owners are facing from rising gas and electricity prices. We have put in place several measures to assist businesses, with more new support programs being developed.

The Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Scheme, which helps businesses with their energy costs through discounts on selected energy-saving products and services, has operated since 2009. The Andrews Labor Government has expanded and strengthened this program with several additional programs that businesses can access to help keep their energy costs down.

Boosting Business Productivity

The \$3.6 million Boosting Business Productivity grants program supports businesses to develop skills needed to cut energy costs, reduce greenhouse emissions, and improve energy productivity. Businesses can access this program to reduce energy costs through three streams:

1. Energy Assessment Grants of up to \$9000 are available for businesses spending over \$20 000 a year on energy, and can provide help to implement recommendations on improving energy efficiency, renewable energy opportunities and energy tariffs. On average, assessments can find potential energy savings of more than \$50 000 a year from energy efficiency alone.
2. Materials Efficiency Grants of up to \$13 000 are available to businesses and manufacturers looking for solutions to their waste problems. Matched grants are available to fund expert advice to identify the causes of waste, and to develop and help implement a solution. On average, assessments can find potential savings of more than \$150 000 per annum from materials efficiency alone, in addition to benefits such as improved productivity and energy savings.
3. Energy Efficiency Capability grants for industry associations, business networks and registered training organisations (RTOs) to develop energy efficiency knowledge and skills in small-to-medium businesses and service providers are also being provided. Applications for these grants have now closed and more information will be available soon about how to participate in the funded projects.

To find out more about this program, see www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/services-and-advice/business/energy-and-materials-efficiency-for-business/boosting-productivity.

Better Commercial Buildings Program

The \$1.8 million Better Commercial Buildings program is available to fund energy efficiency improvements for 50 poorly performing commercial buildings. Improving building performance can lead to savings in energy costs, increased tenant satisfaction and lower vacancy rates.

To find out more, see www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/services-and-advice/business/resource-efficient-buildings/energy-efficient-office-buildings/better-commercial-buildings-program

Environmental Upgrade Finance

In November 2016, the Andrews Labor Government's legislation took effect to allow all Victorian councils to offer Environmental Upgrade Agreements (EUAs). EUAs are a council-based low-cost financing option to upgrade buildings' energy efficiency and environmental performance.

Our government, through Sustainability Victoria, provides a Sustainable Finance service. This is a free finance facilitation service that is available to all businesses, property owners, councils and community groups seeking to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

You can learn more at:

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/services-and-advice/business/energy-and-materials-efficiency-for-business/sustainable-finance-service

Victorian Energy Compare

One of the best ways to reduce energy costs is to shop around for a new energy supply offer. To assist consumers to do this, the government's independent price comparison tool, Victorian Energy Compare, can be used help Victorians save money on their energy bills.

Victorian Energy Compare is an independent comparison website, available to householders and small business customers (consuming under 40 megawatt hours (MWh) annually) who have smart meter data. It is the only independent price comparison tool that has every generally available electricity, gas and solar tariff on the market.

Victorian Energy Compare makes it easier for Victorians to review their energy plan and save money. Data from the website shows that nine out of every ten users can save money by switching energy offers.

Victorian Energy Compare can be found at www.vic.gov.au/victorianenergycompare

Poker machines

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

Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins

Raised on: 6 June 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Government recognises that while gambling is a legitimate recreational activity it can have catastrophic consequences for some people and that it is important therefore to have in place measures to reduce gambling-related harm.

On 7 July 2017, I announced the new gaming machine arrangements that will help limit gambling-related harm and give certainty to clubs and hotels across Victoria. Under the arrangements, the number of gaming machines in Victoria outside the Melbourne casino will remain capped at 27 372 and the maximum number of gaming machines in a single venue will be frozen at 105.

In 2015-16, the government committed funding of \$148 million over four years to the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation to reduce the prevalence and severity of problem gambling and to foster responsible gambling. The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation designs and delivers communication and education strategies, commissions research and works with Gambler's Help agencies to deliver counselling and treatment services.

The government recognises the importance of ensuring that community views about the placement of gaming machines are better considered. For this reason, the Responsible Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council was asked to provide advice on ways in which the process for the placement of gaming machines in local communities can be improved. I am currently considering the council's advice on this matter.

In 2015, when announcing the review of the arrangements that will apply to the operation of gaming machines after August 2022, the government also committed to examining gaming machine harm minimisation measures to ensure they are – appropriate now and post-2022 having regard to emerging research and industry developments. A consultation paper seeking community and stakeholder submissions on the harm minimisation measures that apply to gaming machines was released as part of this process. I will have more to say about this process in due course.

Cowes police station

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 6 June 2017

REPLY:

I am advised by the Office of the Chief Commissioner of Police that construction of the new Cowes police station is expected to be completed by March 2018.

I can assure you that Victoria Police continues to provide a 24-hour policing response to the Cowes and Phillip Island community. There has been no reduction or change to service delivery, as rostering is being co-ordinated between Cowes and San Remo, to provide maximum coverage in the area.

During construction, counter services have been operating every Wednesday at the Bass Coast Shire Council Offices in Cowes. The availability of counter service times is published in local newspapers, and on Victoria Police's Eyewatch Facebook pages.

Victoria Police are preparing and planning for the summer period, to ensure that they will continue to provide a visible presence for the safety of residents and tourists. Victoria Police considers the increased population in tourist areas when planning police staffing for the summer months. Where necessary, additional staff will be allocated to meet demand.

Swan Street Bridge upgrade

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 6 June 2017

REPLY:

The Swan Street Bridge Upgrade is funded as a road project, and includes the widening of the bridge, Alexandra Ave, and Olympic Blvd, to accommodate one additional east bound lane.

VicRoads has advised it is aware of a number of issues in regard to the existing pedestrian and cyclist trails underneath the Swan Street Bridge, including narrow width and low head clearance on the east (Batman Ave) side, and periodic flooding on the west (Alexandra Ave) side.

The geotechnical conditions of the area are poor, resulting in an ongoing high degree of settlement, particularly of the west bank (Alexandra Ave side), which means the west side path is steadily sliding down into the river. Over time this has led to more frequent flooding during higher tide events.

The matter of upgrading the two paths is of interest to several separate authorities, with Parks Victoria the custodians of the land on which the waterway and paths reside, Melbourne Water are interested in (not reducing) the flow operation of the waterway, and City of Melbourne is responsible for the path infrastructure itself. VicRoads is responsible for the Swan Street Bridge structure on both banks and above the waterway and paths.

VicRoads has led a number of discussions with the above mentioned stakeholders in respect to investigating potential solutions as part of the Swan Street Bridge Upgrade. The engineering complexities of the site means there is no simple and obvious solution for either path. For example, widening the narrow path on the east side does not resolve the existing issues with reduced head clearance to the bridge above the path, however lowering the path may expose it to potential flooding.

A full investigation and scope is required in order to determine the appropriate solution.

As a result of this, VicRoads is working with the City of Melbourne, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water to consider alternatives for making improvements to this existing situation.

Thank you for your interest in the project.

Family violence

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Raised by: Mr Elasmar
Raised on: 6 June 2017

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Northern Metropolitan for raising the government's efforts to prevent family violence with the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence.

The Minister was proud to recently launch Victoria's first primary prevention strategy Free from Violence (the Strategy). The Strategy focuses on the need to drive prevention initiatives through key settings where Victorians work, learn and play, including our schools, workplaces and sporting clubs.

Similar to other world-leading prevention initiatives, such as the Transport Accident Commission's work to make our roads safer, we are utilising public awareness campaigns and targeted prevention programs to help change harmful attitudes and behaviours. As part of the Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention Grants program, the Minister was pleased to provide Women's Health in the North \$140 000 to strengthen targeted prevention action in your community.

Changing entrenched attitudes and behaviours is incredibly complex and will take time. That is why our government is working to establish a prevention agency with dedicated and enduring funding to strengthen our focus on stopping this violence before it starts.

Mernda rail extension

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Leane
Raised on: 6 June 2017

REPLY:

I would like to thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan and Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure for his advocacy for better public transport services on behalf of his community.

The Mernda Rail Jobs Hub is an industry leading initiative that makes it easier for people looking for work on the Mernda Rail Extension Project to find out about opportunities on the project. The Hub brings together a network of labour hire companies, sub-contractors and job support services, as well as TAFEs and training providers to connect people with the jobs, training and support services they need.

People looking for work can access the Mernda Rail Jobs Hub online, via a dedicated 1800 number or in person at 323 McDonalds Road, Epping. This is a new model for the construction industry in Victoria and the community response to it has been significant. So far hundreds of people have registered their interest directly with the Hub. Each week around 100 people have visited the Hub in Epping which was built by BARPA, an indigenous construction company. It is fitting, as Barpa in the traditional language of the Jaara People of Central Victoria means 'to build'.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) is encouraging their construction industry partners to think about innovative ways to recruit their workforces. An initiative like the Mernda Rail Jobs Hub is a great way to provide opportunities for local people to find employment, re-skill and re-train. I'm pleased to inform the Member that this encouragement is already leading to more great initiatives.

The Government recently awarded the contract for the Camp Road, Campbellfield level crossing removal to an Alliance, comprising the LXRA and John Holland/KBR. Work on this fast-tracked removal has commenced, with the crossing to be removed by early 2018. This project will also include a job hub as part of the project. A pop-up Employment and Business Hub will be set up in a central location close to Camp Road where locals interested in working on the project or providing goods and services will be able to get in touch with the project team. The

LXRA project team will also work with local social enterprises, training and employment providers to identify opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers.

These initiatives are a great way for contractors on major infrastructure projects to deliver ten per cent of all work on the project to apprentices, trainees and cadets as part of the Government's Major Project Skills Guarantee (MPSG) initiative. I look forward to being able to advise the Member of many more great initiatives like this in the future.

Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network

Raised with: Minister for Women
Raised by: Ms Springle
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

I would like to acknowledge the advocacy of the Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network in the Dandenong region.

As part of the development of Victoria's first Gender Equality Strategy (the Strategy) the Minister for Women heard directly from culturally diverse Victorians on the barriers to equality that they have experienced, and what they wanted the Strategy to embody.

The Strategy recognises that women from culturally diverse communities face additional barriers to equality, particularly when they have been separated from family or other support networks. The founding reforms of the Strategy lay the groundwork to improve equality for all Victorians, in a way that will help to overcome other forms of disadvantage and discrimination.

I understand that my colleague, the State Member for Dandenong, met with the Network last year to discuss the Royal Commission into Family Violence, discrimination and social inclusion, and local English language classes that are available in Dandenong. I am informed that as requested by the State Member for Dandenong, the Office of Minister Richardson has made contact with the Australian Hazara Women's Friendship Network to arrange an opportunity to further discuss their work.

Heatherdale railway station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Leane
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

I would first like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure for his great work on this issue.

Following a review of the recently installed Digi-Glass at Heatherdale Station, constructed as part of the Heatherdale Road level crossing removal project, I can confirm that the Level Crossing Removal Authority will install additional signage in response to the issue you raise.

Specifically, this signage will allow the description of the floral images, which is currently most easily read from the platform stairs, to also be viewable from the station concourse.

Drug driving

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Ms Patten
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

The 2016 road toll was 291, the worst result since 2008. About 7000 people were seriously injured. The majority of driver/rider deaths were associated with an impairing substance, with post-mortem blood analysis finding some 35 percent had impairing drugs, primarily methamphetamine or THC, with illegal levels of alcohol found in 19.5 percent. These substances were also found in similar proportions in hospital blood testing of seriously injured drivers/riders.

Unlike alcohol which is packaged showing the alcohol content, thus allowing a rough estimate of how much alcohol is consumed, illegal drugs are not sold with advice on the type or amount of particular substances they contain. People who consume cannabis or methamphetamine type drugs have no way of knowing what level of the drug they now have in their body, and consequently how long it will take to metabolise the drug into a non-impairing form. In such circumstances, police, when asked how long after ingesting an illegal drug a driver will remain impaired, rightly take a conservative approach and advise drivers not to drive for many hours after consumption.

The drug driving program run in Victoria has built-in safeguards that ensure only impaired drivers are infringed or prosecuted. In relation to cannabis, it is only the active form THC that is detected by the device Victoria Police use, and which is specifically confirmed in the follow-up laboratory test by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, which is used to determine whether a drug driving infringement is to be issued. The non-active forms of cannabis, including long-life metabolites, are specifically excluded in the testing and evidentiary process.

While MA can be detected for longer timeframes than typically apply. to THC, the actual time is dependent on dose levels, and again detected drivers will be impaired. In addition, many drivers who 'use MA are further impaired by extreme fatigue, which may be masked by MA use but which can still impact their ability to drive safely.

Gippsland offshore wind farm

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Ms Shing
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

Australia's first offshore wind energy project is being developed by Victorian based Offshore Energy Pty Ltd (OEPL). This proposal was announced at the Latrobe Valley New Energy Technologies Roundtable held in Churchill on 2 June 2017.

The project requires the granting of an exclusive exploration licence by the Commonwealth Government prior to further feasibility studies proceeding.

It is anticipated the exploration stage of the project will involve expenditure of up to \$25 million. It is the opportunities presented by significant proposals like this which led to the launch of the Latrobe Valley New Energy Jobs and Investment Prospectus at the recent roundtable.

The aim of this prospectus is to ensure local Latrobe Valley businesses and suppliers are well positioned to seize such opportunities, and other proposals arising from supportive government policy and the current energy sector transition.

The consultation phase of the prospectus has identified several questions, framed around six themes, covering issues such as skills, investment, innovation, competitiveness, market development and supply chains to support the economic transition of the Latrobe Valley.

The initial consultation process is open until 14 July and we welcome your feedback.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to working with OEPL, Latrobe Valley Authority, local government, key stakeholders and the communities and business of the Gippsland region to ensure we maximise the local economic development opportunities of this proposal.

Kindergarten funding

Raised with: Treasurer
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

The \$98.4^a million of kindergarten programs in the Gender Equality Budget Statement includes the following three kindergarten initiatives:

- Education State reform — High quality learning and development for three and four-year olds — \$87.1 million;
- Early Start Kindergarten for vulnerable children — \$6.2 million; and
- Ensuring children with significant disabilities can participate in kindergarten — \$5.0 million.

This funding will help to improve educational outcomes for children, including girls.

The Minister for Families and Children is responsible for the provision of kindergarten and children's services.

Note

- (a) Figures may not add due to rounding.

Tram priority signalling

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

VicRoads makes changes to traffic signals to provide priority for trams at no cost, if there are no associated hardware changes. This is possible in the majority of cases where improvements for tram operations have been identified.

Sometimes, it is necessary to make changes to the traffic signal hardware to provide improved priority, such as upgrading traffic signal controllers, new "T" lanterns or new tram detectors. Where there are funded initiatives or programs supporting these activities, they are provided as part of the initiative. At times, in order to start gaining the benefits of tram priority where funding is not available, Yarra Trams will fund the hardware changes while VicRoads absorbs costs associated with the reprogramming and fine-tuning of the signals. The cost to Yarra Trams would rarely amount to \$15 000 for one site.

Victorian Institute of Sport

Raised with: Minister for Sport
Raised by: Mr Eideh
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

I refer to your adjournment debate matter regarding additional funding to the (VIS), raised in the Legislative Assembly on 7 June 2017.

The Andrews Labor Government has committed to a \$300 000 funding boost for a new outreach program to increase the engagement of the Victorian Institute of Sport in our regions and investigate improvements required to enhance VIS data management systems and processes. This includes the Western Metropolitan area.

Part of the commitment provides \$200 000 towards a Regional Community Outreach and Roadshow pilot that will see VIS coaches, athletes and talent identifiers visit communities across Victoria to share expertise, knowledge and resources, and engage with promising young athletes and coaches in regions which would otherwise find it difficult to access VIS facilities in inner Melbourne.

As well as sharing VIS coaching expertise and other high performance learnings to improve community and sub-elite sport outcomes, linking VIS athletes with state sporting associations, regional sports assemblies and sporting clubs in both metropolitan and regional areas provides opportunities to inspire more people to get active and join a grassroots sporting club.

We are proud to continue funding the first-class high performance sport development programs at the VIS.

This funding is in addition to the \$6.7 million we provide to the VIS to ensure it remains a leading provider of high performance sports programs for talented Victorian athletes across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Domain railway station

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

Victoria Police personnel are always deployed to, and in anticipation of, protests and demonstrations. Attending police are there to prevent a breach of the peace by ensuring that opposing parties are separated. Further, police ensure that works are able to proceed without being hampered by protest activity.

I can assure your constituents that Victoria Police is working hard to detect and respond to crime in our state. The Government is committed to ensuring that all Victorians feel safe, and we are working closely with Victoria Police to ensure that they are well resourced to tackle crime in our communities, and hold perpetrators to account.

As you are aware, the Government has announced a comprehensive strategy to prevent, identify and disrupt crime in Victoria. The Community Safety Statement outlines our \$2 billion investment in Victoria Police resources and powers, and our commitment to boost police numbers right across the State.

As part of the Community Safety Statement, the Government is funding 3135 additional frontline police over the next five years to support police, to respond to crime in our communities.

The first 300 additional frontline police have already been deployed to Melbourne's growth suburbs in May 2017. The Southern Metropolitan Police Region will receive 50 additional frontline police, which will greatly strengthen local police responses in the region.

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

Latrobe Special Developmental School

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure, and this has been demonstrated through the allocation of more than \$2.5 billion to school facilities over the last three state budgets. Our challenge, however, is to responsibly balance and prioritise the needs of over 1500 government schools in Victoria, all in varying condition.

We are aware that Latrobe Special Development School has maintenance and capital needs. I would like to assure you that the needs of all schools will be considered when determining priorities for the capital works program. We will continue to use all available data, including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, when allocating resources in future state budgets.

In the meantime, the school is advised to address maintenance issues as they arise using funds allocated annually through its Student Resource Package (SRP). The 2016-17 State Budget increased funding available through the annual SRP, so that all schools now share in \$72.5 million every year. I am pleased to confirm that Latrobe Special Development School will now receive \$24 601 in SRP maintenance support.

To ensure we are providing a safe environment for school communities, all schools must have an Asbestos Management Plan, developed in accordance with safety regulations. Training is available for principals and school asbestos coordinators to ensure that they are equipped to identify and monitor potential hazards.

Necessary action has been undertaken to remove all high risk asbestos-containing materials from school premises. The Government is now targeting asbestos that, although not classified as high risk, may pose a risk in the future. The 2017-18 State Budget delivered \$85 million towards the next phase of the Government's asbestos removal program. As part of this next phase, Latrobe Special Development School will have works programmed to remove the relevant material within the next three years.

Hume drug rehabilitation centre

Raised with: Minister for Mental Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has provided funding to support capital planning and land acquisition to enable development of three new alcohol and other drug regional residential rehabilitation facilities in the Gippsland, Hume and Barwon regions.

Planning regarding land acquisition has commenced within the identified regions. Sites will be identified using a range of criteria to ensure the location delivers maximum effectiveness.

Over the next 18 months sites will be identified and acquired, capital planning finalised, and service providers identified via an advertised call for submissions with building to commence in 2019.

VicRoads Sunshine office

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

VicRoads advises me that the relocation of its metropolitan north west regional office and Sunshine Customer Service Centre was prompted by the lease expiring at the current premises (499 Ballarat Road). Construction of the new office has commenced and the relocation will take place in early 2018.

I understand that VicRoads' new premises at 12 Clarke Street will feature a modern 21st century customer service centre, which will allow customers to access a range of registration and licensing services via self-serve and fast-lane areas and to make transactions via a digital kiosk. Accessibility for the community will also be improved with the centre located within 500 metres of the Sunshine train station, multiple bus routes and the local shopping district.

VicRoads will re-direct these appointments to its neighbouring customer service centres around western metropolitan Melbourne, including Broadmeadows, Hoppers Crossing, Werribee, Sunbury and Melton. VicRoads is increasing the capacity at these centres to ensure that it can adequately meet the additional demand at these sites with no service degradation.

VicRoads advises me that there will be no reduction in appointments for the community as a result of this change.

Taxi and hire car industry

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 7 June 2017

REPLY:

As Minister for Public Transport I have met with individual taxi licence holders and stakeholder body representatives on dozens of occasions in relation to the global changes in their industry and the Government's reforms. Cabinet and caucus members and members of my staff have also met with hundreds of taxi licence holders right across Victoria.

The Government's financial assistance package is the most generous in the country and stands in complete contrast to the position of the Liberal Party. In assessing the position of the Liberal Party it is important to understand that:

- Licence values dropped by half (from over \$500 000 to around \$250 000) during the four years of the previous Liberal Government. Not a cent of financial assistance was paid.
- When the Government announced our \$490 million financial assistance package the Shadow Minister David Hodgett said it was a "slush fund to buy the votes of taxi licence holders"— Neos Kosmos 27/8/16
- The Opposition opposes the per trip levy that funds the financial assistance but have not said how they would pay for any financial assistance. Unless they say where the money is coming from it is not coming.
- In Parliament, the Opposition supported the Government's legislation to deregulate the taxi industry and remove the need to have a licence but moved amendments to prevent financial assistance being funded.
- Opposition Members, including Matthew Guy and David Hodgett, regularly promote Uber who have stated that the existing taxi industry should not get any financial assistance.
- The Liberals have not once put in writing that they would provide financial assistance. They have not put forward any alternative to the Government's financial assistance package.

The former Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett provided advice to the recent inquiry in relation to the Liberal Party's position by saying "I am going to be quite frank with you. I have been terribly disappointed in the way my side of politics has handled this issue since the establishment of the inquiry under Ted Baillieu."

Only days after this criticism from Mr Kennett, the Member for Southern Metropolitan lashed out by swearing numerous times at a gathering of taxi licence holders in Oakleigh.

Wyperfeld National Park

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Mr O'Sullivan
Raised on: 8 June 2017

REPLY:

Parks Victoria has assessed the drop-log well at Wyperfeld National Park and works are scheduled to be undertaken in the 2017/18 financial year. The works will require careful planning to ensure worker safety and protect the heritage value of the site. Planning and repairs are expected to take several months to complete.

Tram timetables

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 8 June 2017

REPLY:

Any tram journey time change undertaken or introduced (as part of a major timetable change or as a reaction to the changed operating conditions) is based on the advice received from Yarra Trams, as operators of the network.

As part of timetable development process, Yarra Trams are required to consult with depots regarding proposed timetable changes and journey times. Feedback received in this process is assessed and, where appropriate, incorporated into adjusted journey time charts.

PTV is monitoring the new timetable to ensure it is operating effectively, and most importantly, ensuring the safety of staff and passengers.

Country Fire Authority regional integrated stations

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 8 June 2017

REPLY:

I appreciate and share your concerns for the safety of the community, and for the well-being of all of our firefighters. I have spent a lot of time with firefighters, volunteer and career, over recent months, listening to their views about what our fire services need.

This is why we have started work on modernising our fire services.

Every day our fire services are under pressure. We need to improve governance, refresh the structures and, most importantly, improve culture and support for our fire services' volunteers and staff, so they can get on with doing what they do best.

While some improvements have been made, much needed and significant reform has been put in the too hard basket for too long. Now is the time to act. And under the reforms currently before Parliament, that is exactly what we are doing.

Volunteers at the 35 integrated stations have a connection to their brigade; its history, culture and location.

We'll work with volunteers in the 35 integrated stations to identify the best solution for each volunteer and each brigade. This includes co-location of volunteer brigades alongside FRV to ensure that volunteers can continue to work alongside the career staff as they always have.

CFA has also established a taskforce to consult with integrated brigades. The taskforce will explore the best options for volunteers and identify their individual needs at each integrated station to ensure the best service to the community.

Our priority is to support the critical contribution of volunteers, remove the barriers that have inhibited the work of our fire services to date, and most importantly to keep Victoria safe.

Midland Highway upgrade

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

VicRoads advises me that it reinstated the 100km/h speed limit along the Midland Highway between Stanhope and Mooropna to minimise inconvenience to the travelling public, who I understand have shown great patience and understanding during construction works.

VicRoads advises me that it reviewed the above location and immediately reduced the speed limit to 80km/h after it identified a safety concern at the intersection of Starriff Road. VicRoads has since carried out additional works at this intersection but will retain the 80km/h speed limit until it completes a road safety audit, which is expected by the end of July 2017.

This important project will deliver road safety improvements to prevent crashes and the serious injury to motorists. The completed works will include overtaking lanes, safety barriers and intersection improvements.

Swimming pool safety

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Melhem
Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

The current requirements for swimming pool barriers are set out in the Building Regulations which are being reviewed.

Pursuant to a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) process, public consultation is now underway on proposals for the new Regulations. The public consultation will run until 5pm 18 July 2017.

The new regulations will be decided upon, in their totality, after the RIS consultation process has concluded and the submissions evaluated.

The RIS contains a preferred option which is to "Require all pools and spas to erect a barrier that complies with the most recent Australian Standard, AS 1926.1-2007 (a four-sided isolation barrier)." There would be an appropriate period for upgrades to be completed.

I will give due consideration to submissions made in response to the RIS including any submissions on whether the estimated costs in the RIS for upgrading barriers are accurate, the time period required for upgrades and the interaction between barrier standards pool and spa inspection or assessment regimes.

The RIS also contains proposals for:

- A voluntary pool and spa register to be established and maintained by the VBA.
- A voluntary annual pool and spa self-assessment tool.

While these measures may be of assistance, in my view they may not go far enough.

Section 15A of the Building Act 1993 sets out powers to make regulations regarding certain matters concerning swimming pools and spas. It does not include a power to make regulations for the registration of swimming pools.

Accordingly the government will consider legislating for the creation of a mandatory swimming pool register.

In relation to inspections, where a new pool is built or a pool barrier is upgraded a building permit is required. Where the building work is an upgrade to the four sided isolation barrier the work will require inspection and approval by the relevant building surveyor or inspector.

The issue arises as to what inspection or self assessment regime, or combination of the two, should follow after that so as to ensure barriers and gates are maintained in working order.

Further work is therefore required to assess the options for the creation of a mandatory register and for the appropriate inspection/self assessment regime. Both the Western Australian and Queensland schemes require consideration.

The government is committed to this work and to legislating the preferred options once identified.

As the honourable member notes in his question, it is important to also stress that pool and spa barriers are a secondary protection mechanism that should in no way be regarded as an adequate substitute for adult supervision of young children around pools.

The government will also consider a new education campaign to remind adults of the need for supervision.

Plastic bag ban

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Ms Springle

Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to protecting Victoria's environment, including reducing the impacts of plastic pollution.

As a result of our comprehensive infrastructure planning, targeted investment and carefully designed programs, Victoria has relatively low levels of litter when compared with other jurisdictions. The 2015-16 Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index recently reported that Victoria has the lowest litter count in the country for the fifth year in a row. Victoria recorded a 27 per cent reduction in litter items over the past year and is 47 per cent below the national average. Of course, we should not become complacent or stop looking for ways we can do more.

We are working with other states and the Commonwealth, and will continue to engage with the community, to identify the most effective and appropriate approaches to minimise the environmental effects of plastic pollution in Victoria. A ban on single-use lightweight plastic bags, including biodegradable bags, is one of the options being considered.

At the Meeting of Environment Ministers in November 2016, Victoria agreed to support a national, voluntary approach to phase out microbeads found in personal care products, cosmetics and cleaning products by mid-2018. Later this year, Ministers will meet again to consider whether the voluntary phase out is on track. The Andrews Labor Government remains committed to strong, national action to eliminate microbeads, and will advocate for a national ban if the voluntary approach is not effective in eliminating microbeads in Australia.

The Andrews Labor Government continues to work with other governments and businesses through the Australian Packaging Covenant to help design more sustainable packaging, increase recycling rates and reduce packaging litter.

In 2016, we supported a project trialling the recovery of flexible plastic waste through existing kerbside recycling services in four councils. The Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group is currently evaluating the program before considering options for future expansion.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$30.4 million in waste management over the next four years to help ensure Victoria's waste and resource recovery systems are able to tackle the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by our growing population.

This investment will also ensure our litter rates remain the lowest in Australia, and it includes a Litter Innovation Fund that supports local government, industry, community groups and other land managers to manage and prevent litter in new and innovative ways.

The government notes the Environment and Planning Committee's report on the Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags, Packaging and Microbeads) Bill 2016. The report backs our position, which is to ensure we take action that is effective, enforceable and fair for all Victorians.

We will assess the impacts of any regulatory measure to ensure that they are balanced across communities, families, individuals, businesses and the environment.

Melbourne Regional Landfill

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

Planning for landfills is government's responsibility, as is responding to community interests. I believe the permit balances these needs.

In 2016, I fulfilled the Victorian Government's commitment to 'call in' the planning permit application for the expansion of the Melbourne Regional Landfill and ensure the community was involved from the start.

Following on from this planning permit 'call-in', the Victorian Government and Environment Protection Authority undertook a 13-month process to assess the proposal, including extensive consultation with the council, community and stakeholders. This included an independent panel which held public hearings over four weeks. The panel considered an extensive amount of evidence including all written submissions received and further verbal submissions from local residents.

The panel recommended that a permit be issued, subject to conditions, having regard to its findings and current state waste policy.

I considered the recommendations of the panel and advice received from my department and determined to grant a planning permit for a much smaller expansion to the landfill than originally proposed. The planning permit is also subject to conditions that protect the amenity of neighbouring residents. These conditions were informed by community feedback during the panel process and will be strictly enforced.

Victorian Institute of Sport

Raised with: Minister for Sport
Raised by: Mr Eideh
Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has committed to a \$300 000 funding boost for a new outreach program to increase the engagement of the Victorian Institute of Sport in our regions and investigate improvements required to enhance VIS data management systems and processes. This includes the Western Metropolitan area.

Part of the commitment provides \$200 000 towards a Regional Community Outreach and Roadshow pilot that will see VIS coaches, athletes and talent identifiers visit communities across Victoria to share expertise, knowledge and resources, and engage with promising young athletes and coaches in regions which would otherwise find it difficult to access VIS facilities in inner Melbourne.

As well as sharing VIS coaching expertise and other high performance [earnings to improve community and sub-elite sport outcomes, linking VIS athletes with state sporting associations, regional sports assemblies and sporting clubs in both metropolitan and regional areas provides opportunities to inspire more people to get active and join a grassroots sporting club.

We are proud to continue funding the first-class high performance sport development programs at the VIS.

This funding is in addition to the \$6.7 million we provide to the VIS to ensure it remains a leading provider of high performance sports programs for talented Victorian athletes across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Metung Road, Metung

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

The Mass Action Wide Centreline and Audio Tactile Line Marking component of the recently launched Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020 is part of the Andrews Labor Government's statewide initiative to reduce head-on and run-off-road crashes on rural roads. Metung Road has recently received this road safety improvement.

VicRoads advises me that it has assessed the dark colour of the audio tactile linemarking on Metung Road and does not pose any adverse risk to cyclists. The profile of the treatment makes it visually pronounced and also has skid-resistant properties effective in all weather. Should a cyclist cross or ride atop of the line, they may be exposed to minor discomfort only — not to an added risk of crashing or being involved in an accident. Replacing the audio tactile linemarking with a highly visible variant has been assessed to potentially increase risk for cyclists, as it may cause confusion for motorists to identify the traffic lane edge and, therefore, may adversely track closer to the riders in the shoulder.

However, as part of a separate operational matter regarding the placement, VicRoads has decided to remove and replace the edgeline audio tactile linemarking on Metung Road. There are no plans to change the colour of the product used, only the placement and offset distance from the traffic lane edgeline.

Future Voices

Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Raised by: Mrs Peulich
Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

The multicultural affairs portfolio has made a substantial investment in projects in the Shepparton area in recent years, including \$230 000 per annum over four years to establish a strategic partnership led by the Ethnic Council of Shepparton, and the delivery of the New and Emerging Communities Leadership Program in Shepparton in 2016.

Representatives of the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion (MASC) Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet have been in contact with Future Voices on a number of occasions during 2017.

On 8 March 2017, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs received correspondence from Jaclyn Symes, State Member for Northern Victoria, which included a Future Voices proposal to develop their social enterprise hub concept in Shepparton.

The Minister responded with information on the multicultural portfolio's grant opportunities, suggesting that Future Voices contact the MASC Community Grants Team to explore future funding opportunities.

On 4 May 2017, representatives of MASC met Ms Jennifer Hippiisley (CEO) and Rashidi Sumaili (Project Manager) from Future Voices to discuss the proposed Nelson Mandela Centre in Shepparton.

On 1 June 2017, the Premier received correspondence from Ms Hippiisley seeking advice and funding options from the Victorian Government.

In response Future Voices will be provided with information on two grant programs and it will be suggested that Future Voices contact MASC directly to discuss the work of their organisation and explore potential future funding opportunities.

Future Voices has also been notified by phone of the grant program that is open for applications.

Yarragon primary school site

Raised with: Minister for Finance
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

The former Yarragon Primary School was declared surplus to educational requirements in May 2015 and was approved for disposal by the Minister for Education following the relocation of the school to a larger site.

The Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) is managing the sale of the site on behalf of the Department of Education and Training.

In accordance with government policy, the site was listed on the First Right Of Refusal (FROR) database which expired in December 2015. The FROR process affords government agencies and local councils the opportunity to purchase surplus government land by private treaty for community use.

The Baw Baw Shire Council ultimately did not express any interest in purchasing the site for community purposes.

The property is currently zoned Public Use Zone 2 — Education and is in the process of being rezoned by DTF prior to sale. The Planning Scheme Amendment is currently on exhibition. This will enable the community and the Council to participate in the rezoning. Proceeds from the sale of surplus government land are reinvested into important new infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and public transport.

Police resources

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 20 June 2017

REPLY:

The Government is committed to ensuring that Victoria Police has the resources and powers it needs to reduce harm in the community and keep Victorians safe.

Victoria Police prioritises communication and connectivity as the bedrocks of community engagement. As such, the Police Service Areas (PSAs) of Stonnington and Port Phillip actively engage in community safety forums as a way to provide improved safety outcomes for the community. In the presentation of policing initiatives, police are able to communicate initiatives, such as the five step partnership program, that proactively minimises community harm and fosters strong local agency partnerships.

The Port Phillip PSA subscribes to a precinct policing model that appoints local sergeants to defined geographical areas or business zones to act as liaison officers for traders and residents. The Precinct Director, a new position created by the City of Port Phillip in January 2017, now supports this model, strengthening interagency cooperation.

More broadly, the Government is responding comprehensively to the pressure on police and the harm caused in our communities, as outlined in the Community Safety Statement. Central to the Community Safety Statement is the increase in police numbers right across the state. In total, the Government is funding 3135 additional frontline police over the next five years to support the police response to crime in our communities. It is the biggest boost to frontline police in Victoria's history, and it is crucial to dealing with the growing demand on police services.

Stonnington and Port Phillip PSAs have commenced planning to accommodate the additional frontline police that have begun deployment throughout the State. Increased frontline police resources will be allocated through the Staff Allocation Model and will contribute to improved safety outcomes through the ongoing delivery of service reform.

In addition to this, over the past two years Victoria Police has enacted a number of service delivery reforms that are driving improved community safety outcomes. In 2015-16, the Southern Metropolitan Region implemented Operation Tense to focus on cross-border youth networked offending and high-focus crimes, including car-jacking and aggravated burglary. This model progressed to the State-wide Operation Cosmas, which was instrumental in developing the current Regional Crime Team model that allows Crime Command to work effectively with the regions in responding to serious and organised crime.

Stonnington and Port Phillip PSAs will continue to support community safety forums and related community engagement. The Staff Allocation Model and future planning will progress service delivery and enhance the operations of the four existing police stations in Malvern, Prahran, St Kilda and South Melbourne.

National disability insurance scheme

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Ms Shing
Raised on: 21 June 2017

REPLY:

The Victorian Government has provided more than \$20 million for its Transition Support Package to assist people with a disability and service providers make the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The Transition Support Package will provide service providers, participants, their families and carers in areas yet to roll out (including the Inner Gippsland area) with opportunities to access practical and targeted resources to adapt to

the way the NDIS will work. This includes support directly to participants currently in receipt of services to understand how they can make the NDIS work best for them.

In addition, there have been a number of community information sessions conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) throughout South Gippsland, Wonthaggi and other parts of the Bass Coast Shire. These sessions will continue throughout the transition of each area.

The Victorian Government is also working with the NDIA to continue to improve the transition experience for people with disability. Some of these actions include:

DHHS staff providing assistance with the planning and assessment of people with a disability

resources and tools to support DHHS staff and service providers to provide consistent and accurate advice to prospective participants and their families about accessing the NDIS

NDIS participants are able to access support coordination as part of their NDIS plan. Support coordination is similar to case management in that it helps people plan and use their support budgets to achieve their goals.

The Victorian Government will continue to work to enable a smooth transition for people with disability and service providers to the NDIS.

Sudanese community

Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 21 June 2017

REPLY:

The multicultural affairs portfolio is aware of the good work Mr Deng and his group are doing for young people in the Western region.

In 2016/17, the Victorian Government allocated \$250 000 per annum over four years to establish the South Sudanese Partnership Fund. Of this funding, \$75 000 was provided to each of the peak South Sudanese organisations in Victoria: the South Sudanese Community Association in Victoria (SSCAV) and the Federation of South Sudanese Associations in Victoria (FSSAV).

The aim of the peak body funding is to build organisational capacity and support community activities. Other funding through the South Sudanese Partnership Fund will support collaborative projects addressing shared issues of concern.

Mr Deng is the President of the Wyndham South Sudanese Community, which is aligned with SSCAV. Mr Deng is also the Public Relations Officer for the SSCAV.

SSCAV has provided significant funds to the Wyndham South Sudanese Community through its allocation of \$75 000 through the multicultural affairs portfolio. Funds have been used to pay for food and petrol to support the volunteers patrolling the streets and provide meals for the young people they are engaging with. The patrol group is also working closely with Victoria Police.

SSCAV also received \$250 000 through the Department of Health and Human Services' Empower Youth Program (2017-19) to deliver the Empower South Sudanese Youth Wellbeing program.

The program will be run in Melton and Wyndham to support at risk South Sudanese young people through community engagement activities.

Level crossing removal

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Leane
Raised on: 21 June 2017

REPLY:

I would like to thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan and Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure for his advocacy for better public transport services on behalf of his community.

We recognise there is a strong interest from community groups and individuals to reuse items of rail equipment that are removed during the level crossing removal works, such as boom gates, lights and signage.

Many of these rail assets are able to be reused as spare parts elsewhere on the network, and are retained by Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) for this purpose.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) and MTM are working together to prepare a strategy for identifying and disposing of surplus rail equipment where level crossings are removed. This strategy will consider whether there is an opportunity for items in reasonable condition to be offered to other jurisdictions, collectors, or special interest groups.

I would be happy to arrange for the CEO of the Level Crossing Removal Authority to meet with the Member for Eastern Metropolitan and representatives of the Australian Sri Lankan Community to explore opportunities for reusing equipment removed from level crossing sites.

Shepparton rail services

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 22 June 2017

REPLY:

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

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

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

Coal industry

Raised with: Minister for Resources
Raised by: Mr Barber
Raised on: 22 June 2017

REPLY:

The Statement on Future Uses of Brown Coal was released on 7 July 2017.

The decision by Engie to close the Hazelwood Power Station, announced in November 2016 meant that additional time needed to be taken to bring the statement up to date with developments in the industry.

Pakenham Hills Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Mr Mulino
Raised on: 22 June 2017

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Shared Facilities Fund (SFF) is designed to help meet local infrastructure needs by developing community facilities on school sites across Victoria. Integrated school and community facilities play a fundamental role in bringing communities together. They allow for increased access to local services and participation opportunities, whilst fostering a sense of community pride and value in schools.

I am delighted to confirm that \$2 017 260 has been allocated to develop a multi-agency, multi-service community hub for parents, children and the broader community at Pakenham Hills Primary School. The partnership between Anglicare Victoria, Cardinia Shire Council and Pakenham Hills Primary School will employ a “Parentzone” approach to parent education, information advice, and referral support.

I whole-heartedly thank the honourable member for Eastern Victoria for taking such a keen interest in this special fund, which is having a positive impact across the state.

Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union secretary

Raised with: Premier
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 22 June 2017

REPLY:

The Victorian Government does not believe it is appropriate to bring people’s families into these highly contentious issues.

This debate is an emotional and highly charged one, particularly when you are talking about the death of people on building sites.

That does not, however, constitute an excuse for bringing families into this, nor does it excuse people from the requirement to always be appropriate and always be respectful.

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their workplace.

The Andrews Labor Government’s focus is on delivering for the people of Victoria and we will continue to do that.

Since November 2014, our Labor Government has created more than 246 000 jobs, including 151 400 full-time jobs. Compared with other states, Victoria’s annual employment result is the highest in Australia in both absolute and percentage terms. This is compared to the four years of Liberal Government that saw the unemployment rate rise across the state from 4.9% to 6.6%.

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

Recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showed that in the year to April 2017, there were almost 24 800 new jobs in regional Victoria, whereas in the rest of Australia, regional employment increased by only 7200. There’s clear evidence here, that under Labor leadership, there has been a resurgence in the economic strength of Victoria’s regions.

It should be noted that under the former Coalition Government, of which you were a part, unemployment in Geelong rose from 5% to 8.2% and in Ballarat unemployment rose from 6.2% to 6.9%. In comparison unemployment has dropped to 4.8% in Ballarat and 5.6% in Geelong.

In addition to this, the Andrews Labor Government is bringing hundreds of public sector jobs to the regions with new GovHub offices to be built in Ballarat and the Latrobe Valley. The recent Victorian Budget secured a major jobs boost for these regional centres and will also kick off planning for a third GovHub in Bendigo.

The Ballarat GovHub funded in the Victorian Budget 2017/18, will be home to up to 1000 government employees, including 600 new positions to the city, and will help revitalise a major part of the Ballarat CBD.

Recently, the Avalon Airport Precinct took a major step forward with works starting on its industrial precinct, which will eventually be home to 750 new jobs, and the Cotton On Group's purpose built distribution centre.

This Government's priority is to protect and create local jobs.

Commercial passenger vehicle industry

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 22 June 2017

REPLY:

The Commercial Passenger Vehicle is changing globally and every jurisdiction in Australia is moving to regulate ridesharing. The Government is aware that the global changes in the industry have affected existing licence holders and a range of support services for existing industry is outlined at www.taxi.vic.gov.au. Payments from the Government's Fairness Fund have started and will continue as the Chair of the fund assesses them.

The Member for Southern Metropolitan has supported the regulation of ridesharing but opposed the provision of financial assistance to the existing industry.

The Government's financial assistance package of over half a billion dollars is the most generous in the country and stands in complete contrast to the position of the Liberal Party. In assessing the position of the Liberal Party and the claimed concerns the Member for Southern Metropolitan has for licence holders it is important to understand that:

- Licence values dropped by half (from over \$500 000 to around \$250 000) during the four years of the previous Liberal Government. Not a cent of financial assistance was paid.
- When the Government announced our \$490 million financial assistance package the Shadow Minister David Hodgett said it was a "slush fund to buy the votes of taxi licence holders" — Neos Kosmos 27/8/16
- The Opposition opposes the per trip levy that funds the financial assistance but have not outlined if or how they would provide financial assistance.
- In Parliament, the Opposition supported the Government's legislation to deregulate the taxi industry and remove the need to have a licence but moved amendments to prevent financial assistance being provided.
- Opposition Members, including Matthew Guy and David Hodgett, regularly promote Uber who have stated that the existing taxi industry should not get any financial assistance.
- The Liberals have not once put in writing that they would provide financial assistance. They have not put forward any alternative to the Government's financial assistance package.

The former Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett provided advice to the recent inquiry in relation to the Liberal party's position by saying "I am going to be quite frank with you. I have been terribly disappointed in the way my side of politics has handled this issue since the establishment of the inquiry under Ted Baillieu."

Metropolitan partnerships representation

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Ms Springle
Raised on: 22 June 2017

REPLY:

The matter raised falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Suburban Development, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP. The Member will need to redirect her question to Minister D'Ambrosio.

South Melbourne Park Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert
Raised on: 22 June 2017

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

I appreciate your interest in the new South Melbourne Park Primary School (interim name) being delivered by the Victorian Government to alleviate enrolment pressures in the densely populated suburb of Albert Park.

I can advise that the total budget allocated to the South Melbourne Park Primary School project across the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 State Budgets is \$31.086 million. This includes \$6.4 million to relocate and rehouse existing tenants Orchestra Victoria and Parks Victoria.

The remaining \$24.686 million is allocated for planning, design, project management, communications, site remediation, demolition, civil works, heritage conservation, landscaping, school construction works and establishment grants.

Port Phillip police numbers

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert
Raised on: 23 June 2017

REPLY:

The decision on how and where resources are deployed is a matter for the Chief Commissioner of Police. However, to support these decisions, it is essential that a comprehensive investment package equips Victoria Police to effectively meet Victoria's law and order challenges. Hence, the Government has invested \$2 billion to deliver the resources and powers that Victoria Police needs to reduce harm in the community and keep Victorians safe. The crux of this work is the vast increase of police numbers right across the state. The funding of 3135 additional frontline police, on top of attrition, is the lynchpin of Victoria's first-ever Community Safety Statement.

Victoria Police, in consultation with The Police Association, has developed a new and sophisticated Staff Allocation Model (SAM) to facilitate the roll out of additional police members across the state. The SAM will help police predict the number of police necessary in the future, facilitating the planning that will deliver these resources to the locations where they are needed most. Any increase in police numbers under the SAM model will be dependent upon a range of inputs. At this time, there has been no further allocation of staff beyond the initial 300 police deployed to Victoria's busiest growth areas.

Local police service delivery in St Kilda and South Melbourne, including Carlisle Street, is the responsibility of The Port Phillip Local Area Command (LAC). In the past 12 months, the Port Phillip LAC has initiated a Precinct Policing model that allocates responsibility to a sergeant for a defined geographic area. Accordingly, a Port Phillip LAC sergeant has been appointed as the Carlisle Street police liaison to engage with traders and local residents.

Through this liaison, the Carlisle Street Community Safety forum was held on 13 June 2017, which allowed for community feedback to be included in ongoing tasking and police response.

Victoria Police enjoys a productive relationship with the City of Port Phillip. Police, Council and relevant stakeholders will continue to provide input into community safety initiatives for the Southern Metropolitan Region Division One. By prioritising local community engagement, Victoria Police is best placed to effectively deploy increased police resources as a result of funding provided by the Government.

Sunbury police station

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 23 June 2017

REPLY:

In response to your concerns regarding the operating hours of Sunbury Police Station, I can confirm that the Sunbury Police Station is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has been for the last 12 months. I understand from Victoria Police that, on one occasion in March this year, the station was closed for one hour on night shift when watch-house keepers provided assistance to fellow police members in Sunbury. This occurred as these police members were in need of urgent assistance and assistance was unavailable from the wider Hume area.

Prior to the last 12 months, Sunbury Police Station had a restricted access policy whereby the station doors were temporarily closed on night shift when only one watch-house keeper was present. This policy was discontinued 12 months ago when appropriate security was facilitated to enable a single watch-house keeper to address counter enquiries on nightshift when required. Additionally, members of the public can contact Sunbury Police Station at any time via telephone. This number includes an automated response advising 000 contact if the call relates to an emergency. Numbered options follow if personal contact is required and I am assured that this system is working well.

The Government is committed to tackling crime in Victoria and ensuring that all Victorians feel safe. That is why the Government has announced a comprehensive strategy to prevent, detect and disrupt crime in Victoria. The Community Safety Statement outlines our unprecedented \$2 billion investment in equipping Victoria Police with new powers, tools and capabilities to prevent harm in our communities and hold perpetrators to account.

Central to the Community Safety Statement is the increase in police numbers right across the state. In total, the Government is funding 3135 additional frontline police over the next five years to support police respond to crime in our communities. It is the biggest boost to frontline police in Victoria's history, and it is crucial to dealing with the growing demand on police services.

The first 300 additional frontline police commenced deployment to Melbourne's growth suburbs in May 2017. Wyndham, Brimbank, Hume, Moreland, Whittlesea and Casey will receive significant resources over the next 12 months, and these extra police will greatly strengthen local police responses in those areas. As you noted, Hume Police Service area is to be allocated 36 additional positions and some of these will be located at Sunbury Police Station. These allocations will be determined by demand at any given time, whereby frontline police resources are assigned through the State Allocation Model. The Chief Commissioner of Police recognises that proactive operations, putting resources where they are needed and responding to calls for assistance will best address crime and other community concerns.

As a whole, the comprehensive investment in police resources and the continued improvement of local service delivery will ensure that Victoria Police is equipped to protect not only the residents of Sunbury, but all Victorians.

Building industry regulation

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 23 June 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is taking action to restore community confidence in the safety of medium and high-rise buildings in Victoria. On Monday, 3 July 2017 we announced the establishment the Victorian Cladding Taskforce to investigate the extent of non-compliant cladding on Victorian buildings.

The Victorian Cladding Taskforce will be jointly chaired by former Premier and architect Ted Baillieu, and former Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning John Thwaites.

The new taskforce will bolster the state's ability to detect and address non-compliant cladding, and provide residents, owners' corporations and building managers better information about the issue.

After the Lacrosse Building fire at the Docklands in 2014, Victoria embarked on Australia's first ever audit to identify buildings fitted with cladding.

The original audit and subsequent investigations have now assessed more than 220 Victorian buildings. Although all have been declared safe to occupy, many do not comply with regulations.

The taskforce will oversee the continuing audit to identify where cladding has been used inappropriately and ensure buildings are rectified more quickly.

It will also make recommendations to the government on how to improve compliance and enforcement of building regulations to better protect the health and safety of building occupants.

Key agencies Worksafe Victoria, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, the Victorian Building Authority, the Municipal Association of Victoria and Emergency Management Victoria will all be represented on the taskforce.

A stakeholder reference group made up of organisations including building unions, the Master Builders Association of Victoria and the Housing Industry Association will also be established.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 9 August 2017

Caulfield–Dandenong line elevated rail

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 21 June 2017

REPLY:

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

The elevated design will involve far less disruption to train and road users but also to local residents and traders than a trench based solution.

Local businesses will benefit enormously from the delivery of this project but it is acknowledged that while some traders will benefit from the trading opportunities from the 2000 jobs that are created, some will be impacted during construction.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority has a comprehensive support package for local traders right across the removal projects. Details are available at www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au