

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

**WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
WITHOUT NOTICE**

23 June to 10 August 2017

(Extract from book 13)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 10 November 2016)

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Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, 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 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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The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

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Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

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Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

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Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Mr G. BARBER

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

¹ Appointed 16 April 2015

² DLP until 26 June 2017

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁴ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁵ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁶ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁷ Appointed 13 October 2016

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;

LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;

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

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WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Responses have been incorporated in the form provided to Hansard and received in the period shown.

23 June to 10 August 2017

Electricity supply

Question asked by: Mr Bourman
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 11 May 2017

RESPONSE:

The “Power outages — know how to prepare and be safe” pamphlet, published in 2016, was produced as part of the Victorian Government’s Summer Fire Campaign run each summer fire season. The campaigns focus is one of safety and to help people find information they need quickly.

The publication of the pamphlet does not relate in any way to the closure of the Hazelwood power station, however forms part of the response to the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission recommendations, which identified community education as critical to ensure Victorians are well-informed about how they respond to the threat of bushfires, following the devastating 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

The brochure is distributed throughout councils and community groups across regional and rural Victoria and is deemed particularly important during the period of Total Fire Ban days in which electricity network settings are altered to prevent reconnection of power in the event of a fault in high bushfire areas.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Victoria’s energy security is strengthened as a participant of the National Electricity Market, which is subject to regulatory arrangements that ensure security of supply. However, in the event of Victoria and South Australia experiencing extreme energy demand, Victoria’s energy supply will be reserved for Victorians.

It is important to note that the closure of the Hazelwood power station will not compromise Victoria’s security and reliability of energy supply. There are power generation resources available in Victoria that are currently not operating at all, or to their full capacity, that can be made available to replace the power that was supplied by Hazelwood.

Victoria has just under 12 000MW of generation capacity without Hazelwood power station. For context, the maximum demand recorded in Victoria was on 29 January 2009, the week of Black Saturday, was just under 10 500MW.

The Australian Energy Market Operator has also advised that the closure of Hazelwood power station will not compromise the security of the Victorian electricity system nor the broader National Electricity Market.

Regional community consultation

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 22 June 2017

RESPONSE:

VicRoads lowered the speed limit on the Princes Highway through Killarney earlier this month following approaches by local residents concerned with road safety when trying to turn onto and from the Princes Highway from side roads, private driveways and businesses. The speed of traffic on the highway in this section was causing concerns leading to dangerous situations.

VicRoads reviewed the limit against the speed zone guidelines and discussed the proposed change with local Police and officers from the Moyne Shire who live, work and travel in the area.

In June 2017, I finalised a review of the Victorian speed limit guidelines with VicRoads, in which a greater emphasis has been placed on engaging with the community more broadly in the assessment and identification of speed limits across Victoria.

Whilst not everyone in the community will always agree with changes in speed limits, this Government, through the release of this change in the improved VicRoads guidelines for setting speed limits, expects that the community will be able to have a positive discussion as to decisions made on the road network with VicRoads.

VicRoads is focused on listening to Regional Victoria. VicRoads is touring Regional Victoria speaking to as many people as possible to ensure the Government is making well balanced and informed decisions about where we invest on the road network.

National firearms amnesty

Question asked by: Mr Young
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 22 June 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The implementation of the National Firearms Amnesty is an operational matter for Victoria Police. I am advised by Victoria Police that it has adopted a model that encourages people to surrender to nominated licensed firearms dealers, while still allowing any dealer to participate.

Victoria Police advises that in April 2017, all licensed firearm dealers were invited to nominate to participate in the Amnesty. While all dealers are able to accept surrendered items, for safety and security reasons, dealers who were able satisfy the following criteria were able to have the details of their dealership disclosed in the Amnesty's public information material:

- Sufficient storage to accommodate a set number of surrendered firearms;
- History of compliance with record keeping requirements;
- Appropriate security measures and procedures to deal with an increase in the number of people surrendering firearms and flow-on impacts for storage;
- Set trading hours at an establishment that has a shopfront; and
- Strong engagement with the local Victoria Police Divisional Firearms Officer.

Dealers who opted in were required to agree to greater reporting requirements for the duration of the Amnesty and arrangements for the collection and transportation of items that are surrendered for destruction.

I am further advised that 34 dealers nominated to participate, however three were excluded as they did not operate from a shopfront. This would have meant that a residential address would have been provided in public material, which presented an unacceptable risk. Victoria Police contacted the three dealers to advise they were still able to participate in the Amnesty but police would not make their information available through the Amnesty website and associated material.

In June 2017, Victoria Police's Licensing and Regulation Division again wrote to all firearms dealers and provided a detailed Amnesty Guide, Amnesty reporting templates and promotional resources which are also available on the Victoria Police website.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Victoria Police advises there have been no changes to the fees that firearms dealers can charge during the amnesty period. Dealers have been advised that 'Permit to Acquire' fees and fees associated with the temporary storage of firearms have not changed.

Prison programs

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 23 June 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

It is inappropriate to comment on individual prisoners and their management by Corrections Victoria.

Corrections system

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 23 June 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

Under the Andrews Government, more searches for contraband are occurring than ever before, resulting in the increased detection of all types of contraband. In the 2016 financial year the Security and Emergency Services Group conducted over 81 000 searches of prisoners, prison areas and visitors. This is in addition to the thousands of searches routinely conducted by local prison staff every year.

Corrections Victoria detects contraband by:

- intelligence-led searching
- drug detection dogs
- advanced technology, such as ion scanners and microwave and thermal imaging.

In an effort to combat emerging threats, in June 2017 we began debating a bill that will ban drones from flying near prisons — an Australian first, which will further bolster our detection capabilities.

Prisons are very complex environments, with Correction Victoria's dedicated staff required to manage complex and violent prisoners.

This government has invested in more staff, with better training and the latest equipment, which is in stark contrast to the previous government.

This has resulted in a strengthened dynamic security approach and a heightened ability to respond swiftly to such behaviours. As such, both serious staff assaults and serious prisoner on prisoner assaults reduced from the 2015 financial year to the 2016 financial year.

All assaults and other incidents in the prison system are treated seriously and prisoners clearly understand that such behaviours will have consequences, with allegations of criminal conduct being referred to Victoria Police.

Supervised injecting facilities

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 23 June 2017

RESPONSE:

The Department of Health and Human Services has informed City of Yarra of additional clean ups being funded in North Richmond, which we understand is having a positive effect.

On 22 February 2017, the Government supported a motion to refer the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pilot Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2017 to the Legal and Social Issues Committee of Parliament for review and consideration. The Government will carefully consider the recommendations of this Committee following delivery of the final report in September 2017.

Dinjerra Primary School

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 23 June 2017

RESPONSE:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to providing high quality learning and teaching environments for all Victorians, regardless of their personal background or where they live. This commitment has been demonstrated through the allocation of more than \$2.5 billion to school facilities over the last three state budgets. However, state budget constraints mean that not all school building projects can be immediately and simultaneously funded, and it is our responsibility to balance the needs of more than 1500 Victorian schools.

I am pleased to confirm that, as part of the 2016-17 State Budget, Dinjerra Primary School was allocated \$133 000 from the Planned Maintenance Program. It also shared in a total of \$12 million in planning funding, along with 35 other Victorian schools.

Over the coming months, the Victorian School Building Authority will work closely with the school to finalise its plan for future capital works, ensuring that its project is shovel ready when funding is made available in a future state budget.

I can assure you that we will continue to use all available data, including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, when allocating funding in future state budgets. I emphasise that Dinjerra Primary will continue to receive fair and equitable consideration through this process.

Building industry regulation

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 23 June 2017

RESPONSE:

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower in London, is yet another timely reminder of the important steps necessary to ensure the safety of Victorians living and working in medium and high rise buildings.

In July 2017 the Victorian Government established the Victorian Cladding Taskforce to oversee a comprehensive audit of the use of inappropriate cladding material on high and medium rise buildings in Victoria. The Minister for Planning has asked the taskforce to develop a clear response where a risk to public health and safety is found. It will bolster the state's ability to detect and address non-compliant cladding, and ensure residents, owners corporations and building managers are better informed about the issue.

The establishment of the Taskforce builds on the audit of non-compliance cladding undertaken by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) after the Lacrosse Building fire at the Docklands in 2014, a first in Australia. The Victorian Building Regulations have also been amended to require sprinkler protection of covered balconies in new high-rise and other sprinkler-protected buildings, and strengthened the entry, inspection and enforcement powers available to regulators under the Building Act 1993.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring the safety of high-rise buildings, and to that end, the Minister for Planning has requested that the Taskforce provide him with interim recommendations on immediate issues and a timetable for further work by 31 October 2017. Victoria continues to champion a national approach to health and safety risks posed by non-confirming building products through the Building Ministers' Forum.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

While a significant number of the 170 buildings audited by the VBA had some level of non-compliance with the Building Code, only one building was found to pose a risk to the safety of occupants. In this case the Municipal Building Surveyor exercised their power to order emergency building work to ensure the building's safety.

The Minister for Planning has also asked the Victorian Cladding Taskforce to develop a process for the prompt rectification of non-compliant cladding issues more broadly.

Beechworth Correctional Centre

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 8 August 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

There is an ongoing police investigation and it would be inappropriate to comment ahead of the investigation's completion.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

I am advised that two of the prisoners were transferred to Beechworth Correctional Centre on 6 May 2017, and the third was transferred on 20 June 2017.

Victorian Training Market Report

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 8 August 2017

RESPONSE:

The Victorian Training Market Report is based upon data as published by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). The NCVER only just released their 2016 full year training activity publication Government-funded students and courses 2016 on 12 July 2017. This data is now being used in the preparation of the 2016 Full Year Victorian Training Market Report, which is expected to be released late August 2017.

Prior to the 2016 Half Year Victorian Training Market Report, the Report was based on internal Departmental training data. Internal Department data is available soon after the period the report covers finishes — for example internal Departmental data for the 2015 full year was available in late January 2016.

In the second half of 2016 it was agreed with the former Minister to move to using NCVER data for the compilation of the Victorian Training Market Report, rather than relying on the Departmental internal data alone, which was the practice of the past. The use of NCVER data allows for a comparison of training data, including student participation rates across jurisdictions nationally.

Using NCVER data removes the confusion which arises when there are variances in data included in State versus National publications, as a result of differences in the application of statistical rules between the two.

Unfortunately NCVER data alter the timelines for releasing Victorian Training Market Report, but ensures consistency in the reporting of data year on year.

MyEnvironment

Question asked by: Mr O'Sullivan
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 8 August 2017

RESPONSE:

The Forest Industry Taskforce brought together representatives of the forest, fibre and wood products industry, union and forest conservation groups in an effort to reach common ground about future issues facing the timber industry, job protection, economic activity, protection of our unique native flora and fauna, and threatened species.

The Construction Forestry Mining & Energy Union, the Victorian Association of Forest Industries and The Wilderness Society, together, the Planning Group, led the establishment of the Taskforce, in line with the Government's 2014 election commitment.

The Planning Group settled the membership of the Core Group as part of their development of the Taskforce's Terms of Reference.

MyEnvironment is represented on the Core Group of the Forest Industry Taskforce.

Parkville Youth Justice Precinct

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 8 August 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

I am informed that:

The premise of the member's question is incorrect.

My Department has advised that two young people attempted to gain access to the roof at a unit at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct on the night of Friday 28 July 2017. Neither of the young people escaped as the member has suggested as quick action by staff ensured a safe and immediate response. At no point were either of the young people considered to be missing.

Following the incidents at the Precinct on 12 and 14 November 2016, Neil Comrie AO APM was engaged to review and report on the overall adequacy of the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct for its intended purpose, the circumstances leading up to the incidents, and the extent of compliance with operating procedures and guidelines leading up to, during and after the incidents.

The report found that the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct has inherent safety and security issues arising from the construction and design of the Precinct, including its grounds. Mr Comrie also found that the Precinct is not adequate for its intended purpose and its design presents safety and security risks that impede the proper supervision of young people.

Since November 2016, a program of repair and fortification works to the units damaged in the November incidents has been in place at the Precinct, which was completed in July 2017. In addition, works to fortify and strengthen the infrastructure of other units at the Parkville Precinct, including the unit where this particular incident occurred, was funded in the 2017/18 budget and has commenced. These works will further support the safe and secure detention of young people and greater security for staff.

Parkville Youth Justice Precinct

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Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
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Police retirement benefits

Question asked by: Dr Carling-Jenkins
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 8 August 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

I thank Ms Carling-Jenkins for her question on this important issue. Victoria Police does not manage the retirement/resignation benefits of police members in any circumstance, whether the intended recipient is under investigation or otherwise. This is purely a matter for the appropriate Superannuation Fund to administer.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

I thank Ms Carling-Jenkins for her supplementary question. I have sought further information from Victoria Police on whether any changes are required to ensure retirement benefits are appropriately distributed.

Environment Protection Authority Victoria

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 8 August 2017

RESPONSE:

Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria responded to a request from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) for incident air monitoring at the fire at SKM Coolaroo on Thursday 13 July 2017.

EPA immediately acted to deploy air monitoring staff and equipment, which was up and running within hours.

To manage safety and fatigue, and with agreement from the MFB Incident Controller, EPA withdrew their field officer from the site for approximately four hours on Friday morning (14 July 2017). EPA remained responsive during this time, and communications with MFB were maintained to ensure that any requests from the incident controller were actioned promptly.

EPA field staff were supported through office-based forecast officers to monitor and evaluate risks and to help determine appropriate deployment locations for monitoring equipment.

EPA continued to monitor air quality throughout the incident and assess how the fire was affecting the community.

EPA also worked with its Victorian Government partners to provide environmental health advice to residents and the broader community, via fact sheets, EPA's website, the Vic Emergency website and through attending two community briefings.

EPA have advised that the absence of a field officer on the ground did not in any way delay the evacuation of residents from Coolaroo.

In line with usual processes, the Inspector General for Emergency Management will undertake a review of agencies' response to the Coolaroo fire. Any opportunities for improvement will be considered.

EPA is implementing recommendations following the Hazelwood fire and has increased capacity and capability to support emergency services in these types of incidents.

In the last State Budget, the Andrews Labor Government invested \$162.5 million in EPA to further strengthen our environment protection framework and increase our ability to prevent and reduce harm from pollution and waste.

The Environment Protection Bill 2017, which is currently before Parliament, will further clarify EPA's role as a protector of human health and the environment.

Recycling industry

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 8 August 2017

RESPONSE:

The Andrews Labor Government is working with industry, local government and the community to build a waste and resource recovery system that maximises the recovery and reuse of resources, and disposes only those materials that cannot be recovered.

Victoria is the only jurisdiction in Australia to have a comprehensive waste and resource recovery policy and planning framework. The framework sets out how we will safely manage our waste and recover resources over the next 30 years to achieve the best outcomes for our communities, economy and environment. The cornerstone of the framework is the Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan, which is supported by seven

regional plans. These plans, finalised this year, will help ensure we have the right waste infrastructure in the right place at the right time.

The Government is also investing in the waste and resource recovery system at record levels. The 2017-18 budget invested \$30.4 million over four years in waste and resource recovery for a growing Victoria. This is the largest single allocation of waste and resource recovery funding ever by a Victorian Government and includes:

- \$15 million to support implementation of the government’s election commitment to ban e waste from landfill, assisting councils with collection infrastructure and processes
- \$7.6 million for the resource recovery infrastructure fund, boosting its grants program, bettering our ability to deal with waste
- \$4.5 million for education and litter programs
- \$2.5 million to develop markets for materials and energy recovered from waste
- \$500 000 for waste to energy policy development
- \$280 000 to improve the quality of waste data.

This budget builds on the 2016-17 state budget’s \$23 million investment in waste and resource recovery (including \$2 million to reduce Victoria’s greenhouse gas emissions by leveraging private investment in waste to energy facilities).

We are continuing to show leadership at the national level. Victoria has led the development of product stewardship schemes that drive the recovery and reuse of problem materials such as tyres and paint, and is currently leading the development of a similar scheme for one of our fastest growing waste streams: photovoltaic solar panels that are reaching the end of their life.

It is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that materials are not just recovered, but that these materials are used. Victoria’s Market Development Strategy for Recovered Resources sets out priority actions to increase demand for recovered materials and create new markets. Sustainability Victoria leads implementation of this strategy, including exploring options to encourage greater uptake of recycled material in the manufacturing, building and construction sectors through research and development and field trial initiatives.

In January 2017 the Government released its response to the Independent Inquiry into the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). We’re overhauling the Environment Protection Act 1970 and giving the EPA the resources and tools it needs to protect Victoria’s environment now and into the future.

We will put a general preventative duty at the heart of the new Act. This will require everyone to take reasonably practicable steps to minimise risks of harm from pollution and waste. We will also significantly increase penalties for those who don’t properly manage their risks. The 2017-18 budget committed \$162.5 million over five years to this reform. This will ensure EPA can build its capabilities to prevent and reduce harm from pollution and waste, including boosting its prosecution capabilities to combat issues such as illegal dumping.

In response to the recent recycling facility fire at Coolaroo, the Government has established a joint taskforce to target key recycling sites requiring extra management measures to ensure community safety. The taskforce is led by EPA, but also includes the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Country Fire Authority and Emergency Management Victoria.

To ensure the taskforce has sufficient support to deliver immediate action, I am advised that the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change intends to declare, under section 18B of the Environment Protection Act, an interim waste management policy to require facilities to store materials in a manner that minimises risk to human health and the environment.

The taskforce is conducting audits across Victoria, identifying and prioritising facilities that require action such as a Fire Management Plan to better protect the community.

Facility operators are responsible for managing their risks and complying with any taskforce directions. Materials must, of course, continue to be managed in accordance with Victoria's waste policy framework. EPA is working with facility operators and the regional Waste and Resource Recovery Groups to ensure materials are managed appropriately, including to maximise resource recovery and minimise disposal to landfill.

The Sustainability Fund receives money collected from Victorian landfill levies after funds are distributed to key environmental agencies, including the Environment Protection Agency, Sustainability Victoria and the seven Waste and Resource Recovery Groups.

The Sustainability Fund has contributed to hundreds of projects across Victoria, supporting local government, businesses and communities in a range of waste management, recycling, resource efficiency and sustainability programs.

Our government is committed to reinvesting funds from the fund back into the community which is why a record \$613 million in expenditure of landfill levy revenue was approved in the 2017-18 state budget.

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office examination of the landfill levy has been on their forward schedule for some time and the Government looks forward to contributing to the review.

Caulfield–Dandenong line elevated rail

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 9 August 2017

RESPONSE:

I am advised that a comprehensive noise report was released to the public in May last year and received media coverage. The report found that "The proposed design will result in an overall reduction in noise throughout the corridor and surrounding area through the use of considered design measures."

More information on the noise modelling, including the report, and the benefits of the project can be found at www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au.