

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

**WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
WITHOUT NOTICE**

10 February to 23 February 2017

(Extract from book 3)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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(from 10 November 2016)

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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 Bourman, #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Ms Bath, 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Mr K. EIDEH

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Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
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Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
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Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
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Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	V1LJ
Elasmarr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
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Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁴ Appointed 12 October 2016

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;
DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;
SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; V1LJ — 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.

10 February to 23 February 2017

Firearms

Question asked by: Mr Bourman
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 7 December 2016

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

I thank the member and note he has accepted an offer by the Minister for Police to be briefed on matters arising from his question.

I am advised by Victoria Police that there are no 7-shot Adler A110 lever action shotguns registered in Victoria.

As the member would be aware, the Commonwealth, on 29 July 2016, extended the importation ban on lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity of greater than 5 rounds until unanimous agreement was reached by all jurisdictions in relation to the review of the National Firearms Agreement.

I can advise that on 9 December 2016 First Ministers at the Council of Australian Governments agreed to strengthen the National Firearms Agreement. Specifically, an updated National Firearms Agreement incorporates the reclassification of lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity of no greater than 5 rounds to Category B and lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity of greater than 5 rounds to Category D. At the meeting, the Council of Australian Governments also agreed to task the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council to finalise and implement the updated National Firearms Agreement as soon as possible.

Accordingly, the Andrews Government will move to amend the Firearms Act 1996 as soon as practicable, ensuring that Victoria's firearm legislative framework is modelled in accordance with the updated National Firearms Agreement.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

I have been advised by the Commonwealth that the import prohibition on lever action shotguns with a magazine capacity of greater than 5 rounds will remain in place until all jurisdictions have completed their respective transitions to the new classification structure. Following the final implementation of such transitional changes by all jurisdictions, the Commonwealth will amend the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 to appropriately reflect the updated classifications for lever action shotguns.

As the regulator of firearms in Victoria, Victoria Police has responsibility for enforcing the legislative provisions in the Firearms Act 1996. As part of its normal functions and responsibilities Victoria Police regulates firearms by:

- administering the firearms licensing system by assessing applications for firearm licences, authorities and permits and ensuring that only fit and proper persons are authorised to possess, carry and use firearms; and
- monitoring compliance and ensuring that licence holders are complying with their legislative obligations.

Ambulance services

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 7 February 2017

FURTHER RESPONSE:

The actual cost of heroin related ambulance attendances in Melbourne in the calendar year 2015-2016 is not available at this time.

Turning Point is funded to analyse ambulance data to identify ambulance attendances specifically attributable to alcohol and other specific drug types. This data is yet to be released for 2015-16.

Drug harm reduction

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 8 February 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The Victorian Government categorically rejects the assertion contained in the question that Victoria Police acted in a manner contrary to the interests of public safety. The assertion is untrue, unfair and impugns the character and reputation of every serving officer in Victoria Police.

The Victorian Government understands that when Victoria Police identified a possible link between the Chapel Street overdoses on 14 January 2017, it swiftly issued a warning to the public that a drug, being marketed as MDMA, had been consumed and allegedly sold in the Chapel Street area that weekend. This warning included an urging for the public to avoid taking unknown or illicit substances.

An internal circular was sent to police officers on 27 January 2017 to alert them to the existence of the drug. The circular noted that the drug contained a cocktail of synthetic substances and came in various presentations, including powder, capsules, tablets and paste. The purpose of the circular was to provide a safety alert for police officers who might encounter these items, to inform them that the drug might still contain illicit substances even if it did not return a positive result for MDMA in an on the spot test, and to encourage them to seek immediate medical assistance for any person who appeared to be affected by the drug.

The Victorian Government shares the concerns of Victoria Police about the drug use and subsequent overdoses that occurred in Chapel Street and is aware that police have been liaising with venue operators to address the issue. Police have increased patrols and visits to licensed venues in the area and we understand this will be an ongoing operation.

The Victorian Government does not support the concept of an early warning system for specific presentations of drugs circulating in the community. As indicated in the police circular, synthetic drugs can take a variety of forms. If the Government were to issue a warning - based on advice received from Victoria Police - for one particular batch of synthetic drug, the drug may still be supplied in other forms elsewhere. It would be inappropriate to provide a warning on a specific drug that does not cover every form of the drug. Such a warning could even have unintended, negative effects if, as a result, people developed a false sense of confidence about other forms of the drug being sold or supplied in other locations.

The Victorian Government announced in its Community Safety Statement 2017 that it will ban the manufacture and sale of dangerous synthetic drugs. The Government is firmly committed to tackling the harm caused by illicit drugs and will continue its efforts to shut down drug manufacturers and reduce the availability of illicit drugs in our community.

Gatwick Hotel

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 8 February 2017

RESPONSE:

I have been advised that it is not appropriate to provide the location and personal details of offenders on orders.

Ombudsman jurisdiction

Question asked by: Mr Rich-Phillips
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 8 February 2017

RESPONSE:

The total costs incurred by the Attorney-General on behalf of Government in the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal proceedings were \$58 730.03.

The Attorney-General has sought special leave to appeal the decision of the Court of Appeal on the basis that:

- the decision has significant consequences for the relationship between the Ombudsman and the Houses and Committees of the Victorian Parliament;
- the decision has potentially significant consequences for the operation of Victoria's integrity regime and potential resource implications for the Ombudsman; and
- if the decision stands unchallenged, there would appear to be no impediment to one House of the Parliament referring members of the other House to the Ombudsman for investigation on any matter whatsoever.

While the Legislative Assembly has recently passed a motion asserting its rights and privileges with respect to exclusive cognisance regarding its members, I reaffirm that the Government is not, through this motion or any other activity, seeking to stop the Ombudsman from commencing an investigation.

Corrections system

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 9 February 2017

RESPONSE:

As I indicated to the house, I announced the new facility the week after this question was asked.

Details of the location and the community consultation that the government has undertaken and will continue to undertake can be found at the following location:

<http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/new-secure-facility-to-keep-victoria-safe/>

Serious sex offenders

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 9 February 2017

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

In 2016, ambulance Victoria attended Victorian correctional facilities a total of 1004 times at a cost of \$1 266 573. Over the last four years the average cost for ambulance attendances to Victorian correctional facilities was \$1 218 180.

Child protection

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 9 February 2017

RESPONSE:

The premise of the members' question is incorrect. The 'assault' category in the Category One incident quarterly data does not include sexual exploitation which are captured under the 'behaviour' category. It's important to know that the data captures historic cases of sexual assault that have been alleged to have occurred prior to a child going into state care. Once a child settles into their placement they may feel comfortable and supported to make disclosures about past abuse.

Where there is an allegation of sexual assault or sexual exploitation, it is met with a strong response that includes medical attention (should this be required), a report to police if it involves an allegation of physical or sexual abuse or a client is a victim of a crime, and counselling and support being offered to all parties.

In 2015 the Andrews Labor Government allocated \$16 million to increase staff in residential care units including for stand-up overnight staff. A further \$35.9 million was allocated in 2016. For the first time, \$1.5 million in funding was also made available for spot audits of residential care facilities. Our Government has also funded four child protection senior practitioners dedicated to addressing sexual exploitation. They work collaboratively with child protection, Victoria Police and members of the non-government sector and have led to an increased knowledge and understanding of child sexual exploitation and greater identification of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation.

Rather than trying to hide the figures as the former coalition government did, we have encouraged residential care and child protection staff to report concerns about sexual exploitation. This is why we have published quarterly incident data on the Department's website for the first time as the member has been repeatedly informed.

The Andrews Government established the Keeping Children Safe from Sexual Exploitation Strategy July 2015. The strategy is overseen by an interdepartmental committee, chaired by my department. The committee includes representatives from the Department of Education and Training, Department of Justice and Regulation, Department of Premier and Cabinet and Victoria Police.

Priority one of this strategy is the Enhanced Response Model. Commencing in July 2016 in five pilot sites, this joint DHHS and Victoria Police strategy specifically profiles the nature and extent of children at risk of sexual exploitation, including those living in out of home care.

Our first budget funded four divisional sexual exploitation practice leaders to provide practice leadership, consultation and expert advice to child protection practitioners and other key partners including actively supporting children and staff in out of home care. These practice leaders work closely with Victoria Police and both the police and the practice leaders work directly with children at risk of sexual exploitation.

Collectively these strategies have led to improved identification of and response to sexual exploitation.

Disruption tactics such as issuing harbouring notices and intervention orders are deterring perpetrator behaviour.

Training continues to be provided to child protection practitioners and out of home care staff to identify and respond to children at risk of sexual exploitation.

Child protection

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 9 February 2017

RESPONSE:

I am advised that the Member is again incorrect. The advice I have received is that there were no instances of young people climbing onto the roof at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct on Sunday 5 February 2017.

I have been advised that an incident did occur on 8 February 2017 where a young person became agitated and allegedly assaulted a fellow detainee, who was assessed by health services and did not receive serious injuries. In line with departmental policy, all allegations and incidents suspected to be of a criminal nature, including assaults, must be reported to Victoria Police. As the Member is aware, assaults arising as a result of heightened behaviour have occurred previously, including under the previous Government.

After four years of inaction under the previous Liberal Government — including shelving an infrastructure master plan - the Andrews Labor Government is strengthening the youth justice system. This includes:

- developing a new client behaviour model that focuses on young people taking individual responsibility, with staff providing feedback on that behaviour
- engaging Corrections Victoria staff to support the safety and security of the youth justice centres
- funding additional youth justice staff and implementing a pipeline model of recruitment
- building a secure, fit-for-purpose \$288.8 million youth justice facility that will include 224 beds for remand and sentenced clients, a 12-bed mental health unit and an intensive supervision unit of at least eight beds

Aboriginal children and young people

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 9 February 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The Victorian Government is committed to delivering on Recommendation 145 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence which calls for the Victorian Government to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to develop a state-wide strategic response to improving the lives of vulnerable Aboriginal children and young people.

The Victorian Government is also committed to advancing self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians. In line with self-determination, a key feature of the Government's work to deliver on Recommendation 145 will be to consult with Aboriginal communities.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is leading this work on behalf of the Victorian Government. As part of this work, DHHS has engaged with key representatives from the Aboriginal Children's Forum to discuss key directions for Recommendation 145.

The Andrews Labor Government instigated the development of the Aboriginal Children's Forum and five Aboriginal Children's Forums have been held since early 2015. These forums have visited regional areas and been hosted and co-chaired by the local Aboriginal community organisation and myself.

Much work has already occurred at this forum with support from government to strengthen cultural planning for aboriginal children in out of home care and to strengthen Aboriginal community organisations ability to support Aboriginal kinship and foster carers and to commence guardianship of Aboriginal community organisations for children in out of home care.

The sixth Aboriginal Children's Forum is scheduled for late February 2017 in Healesville and will continue to engage Aboriginal communities in the implementation of programs that provide wrap around support for Aboriginal children and families.

Blue Vein logging coupe

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 9 February 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

VicForests conducts detailed pre-harvest assessments of all areas planned for timber harvesting to identify and manage key biodiversity values. If an area meets specific criteria for high quality Leadbeater's Possum habitat, it is excluded from timber harvesting.

The DELWP is responsible for monitoring VicForests compliance with its regulatory responsibilities.

Youth justice centres

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 21 February 2017

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

As the Member is aware, following a detailed consideration of 16 sites, the Hoppers Lane South site is the Government's preferred location for a new youth justice centre.

The Victorian Government is working closely with Wyndham City Council and wants to hear all views and opinions. We are consulting widely to ensure the local community is actively engaged throughout this project.

This includes hearing views about impacts on residents and businesses in the area as well as helping us explore opportunities for new transport and community infrastructure.

If the Wyndham City Council suggests a suitable alternative location for this much needed youth justice facility that meets all of the Government's strict selection criteria then this will be considered.

Youth justice centres

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 21 February 2017

RESPONSE:

As the member is aware, sites that were considered as the location for a new youth justice centre underwent detailed assessment through a full business case.

That business case is cabinet in confidence.

As was the case under the previous Liberal government, conventions around the release of these sorts of documents exist which limit their public release for a variety of reasons, of which the Member would be aware.

Youth justice centres

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 21 February 2017

RESPONSE:

The Andrews Labor Government has been working on the case for a new facility since last year.

This detailed assessment was expedited because of the importance of designing and constructing a new facility with community safety as the key priority.

The case was considered by Government in early February, and the preferred site announced.

As was the case under the previous Liberal government, deliberations of Cabinet and Cabinet Committees are not disclosed for a variety of reasons of which the Member would be aware.

Youth justice centres

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 21 February 2017

RESPONSE:

I am advised that the member is again incorrect, and appears to be seeking to verbal Mr Lanyon. In the press conference the Member has referred to incidents were not blamed on the drug ice as the Member has claimed.

I am advised that there have been no incidents reported since July 2016 that recorded use or possession of ice by young people whilst in custody.

My department has strict procedures in place which prohibit and seek to prevent the use and possession of illicit substances, including ice and other drugs. This includes the screening of visitors to ensure young offenders' safety and wellbeing.

Some young people may have used illicit substances prior to their admission into youth justice custodial services and may be withdrawing from these substances during their detention. Withdrawal can lead to heightened aggressiveness. Young people in youth justice also often have a history of using drugs and alcohol.

As the member is aware, the Youth Parole Board reports on this issue in its annual report. Published in its 2015-16 annual report are the results of a snapshot survey of 167 males and nine females detained on sentence and remand on 7 October 2015 carried out by the Department of Health and Human Services. This survey showed, for example, that 66 per cent had a history of both alcohol and drug misuse.

Where a young person discloses at admission into youth justice custodial services use of illicit substances prior to their custody, health services are available for them appropriate to their needs.

Youth justice centres

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 21 February 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

Victoria Police advises that it does not record the time allocated to specific tasks as the reasons for police attendance at any one incident may accumulate or be subject to change as an investigation develops.

Further, I note that your question refers specifically to heroin related incidents. Victoria Police has informed me that if such data was available, there would be no differentiation between variations in drug types.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Data presented in the Crime Statistics Agency's most recent release for the year ending September 2016 indicates that there were 320 recorded Drug use and possession offences, and 90 recorded Drug dealing and trafficking offences in Richmond.

Female genital mutilation

Question asked by: Dr Carling-Jenkins
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 22 February 2017

RESPONSE:

A significant number of women living in Victoria have been born in countries where the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting has been documented.

I am advised that the Victorian child protection program has no evidence that there is an increase in the practice of female genital mutilation in relation to children in Victoria.

The Royal Women's Hospital advise that all women and girls that access their services have had the procedure done overseas.

Since the late 1990s, the Victorian Government has been providing funding to a range of organisations, including the Royal Women's Hospital, under the Family and Reproductive Rights Education Program (FARREP) to work with girls, women and communities to prevent this practice from occurring post-settlement.

Through government acute health funding, the Royal Women's Hospital has established an African Women's Clinic which provides a free, confidential service for women affected by the practice. It offers support and education as well as the de-infibulation procedure for women requesting this and for whom it is appropriate to undertake the procedure in the outpatient setting.

The Refugee Health Program, funded by the Victorian Government, provides education and training to refugee health nurses who may come across girls, women and communities from countries where this practice is or was prevalent.

A Victorian Government funded forum will be held in Melbourne on 16 March 2017 to inform service providers, specialist family violence services and other community organisations about prevention and support services available to girls, women and communities in relation to female genital mutilation.

Funded by the Victorian Government, in 2016 cohealth developed a short, animated training video to provide health professionals with information and awareness on female genital mutilation/cutting.

As part of the child protection orientation program, information on how female genital mutilation/cutting is categorised under the Act is provided.

In Victoria, child protection becomes aware of an incident of a child being at risk of female genital mutilation if a report is received, or the issue arises during the course of child protection involvement as a result of other concerns for the child's safety and wellbeing. Child Protection will intervene to address any risk of significant harm and to protect the child, by working with the family by agreement, or if necessary by seeking a court order through the Children's Court. As female genital mutilation is considered physical abuse Child protection will also make a report to Victoria Police for criminal investigation in line with existing protocols.

Child Protection have also developed new practice advice for practitioners who become aware of female genital mutilation and what steps to undertake that will be published in the next month.

Heyfield timber mill

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 22 February 2017

RESPONSE:

VicForests has a responsibility to manage the commercial forest estate in a sustainable manner, for the long-term. Resource modelling completed by VicForests indicates there will be lower volumes of timber available into the future.

The reduced volumes identified in the most recent resource outlook are due, in part, to measures to protect the State's faunal emblem, the Leadbeater Possum. The Member should note that these measures were introduced by the former Liberal-Nationals government and are unchanged.

In line with the Leadbeater's Possum Advisory Group's recommendations of 2013, a review of the effectiveness of establishing timber harvesting exclusion zones around all new colonies was scheduled to commence after two years of surveying, or once 200 new colonies with timber harvesting exclusion zones were established. The review, triggered by the milestones, is currently being undertaken following key input into the design from DELWP and VicForests. It is due to be completed in April.

The Government is working with the company and the union to identify viable business options for the future of the Heyfield mill.

Timber industry

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 22 February 2017

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The Treasurer has portfolio responsibility for plantation leases.

I am advised that the Department of Treasury and Finance is continuing negotiations on the renewal of these leases. These discussions are commercial in confidence