

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

20 and 21 February 2018

(Extract from book 2)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer and Minister for Resources	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
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Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
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Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and Minister for Local Government	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for 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 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 Bourman, Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning — Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmr, 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, Mr Morris, Mr Mulino, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Dr Ratnam, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Mr Somyurek, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

Fire Services Bill Select Committee — 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 Noonan and Ms Thomson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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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:

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John ¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁸	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	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 ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	RV
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ⁴	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
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred ⁷	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁶	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Truong, Ms Huong ¹²	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ DLP until 26 June 2017

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁷ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

¹⁰ ASP until 16 January 2018

¹¹ Appointed 18 October 2017

¹² Appointed 21 February 2018

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

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 20 February 2018

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 8 August 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 8 August 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Goulburn Valley Health

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 22 August 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 22 August 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 6 September 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 6 September 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Autism services

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 19 September 2017

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

I was deeply concerned to hear of the matters you have raised regarding Aberfeldie Primary School and allegations made in relation to the physical treatment of students, within your constituency, while attending this school.

The Andrews Labor Government recognises that every student needs access to the knowledge and skills that will shape their lives, regardless of their learning needs. The Government is also committed to supporting safe and successful educational pathways for all young people, including young people with disabilities.

Regarding the specific circumstances of your constituent and their family, I will be responding to you via private correspondence in order to respect the privacy of all people involved.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 19 September 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 19 September 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 17 October 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 17 October 2017 regarding Goulburn Valle Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 march 2017.

School council representation

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins
Raised on: 18 October 2017

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

School councils and the volunteers that serve on them, play a key role in Victorian government schools, supporting the principal to provide the best possible education for students.

From 2018, more students will be able to have a say in shaping the direction of their school, with student members to be included on all government secondary school councils.

In implementing this initiative, the Department of Education will provide targeted support for those students elected to school councils to ensure they fully understand their roles and responsibilities as school councillors and broaden their skills and capacity to participate as an effective member of council.

Young people should have a say in the future direction of their school. We want our children to be future leaders in our communities and developing these skills is a crucial step in making this happen.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 31 October 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 31 October 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 1 November 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 1 November 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

State care leavers

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children
Raised by: Ms Patten
Raised on: 1 November 2017

REPLY:

Ms Patten, thank you for raising the matter of supports for young people leaving care in Victoria.

Every year approximately 500 young people between the ages of 16 years and 18 years leave care in Victoria.

The Roadmap for Reform sets out the Government's long term vision and commitment to support vulnerable children, young people and families, including young people transitioning from care.

The government invests more than \$11 million per annum in programs to support young people as they transition from care to independent adulthood. These supports include:

- Information, support and referral services
- Access to flexible brokerage
- Specific supports for Aboriginal young people leaving care
- Springboard program — intensive support for young people leaving residential care, to maintain or get back into education, training and/or employment

The Government is strengthening and improving supports for young people leaving care through current trials underway in the southern part of Victoria and the Barwon area — the 'Better Futures' initiatives are trialling a new practice model approach and resources to support young people transitioning to independence.

New investment of \$10.1 million over four years will provide for additional housing assistance for young people transitioning from care, and those leaving youth justice. Assistance may include subsidies to enable young people in kinship care and foster care to remain in these living arrangements after their 18th birthday.

In April 2017 the Government announced it was commencing negotiations for the trial of a Social Impact Bond to improve outcomes for young people leaving care. This project is in the joint development phase, with negotiations progressing well. Further details regarding this exciting initiative will be announced in the near future.

Hyde Street, Footscray, scout hall

Raised with: Minister for Youth Affairs
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 14 November 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Victorian Government is providing \$1 million over four years to Scouts Victoria to enable more young people from culturally diverse and socially and economically disadvantaged communities to actively participate in the valuable activities offered through scouting groups in the community.

This funding builds on the \$457 000 funding provided to Scouts Victoria in 2015-16 to 2016-17 to increase the engagement and participation of young people in scouting.

Scouts Victoria has advised it administers a capital program that can assist scout groups with the refurbishment of their facilities. I encourage Hyde Street Scout Hall, Footscray to contact Scouts Victoria directly to discuss their refurbishment requirements and how they may be supported through the Scouts Victoria capital program.

GenesisCare

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 28 November 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 28 November 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Les Twentyman Foundation

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 28 November 2017

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government's Youth Policy is strengthening our engagement with young people across Victoria and is introducing a number of mechanisms which enable young people to shape government reforms, including services, policies and programs that benefit young people. It is disappointing that the Federal Liberal Government has cut funding to the National Youth Week Program which highlighted Australia's young people.

To support young people and celebrate the vital role they play in our community we are almost doubling our investment for an inaugural Victorian Youth Week in 2018 which acknowledges and celebrates the inspiring and motivated young people across Victoria.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested in a number of new and innovative programs to provide stronger support for vulnerable young people living in areas of social and economic disadvantage. These programs include the Empower Youth program, the Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Program and the Young Pasifika program.

As part of the \$4 million Empower Youth program, youth workers have been engaged by eight organisations working in high priority communities to provide intensive and tailored support to young people to enhance their health and wellbeing, education and training, community participation and pathways to employment.

Funding for the Empower Youth Program was determined through a competitive grant round. In the western suburbs, Wyndham City Council has received funding to deliver an Empower Youth project and the South Sudanese Community Association has been funded to deliver a project to support and empower South Sudanese young people in Wyndham and Brimbank.

The government is also continuing to fund core youth programs such as Advance, FReeZA and Engage! Which are designed to provide young people with more opportunities in activities such as community engagement, mentoring, volunteering, leadership and skill building.

I would encourage all youth organisations to apply for competitive grants available through the Youth Affairs portfolio, information about grant programs can be found on the Youth Central website.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 28 November 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 28 November 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Bendigo and Campaspe police resources

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 30 November 2017

REPLY:

I thank the Member for her question regarding police numbers and resources throughout the area of Bendigo and Campaspe.

As the member will be aware, the Andrews Labor Government has provided the biggest boost to frontline police in Victoria's history. In total, the Government is funding 3135 additional frontline police, over the next five years, on top of attrition, to support police respond to crime in our communities.

Analysis of latest crime statistics, to the year ending 30 September 2017, shows that the rate of offences per 100 000 population decreased by 1.7 per cent in Greater Bendigo and decreased by 4.4 per cent in Campaspe compared to the 12 months prior.

Victoria Police's state-of-the-art new Staff Allocation Manual (SAM) uses a range of data, including baseline staffing needs, recorded crime, calls for police assistance and response times for different types of crime to plan for deployments.

As the decision of how and where resources are deployed is the responsibility of the Chief Commissioner, I have referred the matter to his office and have been advised of the following.

At present, Victoria Police balance counter service hours to the public in a flexible manner to ensure the best possible use of available resources. The Chief Commissioner for 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.

Therefore, if a police station is closed, including 16 hour Police Stations, members may already be out on patrol. If police attendance is required the public should always ring '000'.

Alternatively, to report non-urgent incidents and/or behaviour offences the public can contact Crimestoppers at www.crimestoppersvic.com.au or phone 1800 333 000.

With regard to Rochester Station, Victoria Police advises that this station does receive regular night shift patrols with the Kyabram night shift divisional van tasked to focus on the Kyabram cluster station Response Zones, which includes Rochester.

There are also additional proactive patrols on night shift provided by police members from the Echuca Police Station and the Campaspe Highway Patrol is also regularly tasked for patrol duties in and surrounding Rochester.

Mornington Peninsula schoolies week

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 30 November 2017

REPLY:

I thank the member for his question and the opportunity to demonstrate how Victoria Police is a proactive and vigilant organisation within the community. I also share the member's concern for the safety of the community and the young school leavers who are particularly prone to risky behaviour at this time.

The aim of the police response to 'schoolies' week is to provide a highly-visible presence to identified areas along the Mornington Peninsula, including the Rye foreshore, as a deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour and to ensure the safety of all persons involved in schoolies activities, as well as the community. To achieve this, the Southern Metro Region resourced a number of initiatives throughout the schoolies period.

The Southern Metro Region resourced two Divisional Van Units and a Patrol Sergeant to be allocated for each afternoon shift, while one afternoon shift also reverted to a twilight shift running between 6pm and 2am on a Friday and Saturday night. An additional twilight shift also operated on a Friday and Saturday night, with a pro-active policing unit operating on the twilight shift for 14 of the 18 days. Victoria Police advised that if required, extra police resources could also be allocated from Mornington, Hastings and Frankston police service areas.

In the lead up to and during the 2017 schoolies week, Rosebud Police worked with a number of stakeholder partners including the Mornington Peninsula Shire, particularly Youth Services and Environment Protection, Red Frogs Australia support network, Life Saving Victoria and Stays / Airbnb.

Rosebud Police also initiated Media strategies via 'Eye-watch' and local newspapers. While consideration of entertainment was raised in the lead up to schoolies, proposed venues such as Point Nepean National Park, Mornington Racecourse and the Dromana Drive-In were rejected by event promoters. The provision of some type of entertainment for 'schoolies' is to be considered next year to manage and contain crowd behaviour and enhance security.

Shepparton radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 12 December 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 12 December 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

United Voice website

Raised with: Minister for Industrial Relations

Raised by: Mr Morris

Raised on: 15 December 2017

REPLY:

The Government is aware of the Rate My Boss website. A review of the website shows clearly on the front page that the union, United Voice, is responsible for it.

As the Minister for Industrial Relations I have no regulatory responsibilities for the content of this website.

I share the Members concern for websites that seek to raise money under ulterior motives, for example the “Save the CFA” website operated by the Liberal Party which sought donations for the Liberal Party.

I encourage anyone interested in providing a donation to assist United Voice’s campaign to ensure hospitality staff are treated and paid lawfully to be clear that the website is, as is clearly marked, operated by United Voice.

The issue that the union raises is a serious one, the member may be aware that a recent investigation by the Fair Work Ombudsman found more than 800 hospitality industry employers had under paid staff by around \$2.3 million.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 21 February 2018

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 8 August 2017

REPLY:

In response to your Adjournment Debate question raised on 8 August 2017 regarding Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services, I refer the Member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Cohuna District Hospital

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Symes
Raised on: 15 November 2017

REPLY:

The government and the Cohuna District Hospital Board of Management are committed to maintaining a safe high quality maternity service in Cohuna and are taking all necessary steps to achieve this.

The decision to temporarily suspend birthing services at Cohuna District Hospital was taken very seriously by the Board of Management and supported by the Director of Medical Services. The decision was made in the interest of the safety of the women and their babies who utilise the service.

Cohuna District Hospital is a designated level 2 maternity service which includes ante and post-natal care and birthing. A level 2 maternity service is required to be appropriately staffed to safely provide a birthing service 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

The Board was concerned that only one general practitioner obstetrician was available to provide this 24 hour service. This led to the decision to temporarily suspend the service in the interest of safety. Fortunately the decision was able to be reversed when interim locum medical support was secured.

Cohuna District Health is actively working with health services and agencies in the region to secure ongoing medical support for the maternity service. This includes engagement with the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria and local Primary Health Network to support general practitioner recruitment in the region.

Safer Care Victoria, the lead agency for quality and safety in Victoria, has conducted an independent assessment of maternity services at Cohuna District Hospital to support the Board and the Department of Health and Human Services to plan for the future provision of maternity services for the women and babies of Cohuna.