

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

**WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
WITHOUT NOTICE**

15 December to 8 February 2018

(Extract from book 1)

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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
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
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Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
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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 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 Elasmarr, #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 Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, 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 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 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 Elasmarr 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 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 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

President:

The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmar, Mr Melhem, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Purcell, Mr Ramsay

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O’SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

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 ⁷	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 ⁸	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ⁹	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
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹⁰	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	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	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	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 25 February 2015

⁸ Appointed 12 October 2016

⁹ ASP until 16 January 2018

¹⁰ Appointed 18 October 2017

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 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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

18 December to 8 February 2018

Heyfield timber mill

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 19 September 2017

RESPONSE:

This Government has always said we will fight for every job.

We make no apologies for taking action to secure the future of the Heyfield Mill-saving jobs, protecting the timber industry and supporting the local community.

The costs associated with the purchase of the Heyfield Mill were published by the Treasurer and tabled in Parliament on 15 December 2017 as part of the 2017-18 Victorian Budget Update.

ASH is owned by the Victorian Government and a shareholder group made up of ASH Management.

The share structure provides the Government with controlling and final rights on a range of commercial and management matters.

ASH will operate under a new board which will consist of 6 members; 3 appointed by management and 3 by the Government. A Government nominated board member will act as board Chair.

Victorian Cladding Taskforce

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 21 September 2017

RESPONSE:

The Government carefully considered the appointments of both Ted Baillieu and John Thwaites before appointing them Co-Chairs of the Victorian Cladding Taskforce.

Both bring considerable experience and knowledge to their roles and their effectiveness to date is borne out by the strength and quality of the Interim Report of the Victorian Cladding Taskforce, released on 1 December 2017.

Professor Thwaites was formerly Chair of the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) — as you will be aware, his term concluded on 4 November 2017. Given the complexity of the issues presented by the historical use of non-compliant cladding over at least a 20 year period, Professor Thwaite's understanding of the building system gained from his time as Victorian Minister for Planning and his period as National Chair of the ABCB has been invaluable in the work of the Taskforce to date. While the interim report contained some broad recommendations relating to the ABCB, it was primarily focused on the Victorian building system. Professor Thwaites was aware of the potential for conflicts to arise and understood the need to appropriately manage them, including advising the Taskforce Secretariat and, where necessary, recusing himself from discussions. I am advised this has not been required to date.

I am confident the appointments of Professor Thwaites and Mr Baillieu have given Victorians confidence in the work of the Taskforce and demonstrate the seriousness with which the Government is dealing with this critical issue.

Poker machines

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Trade and Investment
Asked on: 14 December 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The South Australian Centre for Economic Studies has been engaged to evaluate YourPlay. The scope of the evaluation has recently been expanded to include additional research. This involves surveying YourPlay users and interviewing venue managers and staff to determine what may be driving the differences in the take-up of YourPlay in venues across the state. An analysis of the YourPlay Days held to date will also be undertaken to determine the impact of these promotional events on the take-up of YourPlay. A final report is due in mid-2018.

Regional partnerships

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 14 December 2017

RESPONSE:

Melbourne was chosen as a central location for all regions and the most equitable option for distance travel time across all the regions. It also provides for a greater range of transport options, including flights from Mildura.

In November 2015, the Andrews Government established Regional Partnerships to deliver its commitment in the Victoria's Regional Statement to enable rural and regional communities to direct their priorities into the heart of government decision making.

The Regional Partnerships have now been operating for 18 months. Regional Partnership members are volunteers committed to the development of their regions. It was opportune at this time to gather all members to share issues faced across regional Victoria, and to further enhance the capability of our Regional Partnership members.

The networking function held on Monday 4 December marked the opening of the two day event and the total cost incurred was \$12 211. Regional Partnerships have an operational budget for expenses such as travel, engagement, accommodation and meals. The cost of attending the two day conference was covered by the individual Regional Partnerships' operational budget.

Crime statistics

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 14 December 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

There is no evidence available to me of a leak or unauthorised release of the Crime Statistics.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

As Special Minister of State I have policy responsibility for the accountability and integrity system; however, it is not appropriate for me to personally undertake investigations into specific conduct. Instead, these matters are investigated by integrity bodies, such as the Ombudsman and the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Committee (IBAC). It is also not appropriate for me to order any integrity bodies to investigate a matter.

Any individual is able to make a complaint about specific conduct to an integrity body, which have the necessary powers to consider whether the matter warrants further investigation.

Pest animal control

Question asked by: Mr Young
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 14 December 2017

RESPONSE:

The government does not consider it appropriate to manage native wildlife and invasive animals under one government strategy as there are clear differences in the policy and legislative arrangements for their management.

Victorian land classifications do not hinder invasive species control practices. The decision as to which control method to apply, consistent with legislative requirements and best practice, rests with the relevant land manager. While legislative requirements may differ across land tenure, public land managers of the parks and forest estate apply consistent procedures and comply with the various Codes of Practice for the management of pest animals including those under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.

Child protection

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 15 December 2017

RESPONSE:

The permanency inquiry report reflects the detailed and thorough review conducted, at my request, by the Commission for Children and Young People. It includes a range of important findings and recommendations that required careful consideration by my department and by government.

It was my view that releasing the report without having determined the government's response would lead to unnecessary uncertainty for children, families and other stakeholders.

My department is able to meet with stakeholders who wish to discuss the report, its findings and recommendations. In addition, a reference group to support the longitudinal study is being established as recommended by the inquiry and will include relevant stakeholders.

St Kilda incident

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 15 December 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

Reducing the risk of reoffending and community safety are key priorities for Corrections Victoria. Corrections Victoria has a clear non-compliance framework to manage high-risk offenders on Community Correction Orders and Parole Orders, and shares information and collaborates with a range of stakeholders, including Victoria Police.

Corrections Victoria cooperates with all Victoria Police investigations when required, including in efforts to identify offenders involved in criminal activity. Should further offending be identified for those on a Community Correction Order or Parole Order, those matters will be promptly referred to the Courts or the Adult Parole Board, as appropriate.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Victoria Police operations are determined by the Chief Commissioner. Victoria Police has initiated Operation Sandsafe which is the standing response to these local issues in St Kilda, inclusive of local and the Operations

Response Unit support. Operations Response Unit commitments have been obtained to support local deployments on days when the temperature is likely to result in large crowds.

The Port Phillip Local Area Commander (LAC) is engaged with the St Kilda community and meets with local stakeholders on a regular basis. The LAC met with St Kilda Foreshore Traders, the City of Port Phillip CEO and Member for Albert Park, Mr Martin Foley to discuss further safety improvements for the St Kilda Community.

On 5 February 2017, Mr Foley announced a \$220 000 funding package for Port Phillip Council to deliver a safer St Kilda Beach.

The funding will support the immediate installation of bollards, boom gates and design upgrades along the St Kilda foreshore to prevent hoons and unauthorised vehicles from accessing the area. CCTV cameras will also be installed once designs and feasibility assessments have been carried out.

The funding includes \$100 000 for bollards, boom gates and environmental design improvements to prevent hooning and unauthorised vehicle access on the foreshore and support police operations, \$20 000 to support planning and design for CCTV within the foreshore area and a further \$100 000 to support the installation of CCTV cameras, subject to final designs and council support.

These improvements are an important part of the broader work being done by the Victorian Government, with Victoria Police and council to make the foreshore safer.

On top of the latest funding, the Victorian Government has also provided more than \$576 000 since July 2015 for local crime prevention projects in the City of Port Phillip, including CCTV cameras, security upgrades and street art to prevent graffiti.

Prison workplace safety

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 15 December 2017

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The Department of Justice and Regulation and Corrections Victoria cooperated fully with WorkSafe's investigation.

The Department pleaded guilty to one charge, which did not relate to the riot itself. Accordingly, although it is very important that personal accounts from those affected by the riot are heard, those statements were not legally admissible in relation to that particular charge. The three charges relating to the riot were withdrawn.

The Deputy Chief Magistrate stated it was also the role of the Court to perform a restorative function and undertook to read all the statements herself (and allowed three of them to be read aloud in the open Court), noting that she could not take them into account in sentencing. The Department did not object to this.

The Deputy Chief Magistrate also made a point, at the end of the proceedings, of acknowledging the difficult role that prison officers perform, and asked the representatives of the Community and Public Sector Union in court to pass on her comments to their members.

Corrections Victoria

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 6 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

Jan Shuard officially retired as Corrections Victoria's Commissioner on 11 January 2018 following a period of annual leave. I was notified of her plans to retire in a personal meeting on 17 November 2017.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The appointment to the role will be made by the Secretary, following a process that I expect will take some months.

To state that under an acting Commissioner the system is rudderless is shameful. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Rod Wise is a veteran of corrections and I have absolute faith in his leadership and indeed in the rest of the CV executive team that remained after Jan Shuard's retirement.

I would also like to point out that prior to appointing Jan Shuard to the role in 2012 the former Coalition Government relied on an acting Commissioner for over seven months, following the retirement of Bob Hastings. This acting arrangement took place from May to December 2012, despite Ms Shuard being under their nose the entire time. She was, after all, the acting Commissioner.

Lara prison expansion

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 6 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

No announcement has been made on the approach to build the proposed new prison at Lara.

The prison will be publicly operated to ensure an appropriate balance in the proportion of prison beds operated by the public and private sectors.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The prison precinct expansion is in the early planning stages and initial discussions with land owners has commenced.

The department will follow standard government land procurement processes to ensure that the appropriate value is paid for the land.

The profile and size of the cohort for Ravenhall is not comparable to the new prison at Lara. The department will engage a qualified expert to undertake appropriate cost reviews to ensure that the project delivers value for money.

Prisoner release

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 6 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The Member incorrectly states that I was on leave last week. I was not on leave, but rather I was leading a significant delegation overseas regarding matters relating to the portfolios I have responsibility for.

Corrections Victoria is currently conducting a review of the issues leading up to the unlawful release of a prisoner from Ravenhall Correctional Centre on 23 January 2018. The review will be oversighted by the Acting Commissioner of Corrections Victoria. The Justice Assurance and Review Office (JARO) of the Department of Justice and Regulation is also examining the case to identify whether current service improvements underway are consistent with best practice.

Youth justice system

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 6 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

I am advised by the Minister for Police that the following charges were laid against the young offender:

Incident Date	Charges applied
2 January 2018*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intentionally cause injury 2. Recklessly cause injury 3. Assault with a weapon 4. Intentionally cause injury 5. Recklessly cause injury 6. Assault with a weapon
24 January 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intentionally cause serious injury of gross violence 2. Recklessly cause serious injury in circumstances of gross violence 3. Intentionally cause serious injury 4. Recklessly cause serious injury 5. Intentionally cause injury 6. Recklessly cause injury 7. Assault with an instrument

*these charges relate to two victims involved.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

I am advised that in accordance with the Department of Justice and Regulation’s procedures, these incidents were immediately reported to Victoria Police. Malmsbury Management is assisting Victoria Police with access to CCTV footage and witnesses.

Any decision in relation to charges arising from the incidents is at the discretion of Victoria Police.

Youth justice system

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 6 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

My department’s advice is that it is not appropriate for me to comment on operational matters relating to potential gang affiliations of young people involved with Youth Justice. This can legitimise loose youth gang affiliations to young people who are engaged in, or at risk of engaging in, criminal behaviour.

I can advise that the Government has taken action to improve the identification and management of safety and security risks in Youth Justice Precincts.

To help prevent criminal associations and reduce reoffending, a new classification and placement service has been established to ensure that each young person is accommodated at the level of security best suited to their needs and alongside other young people with whom they can safely associate. This initiative is a key part of the \$50 million investment allocated to respond to the priority recommendations of the independent Youth Justice Review.

Further, the Government's 2017/18 Victorian Budget investment of \$72 million included a funding boost for improved intelligence gathering across both Youth Justice precincts. This allows youth justice staff to better track and respond to dangerous criminal associations and prevent anti-social incidents while in custody.

Recycling industry

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 6 February 2018

RESPONSE:

China has not banned the import of waste — it has put measures in place that limit the import of low grade or unsorted recycled plastic and paper. China continues to accept a more processed version of these materials, which are valuable commodities.

Victoria recycles most of its waste locally. Of the 12.7 million tonnes of waste generated by Victorians in 2015-16, 8.5 million tonnes (67 per cent) was diverted from landfill for recycling and 7.3 million tonnes of that stayed in Victoria. The materials affected by China's new trade measures — paper and plastic — make up a relatively small share of this total. In 2015-16, the Victorian waste industry exported 33 per cent of all paper (511 000 tonnes) and 14 per cent of all plastic recovered in Victoria (21 000 tonnes) to China.

Victoria has other international trading partners for recyclable materials, and exports to these countries are continuing.

Victoria already has capacity to locally reprocess some of the materials we currently export. Last State Budget's record investment of \$30.4 million in waste and resource recovery and existing Victorian Government programs, including the Resource Recovery Infrastructure Fund, are supporting industry to increase this capacity.

I regularly meet with representatives of industries within my portfolio and have had several meetings with members of the waste industry since China announced its new import policy in July 2017.

Last week I met with representatives of three of Victoria's major recyclers — Visy, SKM and Polytrade — to discuss how state government, local government and industry can work together to respond to these new trade measures, and make sure the community experiences no disruption to recycling services.

Drug harm reduction

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Youth Affairs
Asked on: 6 February 2018

RESPONSE:

Public health information regarding the suspected drug overdoses was provided by State Health Commander Paul Holman in a media interview on Saturday 27 January 2018. Mr Holman indicated that it was unclear what drugs were taken but that it was likely to be multiple drugs, including PMA.

In addition, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine made a public statement regarding the likely drugs that may have been involved in this incident.

The police are still investigating this incident and the drugs involved are not known. The Chief Health Officer has no additional public health information to release on this incident.

The Chief Toxicologist at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, Dr Dimitri Gerostamoulos, advised that even if you identify there is a particular drug in a batch of drugs, giving advice whether that drug is safe or not, is not possible.

The government continues to explore options to reduce the harm associated with drug use, including through greater capture and sharing of information relating to drug toxicity.

The Victorian Parliament's Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee's Inquiry into Drug Law Reform will report in March 2018. The Victorian Government welcomes the Inquiry and looks forward to considering its recommendations.

Rubicon Valley logging

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 7 February 2018

RESPONSE:

Victoria's state forests are highly valued by the community and are managed for multiple benefits. Among others, these include biodiversity values, recreation and tourism opportunities, as well as providing a sustainable, renewable resource for the timber industry. Current and potential recreation and tourism opportunities are not limited to National Parks and can and do coexist with the native timber industry in state forests. My department has not undertaken socioeconomic assessments specific to the area in question.

VicForests' harvest and regeneration activities in our state forests are such that they ensure the ongoing provision of environmental, economic and social values.