

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**10, 12 and 13 August 2010**

**(Extract from book 12)**

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## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

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**Select Committee on Train Services** — Mr Atkinson, Mr Barber, Mr Drum, Ms Huppert, Mr Leane, Mr O'Donohue and Mr Viney.

**Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration** — Mr Barber, Mr Guy, Mr Hall, Mr Kavanagh, Mr Rich-Phillips, Mr Tee and Mr Viney.

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Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee	Northern Victoria	LP
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Huppert, Ms Jennifer Sue <sup>1</sup>	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Theophanous, Hon. Theo Charles <sup>3</sup>	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Kavanagh, Mr Peter Damian	Western Victoria	DLP	Thornley, Mr Evan William <sup>4</sup>	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
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Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Vogels, Mr John Adrian	Western Victoria	LP

<sup>1</sup> Appointed 3 February 2009

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 9 March 2010

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 1 March 2010

<sup>4</sup> Resigned 9 January 2009



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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, 10 August 2010**

**Kingston Centre: kitchen**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mrs Peulich**

**Raised on: 11 March 2009**

**REPLY:**

A production Kitchen has operated on the Kingston Centre site for the past 30 years producing meals for Southern Health sites. It has been replaced with a new facility immediately adjacent to the old kitchen.

Extensive masterplanning of the Kingston Centre was undertaken to ensure the location of the new production kitchen would not inhibit the redevelopment of inpatient facilities on the campus.

All appropriate town planning processes through Kingston City Council were undertaken for the development of the Production Kitchen and construction commenced in September 2007.

In December 2007 an application was lodged by a neighbouring resident with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to "Cancel the Planning Permit". The VCAT hearing was held on 15 February 2008 and a decision dismissing the application was made on 19 May 2008, allowing building works to progress. Following the VCAT decision, Southern Health voluntarily undertook consultation with neighbouring residents and modified the design of the roadway and the loading dock.

Practical completion of the Kingston Central Production Kitchen (CPK) was achieved on 24 July 2009 with full operation commencing on 16 November 2009. Local residents were fully informed about the CPK commissioning, and further notified at the commencement of operations in the new facility.

I am informed that the new facility is fully compliant with all standards relating to commercial kitchens. Southern Health have noted complaints regarding kitchen operations in the new CPK are now uncommon, and have attributed this reduction to the significant improvements in odour and noise emissions over the previous facility.

Southern Health records and investigates all residents complaints regarding the facility and addresses issues where appropriate, sound and odour monitoring of the facility are conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure operation of the facility continues to meet applicable standards.

The new CPK operates from Monday to Saturday from 6.30 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. and plays an important role in food production for Southern Health, Peninsula Health and other sites in the area.

**Medical practitioners: regional and rural Victoria**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mrs Petrovich**

**Raised on: 11 March 2009**

**REPLY:**

The Victorian Government is committed to providing first class care to all Victorians. That's why we have invested over \$1.5 billion on capital works, equipment grants and infrastructure across regional and rural Victoria.

The zoning of regional areas remains a Commonwealth Government responsibility. I understand the Commonwealth has recently made changes to the RRMA program and introduced a new index, the Australian Standard Geographical Classification — Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA).

Under the new system areas designated as RA 2-5 are eligible for Commonwealth rural workforce funding programs.

According to the Rural Workforce Agency of Victoria, 80 per cent of doctors in rural and regional Victoria are in areas classified as RA 2. I am advised that incentives will be paid on a sliding scale, with incentives increasing with remoteness. In addition to the new rural classification, a new General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) has been introduced.

The Victorian Government has provided substantial funding to increase the supply of new doctors. The number of interns allocated to rural health services increased from 121 in 2008 to 151 in 2010.

The Victorian Government has further supported regional and rural doctors by funding \$14.1 million for 174 specialist training posts in areas such as Obstetrics, Anaesthetics, Surgery and Paediatrics.

A further \$13.9 million has been provided for a Victorian Rural Enhancement Package to support Visiting Medical Officers on-call arrangements. The government also provides support with Continuing Professional Development Grants for Rural General Practitioners and a statewide locum relief scheme.

This government is also investing over \$53 million to improve the teaching infrastructure in rural health services for students and graduates.

These programs have seen over 500 extra doctors recruited to regional and rural Victoria since Labor has come to Government.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting the rural health workforce and will continue to recruit more doctors and nurses, so that we can deliver first class care to all of Victoria.

**Northern Victoria Region: health services**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Broad**

**Raised on: 2 April 2009**

**REPLY:**

The Brumby Government was proud to fund \$35 million from the 2009–10 State Budget to replace medical equipment across the public health system including metropolitan, major regional and rural public hospitals.

In relation to the Northern Victoria Region, \$2.9 million in funding has been allocated so that doctors and nurses can use first class equipment.

Some examples of what has been funded includes equipment such as:

- Replacement of computed radiography digital systems for Alpine Health at Myrtleford and Bright;
- Echuca Regional Health received a physiological monitoring system, image intensifier and a drill/saw set;
- New defibrillators and monitors for Bendigo Health;
- Albury Wodonga Health received funding to replace incubators and ventilators.
- New video processing unit, monitor, ECG machine and operating table for Cobram District Hospital;
- A new CTG machine for Kerang District Health;
- Goulburn Valley Health replaced the anaesthetic machines, blood fridge, tissue processor and microscopes;
- New observation machines, warming cabinet and ultrasonic cleaner for Kyneton District Health Service;
- Northeast Health Wangaratta received funding for new defibrillators, CTG machines and ventilator;
- Mansfield District Hospital was funded to replace a anaesthetic machine;
- The Kilmore & District Hospital was allocated funding for a new operating table; and
- Swan Hill District Health was funded for a replacement of image intensifier and operating table.

These are just some of the many examples of funding provided by the Brumby Government to ensure that hospitals have the right equipment to provide the best possible care to patients.

### **Western Victoria Region: health services**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr Koch**

**Raised on: 12 August 2009**

#### **REPLY:**

The Brumby Government understands the importance of supporting health services in the Western Region so patients can access world class care.

That's why we delivered record investment in health services in that region: including \$26.1 million to more than double capacity at the Barwon Health emergency department, \$30 million to upgrade theatres as well as building an additional 24-bed surgical ward and \$33.6 million in the last Budget to expand acute capacity and purchase land to plan for a second hospital for Geelong.

At South West Healthcare in Warrnambool over \$112 million has been funded to redevelop this health service so that residents have access to state of the art health facilities.

Again in Ballarat, \$55 million has been funded in partnership with the Commonwealth to develop a cancer centre, building on my recent announcement of an extra \$12.7 million in recurrent funding to support doctors and nurses to deliver even better care. This is an increase of over 138 per cent in funding since Labor has come to government.

In smaller townships like Coleraine we have provided \$25.8 million in the last Budget to build a new hospital.

These are just some of the many examples of support provided to health services so that small and large townships get access to first-class care.

Whilst there is more to be done, the Brumby Government has a strong record in investing in health facilities, medical equipment and infrastructure works with over \$1.5 billion funded for rural and regional Victoria.

This stands in stark contrast to the previous Liberal/National Government who closed 12 hospitals across Victoria.

**Public transport: myki ticketing system****Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mrs Coote****Raised on: 24 February 2010****REPLY:**

Please advise your constituent to contact Ms Lina Gucciardo, Customer Service Manager of the Transport Ticketing Authority, who has the authority to investigate this matter. Ms Gucciardo can be contacted either by email at [Lina.Gucciardo@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:Lina.Gucciardo@transport.vic.gov.au), or on telephone (03) 9651 6098.

**Migrant Resource Centre North West Region: membership****Raised with: Premier****Raised by: Mr Finn****Raised on: 9 March 2010****REPLY:**

I am informed that as an incorporated association under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981*, the North West Region Migrant Resource Centre, as any other incorporated association, must abide by its constitution and its rules.

Any concerns about whether this or any other organisation is complying with the rules of the association, should be raised with either the Committee of Management directly and/or with Consumer Affairs Victoria as the appropriate body.

There are also provisions within the constitution of each association through which grievances can be addressed and disputes resolved.

**Rail: station information****Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mr Barber****Raised on: 11 March 2010****REPLY:**

I am advised that train timetable and network maps were reinstalled on both platforms at Brunswick Railway Station and have been on display since 16 March 2010.

**City of Moreland: North Coburg parkland****Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports****Raised by: Ms Hartland****Raised on: 23 March 2010****REPLY:**

I am advised that on 2 July 2010, Mr Justin Madden, Minister for Planning announced that the land would be declared Crown Land with Moreland City Council as Committee of Management.

**Housing: rent increases****Raised with: Minister for Housing****Raised by: Ms Lovell****Raised on: 14 April 2010****REPLY:**

The Department of Human Services is required to regularly undertake a formal valuation of all public housing properties and adjust the market rent for each household accordingly. Under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, the Director of Housing is required to notify tenants in writing of the rent for their property and to provide 60 days notice if the rent is going to increase.

Government policy is that no household living in public housing will pay more than 25% of their total household income in rent. On top of this, the Office of Housing has capped any rent increase to market rent payers resulting from the recent revaluation at no more than \$35 per week.

A second letter was sent to public housing tenants paying a rebated rent to reassure them that the rent they pay would not increase as a result of the market rent value of the property. This letter was signed by the Director of Housing because she has the ultimate responsibility of the provision of public housing under the Housing Act 1983.

As part of its Secure and Sustainable Pension Reform, the Commonwealth Government announced in May 2009 an increase in payments to pensioners, disability support pensioners, carers, wife and widow pensioners and veteran income support recipients that came into effect on 20 September 2009.

To minimise the impact on tenants, public housing authorities in all States and Territories agreed to defer, for at least 12 months, the increase to rent that results from the \$60 per fortnight increase to base pension for single pensioners (that is \$60 per fortnight for those on full pensions). In Victoria, due to the fixed rent periods, this means the increase will not take effect until at least December 2010.

The Department wrote to affected households on 27 October 2009 outlining the State Government's commitment to not increase public housing rents as a result of the pension reform increase to payments until at least December 2010. This letter also outlined that increases to rent arising from standard indexation on base pensions would be processed as usual at the next rent review, which was in December 2009. The State Government's commitment was also outlined in a fact sheet sent to all tenants paying a rebated rent in a letter dated 13 November 2009.

**Parks: entry fees**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 15 April 2010

**REPLY:**

The Metropolitan Parks Charge (MPC) is an annual charge levied on residential and commercial properties throughout metropolitan Melbourne. The charge operates pursuant to the provisions of Part 4 of the *Water Industry Act 1994*.

The current charge on a household in metropolitan Melbourne is \$63.75.

Not all funds collected under the MPC are disbursed to Parks Victoria. Approximately 30 per cent of the MPC funds are distributed between Melbourne Zoo, Royal Botanic Gardens, Shrine of Remembrance, and property acquisitions falling under a Parks Acquisition Overlay.

The MPC is billed and collected by the local water authority, under an agreement with Department of Sustainability and Environment, and forms part of the water, sewerage and drainage fees paid by landowners.

Money collected must be spent on management and control, within the metropolitan area, of open space, parks and waterways for the purposes of conservation, recreation, leisure, tourism and navigation.

In relation to the component of the MPC distributed to Parks Victoria, I am very satisfied that these funds are being expended in a most satisfactory manner as evidenced by the outstanding management and presentation of the metropolitan parks system under Parks Victoria's control and their contribution to making Melbourne the most livable city in Australia.

**Arbuthnot Sawmills: red gum supply**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Mr Drum

**Raised on:** 15 April 2010

**REPLY:**

The Department of Sustainability and Environment has fully allocated River Red Gum sawlog, standard log and residual log from State forests to Arbuthnot Sawmills. To ensure the long term sustainability of River Red Gum timber harvesting operations in State forest, no increases in the existing allocations will be made.

River Red Gum timber suitable for the restoration of the Echuca Wharf is also available from other timber producers in the Riverina, and I am advised that the timber needs of the Shire of Campaspe for this project can be met without accessing timber produced from ecological thinning in national parks. The Department of Sustainability and Environment will continue discussions with the Shire of Campaspe to identify suitable sources of timber.

Where fallen wood in excess of ecological needs is generated by ecological thinning in national parks it will be made available for best use on a cost recovery basis. This could include a range of uses depending on the type of wood, such as community firewood supply or commercial sawmilling.

**Monash Freeway: noise barriers**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 25 May 2010

**REPLY:**

I am informed that, as at the date, the question was raised:

Mr Mahony wrote to the Premier on 14 May 2010 and my office has responded to Mr Mahoney.

The Brumby Government acknowledges the impact of traffic noise upon the quality of life of residents living adjacent to arterial roads. The Government has allocated \$100 million under the Victorian Transport Plan for the construction of traffic noise barriers adjacent to existing freeways.

To qualify for consideration for new noise barriers on existing freeways, traffic noise levels must exceed an average of 68 decibels for 10 per cent of the time, between 6.00 a.m. to midnight. The noise levels are assessed outside the lowest habitable floor of noise sensitive buildings such as homes. The locations for new barriers are prioritised on the basis of existing traffic noise levels, with priority being directed toward the locations with the highest noise levels.

For freeways and arterial roads built on new alignments, or where existing freeways or arterial roads are widened by two or more lanes and buildings previously protected from traffic noise are exposed by removal of buildings required for widening, the traffic noise level is limited to 63 decibels for 10 per cent of the time between 6.00 a.m. and midnight. These noise levels apply outside the windows of the lowest habitable floors of residences.

The figure of 55 decibels is often quoted in the context of traffic noise limits in other jurisdictions. However, the 55 decibel target involves a different measurement basis to that used in Victoria and it is an aspirational target, not a mandatory target as is the case for freeway and arterial roads built on new alignments in Victoria.

Whilst the Brumby Government acknowledges the impact of traffic noise on residents living adjacent to major roads, measures to address this issue must be considered in the context of broader considerations and in accordance with the VicRoads Traffic Noise Reduction Policy.

**Western suburbs: paediatric services**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr Finn

**Raised on:** 27 May 2010

**REPLY:**

The Victorian Government recognises the importance of providing high quality children's health services. To achieve this, the government works with health services to formalise and build upon exiting partnerships to ensure a statewide system of integrated and coordinated care.

Within the Western Metropolitan Area, Sunshine Hospital provides general paediatric services and statewide specialist paediatric services are provided by the Royal Children's Hospital. The network arrangement between Sunshine Hospital and the Royal Children's Hospital enables children of the West to have equitable access to high-quality care when required.

Sunshine Hospital plays an important role in the delivery of children's health services. In the 2010–11 State Budget \$90.5m in funding was provided for the third stage of redevelopment at Sunshine Hospital. The funding will deliver a new inpatient facility, including an expanded special care nursery, with eight additional cots.

To improve access to specialist services for all children across the State, the Victorian Government is investing in a centre for excellence, the new \$1 billion Royal Children's Hospital in Parkville. The new Royal Children's Hospital, which is due to be opened in 2011, will provide increased bed capacity and surgical activity, allowing for more children to be treated each year, with a high level of specialist care provided for children across the State.

Werribee Mercy Hospital also plays an important role in service provision in the Western Metropolitan Area, especially for families. Funding of \$14 million was allocated in the 2008–09 State Budget to address the identified service demand for maternity services. The funding will deliver eight additional obstetric beds and four additional special care nursery cots. This will increase obstetric beds from 24 to 32 and special care nursery cots from 12 to 16. This will enable significant expansion of maternity services at Werribee Mercy Hospital and provide improved access for families in the Western Metropolitan Area.

### **Rail: passenger safety**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 8 June 2010

#### **REPLY:**

The Government is providing additional resources for Victoria Police to increase police presence in public areas, including the rail network. This year, the Government committed to increasing the number of frontline police by 1966 officers. This is on top of the recent expansion of the Transit Safety Division and the establishment of the Operational Response Unit in March 2010 to crack down on assaults, the use of weapons and alcohol-related street crimes.

In response to specific incidents in the McKinnon area, Transit Safety Police Officers have been running a targeted operation along that railway line, focusing on the area from Moorabbin to McKinnon.

There are over 3000 closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV) at railway stations across the metropolitan rail network. In addition, the majority of trains are fitted with duress buttons and CCTV, which Victoria Police uses to identify people involved in violent or antisocial behaviour, including those implicated in the incident that occurred at McKinnon Railway Station on 4 June 2010.

### **Moorabbin Airport: master plan**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 9 June 2010

#### **REPLY:**

The Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government approved the Moorabbin Airport master plan on 25 June 2010.

The *Airports Act 1996* requires that the approved master plan is made available for public inspection within 50 business days of its approval. I understand that the Moorabbin Airport Corporation will, within this time frame, arrange for copies to be made available for inspection and purchase and will ensure the master plan is published on its website.



My Government prepared a Whole of Victorian Government Response to the draft Moorabbin Airport master plan released in April 2009 seeking that the master plan better align with State policies and address issues of safety and impacts on the community. I am hopeful that these issues have been addressed in the final master plan.

### **Hospitals: outpatient services**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr D. Davis**

**Raised on: 22 June 2010**

#### **REPLY:**

The figures cited relate to the number of patients scheduled or waiting for an appointment at specialist outpatient clinics at major Victorian Hospitals.

It is important to note that outpatient appointments are organised on a clinic by clinic, individual health service basis. The appointments themselves are a mix of pre and post-operative procedures, treatment and care for surgical, medical and allied health issues.

It should be noted that the number of patients waiting at any service is not a measure of the time that patients will wait for their appointment, or the clinical appropriateness of the waiting times.

Around 70 to 80 per cent of patients attending specialist outpatient clinics do so for review appointments. Review patients need to be seen when clinically appropriate and many are booked well in advance.

New referrals are prioritised by hospitals so that urgent patients are seen quickly. Where necessary, patients waiting to see specialists have their conditions monitored by other health providers, including GPs and hospital based allied health and nursing staff.

In 2008–09, there were approximately 1.3 million patient treatments in specialist outpatient clinics — that's 25 000 appointments per week. The capacity of Victoria's specialist outpatient system has increased by almost 25 per cent under the current Labor Government.

The Government believes that investment and reform of specialist clinic services is the key to improving patient access to these services. This year's Budget provides \$32 million to fund increases in specialist clinic activity and reform activities enabling 32 000 additional outpatient appointments. This is in addition to the \$44 million provided since 2006–07 to create an extra 200 000 specialist clinic appointments. The Government has also established three super clinics with \$45 million in recurrent funding to deliver additional public specialist clinic services.

### **Rail: Manor Lakes**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Ms Hartland**

**Raised on: 22 June 2010**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 22 June 2010 in relation to Manor Lakes and the Regional Rail Link project.

Regional Rail Link is a key part of the Victorian Transport Plan. This project will provide much needed public transport infrastructure to Melbourne's growing western suburbs, including a new rail line from west Werribee to Deer Park and new stations at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit.

At this point, there has been no decision made on the vertical rail alignment in Manor Lakes.

A range of complex circumstances are involved in constructing the Regional Rail Link in Manor Lakes, and I understand that the Regional Rail Link project team is currently working through these issues with stakeholders including the Growth Areas Authority, the Department of Planning and Community Development, VicRoads, and Wyndham City Council to develop the best integrated solution within the available budget.

In June 2010, a series of community information sessions were held in Wyndham Vale and Tarneit to provide local residents with an overview of the Regional Rail Link project, of where the new rail line will run and of station locations. The sessions also gave residents an opportunity to provide verbal and written feedback, and these comments are being considered as part of the decision-making process.

As more information becomes available, the Regional Rail Link project team will keep the community informed through letterbox drops, email and website updates, community information sessions and advertisements in the local papers.

### **V/Line: passenger information**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr Hall**

**Raised on: 22 June 2010**

#### **REPLY:**

Two significant incidents, the breakdown of a freight train at both Morwell and Moe, and a V/Line passenger service being disabled at Bunyip early on Friday 18 June 2010, created a series of 'knock-on' effects for V/Line services well into the evening.

The above incidents affected the 3.27 p.m. V/Line service from Caulfield to Traralgon. Information about V/Line trains travelling through the metropolitan area is reliant on Metro Trains making announcements to V/Line passengers. It was Metro's responsibility to notify its staff at Caulfield Railway Station of the platform change and to relay this message to awaiting V/Line customers in a timely manner. The failure of Metro to make an announcement is being investigated by V/Line.

As a consequence of the earlier incidents, the 4.10 p.m. V/Line service to Traralgon was cancelled. Two further V/Line services, the 4.47 p.m. and 5.35 p.m. to Traralgon, were also delayed as a consequence. The unplanned nature of these events prevented V/Line from providing advance notice on its website, however the website was updated as events unfolded. V/Line's service centre (telephone 136 196) provided updated information as it became available.

V/Line endeavours to provide rail replacement bus services in a timely manner but was unable to do so on this occasion. This was due to the short notice and the multiple locations, including Pakenham, that needed to be serviced. In addition, the bus companies in the area had no spare buses because of peak period demand. The intention was to have the road coaches meet the metropolitan services at Pakenham, however as this was not possible, road coaches had to be sent from Melbourne further extending the delay.

Overall, V/Line's scheduled services exceed performance targets for reliability (services delivered). For the last 12 months, more than 96 per cent of scheduled Gippsland services have run. V/Line will continue to work closely with Metro management and staff to improve processes so that information is conveyed to passengers in an accurate and timely manner.

**V/Line: passenger information**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr P. Davis**

**Raised on: 22 June 2010**

**REPLY:**

Two significant incidents, the breakdown of a freight train at both Morwell and Moe, and a V/Line passenger service being disabled at Bunyip early on Friday 18 June 2010, created a series of 'knock-on' effects for V/Line services well into the evening.

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**Breast cancer: study**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr Kavanagh**

**Raised on: 23 June 2010**

**REPLY:**

Findings of studies investigating a link between induced or spontaneous abortion and breast cancer are conflicting. Some studies have shown no link between abortion and breast cancer, others have shown a small increased risk.

The three studies cited are case control studies which compare persons with the disease (cases) and persons without the disease (controls). These type of studies have a number of methodological flaws including reliance of woman's recall of abortion, recall bias, inadequate data on spontaneous abortions, differentiation of abortion method (surgical versus medical), type of breast cancer, age of woman, selection bias, small numbers of participants, inadequate matching of the cases and controls, diet, environmental exposures lifestyle (smoking/alcohol) and many other factors. Due to the methodological problems the findings of these studies are open to question and are not considered to be reliable

The most reliable study in this area is a 1997 Danish study which produced strong evidence that abortion does not increase the risk of breast cancer. The evidence in the study came from 1.5 million women listed on the Danish health registries. The study had a strong and powerful design in that information about abortion was collected from all of the women before any were diagnosed with breast cancer. After adjustment for known risk factors, induced abortion was not associated with an increased risk of breast cancer (N Eng J Med 1997, 336: 81–85).

Another large sample study included 267 361 women in Europe who were recruited between 1992 and 2000. The European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition study findings were based on data from 20 centres, across 9 countries. In this study, information was collected from a total of 4805 women with breast cancer, of whom 1657 reported having ever had any type of termination. Overall, the findings provide further strong evidence of the lack of an adverse effect of induced abortion on breast cancer risk (Int J Cancer 2006;119:1741–1745).

There are a number of independent risk factors associated with breast cancer and large scale studies and combined analysis of smaller studies provide little evidence that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer.

### **Righteous Pups: relocation**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mr Drum

**Raised on:** 24 June 2010

#### **REPLY:**

The government has acknowledged the need to develop new and better approaches to meet the needs of people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through the development of the Autism State Plan. The Plan was launched in May 2009 and includes a range of initiatives across government. The first annual report on the implementation of the Plan is now available on the Autism State Plan website [autismstateplan.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://autismstateplan.dhs.vic.gov.au). This report summarises achievements to date and describes how this work will be built on in 2010–11.

The organisation Righteous Pups is well known to the Loddon Mallee Region's Disability Services Program, and I have asked that a representative of the region work with the organisation to explore possible solutions to their current accommodation issues. I understand that the regional representative is meeting with the Managing Director of Righteous Pups on 3 August 2010.

### **Housing: homelessness strategy**

**Raised with:** Minister for Housing

**Raised by:** Ms Lovell

**Raised on:** 24 June 2010

#### **REPLY:**

Victoria is recognised as leading Australia in responses to homelessness. The Victorian Government, in concert with the Commonwealth Government, has committed to one of the biggest investments in decades to increase affordable housing. Under the Nation Building and Jobs National Partnership Agreement, Victoria has been allocated \$1.167 billion to fund new social housing resulting in 4500 new public and social housing units across Victoria over the next two years. At the same time around 2350 new homes will be added to the housing supply from Victoria's own record \$510 million investment.

Through the Victorian Government Growth Strategy, the Nation Building and Jobs National Partnership Agreement and National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) we will have provided an additional 14 350 affordable rental stock by 2013. Increasing supply is the most effective way of reducing upward pressure on

rents. Moreover, over the next two years the NRAS will deliver 7500 new homes in the private market. This scheme delivers properties at 20 per cent below market rents and is the biggest injection of affordable accommodation into the private rental market in decades.

The Victorian Government has embarked on the development of a Victorian *Homelessness 2020 Strategy*. Following broad community and government consultation, a draft *strategy* has been developed and is currently under formal review by the Victorian Government. On 28 April 2010, a consultation summary paper was emailed to stakeholders who put forward written submissions in response to the *Homelessness 2020 Strategy Discussion Paper*. Also included in this email was an update on the status of the draft *Homelessness 2020 Strategy*, outlining that a number of targeted discussions would occur with key stakeholders, including peak bodies, ahead of publication of the final *Strategy* later in the year. Due to the overwhelming number of high quality responses received throughout the consultation process and the complexity of the issues surrounding homelessness and a whole-of-government approach, the release date for the *Homelessness 2020 Strategy* is now expected later in the year.

### **Loch Sport: wastewater treatment**

**Raised with:** Minister for Water

**Raised by:** Mr P. Davis

**Raised on:** 27 July 2010

#### **REPLY:**

The *Gippsland Lakes Future Directions and Action Plan* identified that a wastewater management system for Loch Sport would assist in reducing nutrient input into the Gippsland Lakes. The Victorian Government subsequently approved a funding contribution of over \$8 million from the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program for the Loch Sport project in 2006.

Gippsland Water has concluded its investigations into a sewerage scheme for Loch Sport and has submitted a project business case for the Government's consideration.



**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Thursday, 12 August 2010**

**Transport: Victorian plan**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr O'Donohue**

**Raised on: 25 May 2010**

**REPLY:**

The current scope and cost of the \$220 million New Stations in Growth Areas program includes a comprehensive package of works to construct railway stations in Caroline Springs, Lynbrook, Williams Landing and Cardinia Road in Pakenham.

*Meeting Our Transport Challenges* committed \$60 million for new stations in Lynbrook, Williams Landing and Cardinia Road in Pakenham. This figure was a high level planning estimate and was limited to basic infrastructure costs for the construction of three stations. It did not include a station for Caroline Springs which is funded in the \$220 million package.

The \$220 million budget includes both capital funding and costs for ongoing operations once services commence at the new stations. Additionally, the budget incorporates general cost escalations in the construction industry.

**Rail: western Victoria**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr Koch**

**Raised on: 27 May 2010**

**REPLY:**

As part of *The Victorian Transport Plan* released in December 2008, the Government announced the construction of the Regional Rail Link, a new, dual-track railway link between West Werribee and Southern Cross Station. This project, representing a total investment of \$4.3 billion, will provide separate tracks for regional and metropolitan train services and provide capacity for more than 9000 extra passengers an hour. The Regional Rail Link will provide more frequent and reliable regional rail services, removing the bottleneck where trains on the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo lines reach the metropolitan railway network.

Ahead of the completion of the Regional Rail Link project, I am committed to seeing Geelong line service reliability improve. To that end, the Government is continuing to work closely with both V/Line and Metro to improve the performance and delivery of regional rail services.

The recently completed turn-back at Laverton Railway Station enables train services to start and finish at Laverton and addresses bottlenecks on the rail network and provides a clearer path for V/Line trains. The full impact of this project will come into effect with future timetable changes. Work is under way to develop new integrated metropolitan timetables that are intended to ease some delays for both V/Line and metropolitan trains. These changes are proposed in the coming months.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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COUNCIL

Thursday, 12 August 2010

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Car parking has been upgraded at Ballarat, Ballan, Bacchus Marsh, Deer Park and Lara Railway Stations and a new car park provided at Wendouree Railway Station in Ballarat. A further 300 car parking spaces are nearing completion at Marshall Railway Station on the Geelong line.

Melton Railway Station is one of V/Line's major outer metropolitan stations and continues to experience significant patronage growth. While there are no immediate plans to expand the car park at Melton, I am pleased to advise that the Government has introduced 474 additional weekly metropolitan bus trips in Melton, all serving Melton Railway Station. These services commence on 19 July 2010.



## WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

**Friday, 13 August 2010**

**Consumer Affairs: telephone scam**

**Raised with:** Minister for Consumer Affairs

**Raised by:** Ms Darveniza

**Raised on:** 23 June 2010

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 23 June 2010 in relation to the computer fix scam.

As you have noted, scammers have been cold-calling households and claiming to have detected a virus on their computer, which they offer to remove for a fee. Consumers are asked to provide remote access to their computer and to pay up to \$300 for the removal of the virus. This scam has affected consumers in the United Kingdom as well as Australia and it is believed to be run by criminals operating out of South Asia.

I issued a media release on 15 June 2010 specific to this matter, which resulted in news articles appearing in both metropolitan and regional publications.

I share your concern that vulnerable consumers are made aware of scams. The Government takes a variety of approaches to inform and empower consumers, particularly those who are considered vulnerable or disadvantaged. For example, Consumer Affairs Victoria participates in the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce, a national initiative that holds an annual outreach campaign warning consumers about scams and frauds. I also conduct regular scams sessions to inform and educate the community on how to protect themselves from scams.

To avoid potential fraud I advise consumers to:

- say no to telemarketers trying to sell them products and services they don't need and never send money;
- never give credit card or personal banking details to anyone or any company they don't know and trust, and;
- install up-to-date computer anti-virus and privacy protection software for assurance about the safety and integrity of their PC.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.