

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION**

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

5, 6 and 7 October 2010

(Extract from book 15)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

Professor DAVID de KRETZER, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

The ministry

Premier, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. J. M. Brumby, MP
Deputy Premier, Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. R. J. Hulls, MP
Treasurer, Minister for Information and Communication Technology, and Minister for Financial Services	The Hon. J. Lenders, MLC
Minister for Regional and Rural Development, and Minister for Industry and Trade.	The Hon. J. M. Allan, MP
Minister for Health	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Minister for Energy and Resources, and Minister for the Arts.	The Hon. P. Batchelor, MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. R. G. Cameron, MP
Minister for Community Development	The Hon. L. D' Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Small Business	The Hon. J. Helper, MP
Minister for Finance, WorkCover and the Transport Accident Commission, Minister for Water and Minister for Tourism and Major Events	The Hon. T. J. Holding, MP
Minister for Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Innovation.	The Hon. G. W. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Planning and Minister for the Respect Agenda.	The Hon. J. M. Madden, MLC
Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development and Minister for Women's Affairs	The Hon. M. V. Morand, MP
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Community Services and Minister for Senior Victorians	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MLC
Minister for Roads and Ports, and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Education and Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation	The Hon. B. J. Pike, MP
Minister for Gaming, Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs	The Hon. A. G. Robinson, MP
Minister for Housing, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Mr A. G. Lupton, MP

Legislative Council committees

Legislation Committee — Mr Atkinson, Ms Broad, Mrs Coote, Mr Drum, Ms Mikakos, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Pulford.

Privileges Committee — Ms Darveniza, Mr D. Davis, Mr Drum, Mr Jennings, Ms Mikakos, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Rich-Phillips.

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.

Standing Orders Committee — The President, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Lenders, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Viney.

Joint committees

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr D. Davis, Mr Hall, Mr Jennings, Mr Lenders and Ms Pennicuik. (*Assembly*): Mr Batchelor, Mr Cameron, Mr Clark, Mr Holding, Mr Lupton, Mr McIntosh and Mr Walsh.

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Coote, Mr Leane and Ms Mikakos. (*Assembly*): Ms Beattie, Mr Delahunty, Mrs Maddigan and Mr Morris.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee — (*Council*): Mr Atkinson, Mr D. Davis and Mr Tee. (*Assembly*): Ms Campbell, Mr Crisp, Mr Lim and Ms Thomson.

Education and Training Committee — (*Council*): Mr Elasmarr and Mr Hall. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Dr Harkness, Mr Herbert, Mr Howard and Mr Kotsiras.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Council*): Ms Broad, Mr P. Davis and Mr Somyurek. (*Assembly*): Ms Campbell, Mr O'Brien, Mr Scott and Mr Thompson.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Council*): Mr Murphy and Mrs Petrovich. (*Assembly*): Ms Duncan, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Ingram, Ms Lobato, Mr Pandazopoulos and Mr Walsh.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Finn and Mr Scheffer. (*Assembly*): Ms Kairouz, Mr Noonan, Mr Perera, Mrs Powell and Mrs Shardey.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Atkinson, Ms Darveniza, Mr Drum, Mr Eideh and Ms Hartland. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Ms Beattie, Mr Delahunty, Mr Howard, Mr Kotsiras, Mr Scott and Mr K. Smith.

Law Reform Committee — (*Council*): Mrs Kronberg and Mr Scheffer. (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks, Mr Clark, Mr Donnellan, Mr Foley and Mrs Victoria.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Elasmarr, Mr Guy and Ms Hartland. (*Assembly*): Mr Hodgett, Mr Nardella, Mr Seitz and Mr K. Smith.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva, Ms Huppert, Ms Pennicuik and Mr Rich-Phillips. (*Assembly*): Ms Graley, Mr Noonan, Mr Scott, Mr Stensholt, Dr Sykes and Mr Wells.

Road Safety Committee — (*Council*): Mr Koch and Mr Leane. (*Assembly*): Mr Eren, Mr Tilley, Mr Trezise and Mr Weller.

Rural and Regional Committee — (*Council*): Ms Darveniza, Mr Drum, Ms Lovell, Ms Tierney and Mr Vogels. (*Assembly*): Mr Nardella and Mr Northe.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): Mr Eideh, Mr O'Donohue, Mrs Peulich and Ms Pulford. (*Assembly*): Mr Brooks, Mr Burgess, Mr Carli, Mr Jasper and Mr Languiller.

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

Council — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr W. R. Tunnecliffe

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

President: The Hon. R. F. SMITH

Deputy President: Mr BRUCE ATKINSON

Acting Presidents: Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmar, Mr Finn, Ms Huppert, Mr Leane, Ms Pennicuik, Mrs Peulich,
Ms Pulford, Mr Somyurek and Mr Vogels

Leader of the Government:
Mr JOHN LENDERS

Deputy Leader of the Government:
Mr GAVIN JENNINGS

Leader of the Opposition:
Mr DAVID DAVIS

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:
Ms WENDY LOVELL

Leader of The Nationals:
Mr PETER HALL

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:
Mr DAMIAN DRUM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Lenders, Mr John	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP
Broad, Ms Candy Celeste	Northern Victoria	ALP	Madden, Hon. Justin Mark	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Coote, Mrs Andrea	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Murphy, Mr Nathan ²	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Darveniza, Ms Kaye Mary	Northern Victoria	ALP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pakula, Hon. Martin Philip	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Davis, Mr Philip Rivers	Eastern Victoria	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Petrovich, Mrs Donna-Lee	Northern Victoria	LP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Northern Metropolitan	LP	Scheffer, Mr Johan Emiel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hall, Mr Peter Ronald	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Smith, Hon. Robert Frederick	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Huppert, Ms Jennifer Sue ¹	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Tee, Mr Brian Lennox	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Theophanous, Hon. Theo Charles ³	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Kavanagh, Mr Peter Damian	Western Victoria	DLP	Thornley, Mr Evan William ⁴	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
Koch, Mr David Frank	Western Victoria	LP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Vogels, Mr John Adrian	Western Victoria	LP

¹ Appointed 3 February 2009

² Appointed 9 March 2010

³ Resigned 1 March 2010

⁴ Resigned 9 January 2009

CONTENTS

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

TUESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2010

<i>Schools: On Track data</i>	5335
<i>Hospitals: government performance</i>	5335, 5336
<i>Crime: knife attacks</i>	5337
<i>Police: Bairnsdale</i>	5338
<i>Housing: government performance</i>	5338
<i>Police: western Victoria</i>	5339
<i>Bendigo hospital: funding</i>	5340
<i>Monash Medical Centre: patient care</i>	5340
<i>Police: Werribee</i>	5341
<i>Police: freedom of information requests</i>	5341
<i>City of Banyule: street lighting</i>	5342
<i>Black Forest Drive: traffic management</i>	5342
<i>Nagambie Preschool and Child Care: funding</i>	5343
<i>Torquay Kindergarten: facility upgrade</i>	5343
<i>Kindergartens: government support</i>	5344
<i>Housing: Dandenong tenants</i>	5345
<i>Nurses: national registration</i>	5346
<i>Bushfires: local government</i>	5347
<i>Ballarat Health Services: funding</i>	5347
<i>Alpine Health: Bright campus</i>	5348
<i>Dental services: fluoride supplements</i>	5348
<i>Electricity: western Victoria</i>	5349
<i>Autism: western suburbs schools</i>	5350
<i>Gippsland Plains rail trail: funding</i>	5351
<i>Country Fire Authority: funding</i>	5351
<i>Local government: street lighting</i>	5352
<i>Water: Dethridge wheels</i>	5352
<i>Toorak Road, Camberwell: speed zone</i>	5353
<i>Yanakee Isthmus: wildlife viewing project</i>	5353
<i>Port of Melbourne: Webb Dock</i>	5354
<i>Toorloo Arm Primary School: funding</i>	5354
<i>Consumer affairs: responsible service of alcohol</i>	5355

WEDNESDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2010

<i>Bushfires: community consultation</i>	5357
<i>Police: western Victoria</i>	5358
<i>Public transport: Glen Waverley</i>	5358
<i>Rail: Melton station</i>	5359
<i>Rail: Laverton station</i>	5359, 5366
<i>Mordialloc Creek: dredging</i>	5360
<i>Police: northern Victoria</i>	5361
<i>Country Fire Authority: Warburton station</i>	5362
<i>Police: Craigieburn</i>	5362
<i>Kindergartens: Drouin</i>	5363
<i>Cranbourne Road–Moorooduc Highway, Frankston: intersection</i>	5364
<i>Rail: Frankston line</i>	5364
<i>Health: federal government plan</i>	5365
<i>Public transport: myki ticketing system</i>	5365
<i>Southern Metropolitan Region: health services</i>	5366
<i>Bendigo: bus depot</i>	5366
<i>Queenscliff: boating facilities</i>	5367

<i>Waterbirds: protection</i>	5368
<i>Emergency services: Tamboon South helipad</i>	5368
<i>Bushfires: fuel reduction</i>	5369
<i>Consumer affairs: retirement village maintenance fees</i>	5369
<i>Police: South Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	5370
<i>Portarlington: foreshore</i>	5371

THURSDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2010

<i>Gaming: Pink Hill Hotel</i>	5373
<i>Frankston Reservoir: future</i>	5375
<i>Black Forest Drive: traffic management</i>	5376
<i>Buses: SmartBus route 903</i>	5376

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 5 October 2010

Schools: On Track data

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 13 April 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The published *On Track* data relate only to the survey results, therefore the total completed column refers to the total number of Year 12 students who completed the survey, not the number of students who completed Year 12. This is explained in the notes table that accompanies the data.

The CASES21 system is used by all secondary schools to record the intended student post school destination. However, this information is collected in December as the students are exiting. The *On Track* Year 12 survey, which is conducted in April, collects actual destination data, including deferral data at this time. Any perceived inaccuracy in the data would largely be due to the difference in collection date combined with deferral data which cannot be collected by schools in December.

Each year, *On Track* survey response rates are clearly provided to schools as an individual report. In 2009 the response rate for Bendigo Senior Secondary College was 85 per cent.

The overall consent rate for the 2009 Year 12 completer survey was very high — 89 per cent. High consent (and response) rates are a feature of *On Track* and over the seven years of the survey, this has been due to the high level of support for the survey from schools in all sectors.

Hospitals: government performance

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 6 May 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Labor Government is committed to providing high-quality health services to the community.

In the six months to December 2009, compared with the same period last year, Victoria's hospitals treated an additional 29 000 emergency department patients, 9000 admitted patients, 32 000 patient treatments in specialist outpatient clinics, and provided more than 26 000 additional days of admitted care in a hospital bed.

Between July and December 2009, Victoria's public hospitals treated more than 2000 additional elective surgery patients compared to the same period in 2008.

In the period July to December 2009, median waiting times for elective surgery were reduced from 33 days in 2008 to 32 days. The most recent published national average (in 2007–08) was 34 days.

In the same period, the percentage of patients treated in time increased from 84 per cent to 87 per cent. Again, this is better than the most recent published national average.

The July to December 2009 period saw more patients being treated in Victoria's hospital emergency departments. Emergency presentations increased by more than 29 000 or 4.4 per cent during this period. Despite this additional pressure on the hospital system, more emergency patients are being treated within clinically desirable times. During this period, over 6000 more of the most complex emergency department patients were treated within clinically desirable times than at the same time last year.

The Brumby Labor Government has invested \$7.5 billion in the largest health capital works program in the State's history and boosted recurrent funding to our hospitals by 153 per cent. More recently, at a recent COAG meeting in April, the Brumby Government secured more than \$900 million in additional investment for Victorian patients over the next four years.

This Government is committed to delivering world class public hospitals and innovation in service delivery and will continue to respond to the challenges and demand for hospital services.

Hospitals: government performance

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 6 May 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Labor Government is committed to providing high quality health services to the community.

In the six months to December 2009, compared with the same period last year, Victoria's hospitals treated an additional 29 000 emergency department patients, 9000 admitted patients, 32 000 patient treatments in specialist outpatient clinics, and provided more than 26 000 additional days of admitted care in a hospital bed.

Between July and December 2009, Victoria's public hospitals treated more than 2000 additional elective surgery patients compared to the same period in 2008.

In the period July to December 2009, median waiting times for elective surgery were reduced from 33 days in 2008 to 32 days. The most recent published national average (in 2007–08) was 34 days.

In the same period, the percentage of patients treated in time increased from 84 per cent to 87 per cent. Again, this is better than the most recent published national average.

The July to December 2009 period saw more patients being treated in Victoria's hospital emergency departments. Emergency presentations increased by more than 29 000 or 4.4 per cent during this period. Despite this additional pressure on the hospital system, more emergency patients are being treated within clinically desirable times. During this period, over 6000 more of the most complex emergency department patients were treated within clinically desirable times than at the same time last year.

The Brumby Labor Government has invested \$7.5 billion in the largest health capital works program in the State's history and boosted recurrent funding to our hospitals by 153 per cent. More recently, at a recent COAG meeting in April, the Brumby Government secured more than \$900 million in additional investment for Victorian patients over the next four years.

This Government is committed to delivering world class public hospitals and innovation in service delivery and will continue to respond to the challenges and demand for hospital services.

Crime: knife attacks

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 8 June 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement and public order operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. This will be the biggest ever increase over a five-year period, building on the previous decade.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993. The number of front-line police in the Bendigo and Shepparton Police Service Areas (PSAs) have increased by over 23 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively. Further, the crime rate in the Bendigo and Shepparton PSAs fell by 15.8 and 15.3 per cent respectively since 2000–01.

The Operational Response Unit (ORU) carries out targeted operations focusing on alcohol and weapons offences, and dangerous and irresponsible driver behaviour. With specially recruited and trained police, the ORU is now being deployed where they will have the strongest impact across the State in the CBD, metropolitan, regional and rural areas. This initiative builds on the Government's comprehensive package to address safety in central Melbourne and entertainment precincts across the state, by creating a more visible police presence, stronger enforcement, a greater onus on patrons and licensees to act responsibly as well as addressing the culture of alcohol and violence.

The Brumby Government has been proactive in its efforts to tackle the problem of violence involving knives and similarly categorised weapons. The Government's tough action to increase penalties and to strengthen police powers reflects the strong community concern about the incidence of weapons related offending.

In 2007 penalties for the unlawful possession, carriage and use of prohibited and controlled weapons were doubled and carrying dangerous articles for self-defence was outlawed. The Government also doubled the penalties for the unlawful carriage or use of weapons in or immediately outside licensed venues. These increased penalties are designed to deter the carriage of weapons such as knives in and around hotels and clubs where alcohol-fuelled violence is more likely to erupt.

In December 2009 new legislation was enacted giving police stronger powers to combat antisocial behaviour and violence, especially violence involving the use of weapons, in the Melbourne CBD and other trouble spots across the state. This has included new random search powers for weapons in designated areas, a new power for police to direct people to move-on from a public place where there is a fear there will be a breach of the peace, and a new offence of disorderly conduct. Police are also able to impose an on-the-spot penalty for the new offence of disorderly conduct, as well as the existing offences of drunk, and drunk and disorderly behaviour. On 1 July 2010, the penalty for these offences was doubled to \$478. The Government believes these new measures will provide members of Victoria Police with the powers they need to address street violence and the unlawful use of knives.

While the number of knife attacks has reduced by over 25 per cent since 2001–02. The Government remains committed to reducing the carriage and use of knives and weapons, especially by children. The Parliament has now

passed legislation to boost random weapons searches in public areas and to ban the sale of knives and other controlled weapons to persons aged under 18 years. Also included is a new 'on the spot' penalty of \$1000 for persons aged 16 and over carrying a knife or other controlled weapon without lawful excuse.

The Government recognises the importance of changing the culture around knives, attitudes and behaviours and the need to build greater respect in our community. In March this year the 'Knives Scar Lives' campaign was launched to warn young people of the dangers and consequences of carrying knives. Billboards have been placed in high-profile locations such as railway stations, shopping centres and on buses and trams in both metropolitan and regional areas. Online messages are now on social networking sites such as Facebook and My Space. The campaign is also supported by two AFL teams which are encouraging supporters to spread the message. The second stage of this campaign coincides with the introduction of the tough new laws.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Police: Bairnsdale

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 8 June 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement and public order operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. This will be the biggest ever increase over a five-year period, building on the previous decade.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993.

Victoria Police advises me they have recently written to you on this matter. I am informed that the local Sergeant has discussed concerns about incidents involving Gillick's Bus Lines and risks arising from antisocial behaviour with Mr and Mrs Gillick. He has also taken action to involve the local Crime Prevention Officer to develop proactive strategies to address this type of concerning public behaviour.

Victoria Police advises Mr and Mrs Gillick are satisfied with the service being provided to address their concerns.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Housing: government performance

Raised with: Minister for Housing

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 9 June 2010

REPLY:

I am pleased to advise the House and the Honourable Member for Northern Victoria that the Government is committed to providing high-quality services to the 70 000 Public Housing tenants across the state through the Department of Human Services' Office of Housing.

Clients of the Office of Housing are housed on a priority basis and assessment of these priorities can only be made upon receipt of the appropriate applications and supporting documentation. In the instance of Mr Carter, his application was received by the Office of Housing on Monday 7 June 2010 and approved to the Segment 1 Early Housing waiting list on the same day.

I can advise that Mr Carter and his family have been offered and have accepted a Public Housing property in Mooropna and they moved into this property in June of this year.

Before the Office of Housing's allocation of Public Housing, Mr Carter and his family were provided with temporary accommodation that was funded through the Housing Establishment Fund and income received by the Carter family. The local homelessness agencies have been extremely committed to finding the Carter family a sustainable housing solution and have done some amazing work to secure them the Public Housing property in which they now reside. The family will continue to be supported during the first few months of their tenancy and are currently working with the Office of Housing to ensure the property is modified to the needs of all of the family members and we expect that this work will be completed in the coming months.

Police: western Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 9 June 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement, public order and road safety operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. This will be the biggest ever increase over a five-year period, building on the previous decade.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993.

Decisions on the placement of police throughout the state are operational matters and are made by police command on the basis of assessed need. It is important that this process is not subject to political interference. I am assured by the Chief Commissioner of Police that the level of policing across Victoria is continuously monitored by the respective Regional Command Officers, with a view to maintaining optimum policing effectiveness.

Victoria Police has advised that a statement about police resources attributed to Chief Inspector Don Downes and published in the Hamilton *Spectator* Newspaper on 17 June 2010 was not made by Inspector Downes. Inspector Downes, the new Victoria Police Southern Grampians General Manager has contacted the newspaper to correct the

published information. Inspector Downes was earlier quoted in an article on 25 May 2010 indicating that additional resources from the Operational Response Unit and other support groups have been provided to support police in Western Victoria in their operational policing activities.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Bendigo hospital: funding

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 9 June 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Labor Government strongly supports Bendigo Health. That's why we have increased recurrent funding by over 157 per cent, from \$58 million when Labor first came to office to now over \$149 million.

In the 2008–09 State Budget, \$9.5 million was provided to redevelop the emergency department, which will allow Bendigo Health to better manage demand through a new short stay unit and redesigned space. The new emergency department will be opened before the end of the year, allowing patients to receive world class care, in first class facilities.

In the 2009–10 State Budget, \$55M to Bendigo Health included funding for enabling works as well as funding for a complex fire service upgrade. This includes fitting fire sprinklers to inpatient areas of the acute hospital.

This work requires significant planning and scheduling as the health service must find decanting space throughout the hospital to minimise the overall impact. The plan included the construction of an additional 8 beds for decanting purposes.

As works progress, the health service relocates pockets of the hospital to the new beds to allow works to be completed. They return services to their original location at the completion of the works. When all works are completed, it is Bendigo Health's intention to use these beds as additional capacity for the region.

In the 2010–11 State Budget, the Brumby Labor Government was pleased to announce \$473 million to build a new Bendigo hospital, the largest regional hospital project ever undertaken in Victoria's history.

To date, the Member for Northern Victoria, Donna Petrovich, is yet to say that she supports the redevelopment, let alone commit any funding to this build project.

As usual, it seems that the Donna Petrovich and the Liberal-National coalition are more comfortable talking down and closing down hospitals then committing to open them.

Monash Medical Centre: patient care

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 9 June 2010

REPLY:

As Ms Chen's concerns have been referred to conciliation by the Health Service's Commissioner (HSC) under the *Health Services (Conciliation and Review) Act 1987*, I am unable to comment as proceedings within the conciliation process are confidential to the parties.

I am advised that Southern Health have investigated the issues raised in Ms Chen's correspondence and have prepared a response for the HSC.

Police: Werribee

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 24 June 2010

REPLY:

I am advised that the Werribee Police Station was closed for three days, from 23 to 25 June 2010, to enable renovations to be carried out. Although the contractor engaged to carry out this work had advised that disruption would be minimal and there would be no need for closure, once work commenced it became obvious that a short closure was necessary.

I am advised that notices were placed on the front door of the Werribee Police Station directing members of the public with counter inquiries to the new Wyndham North Police Station, approximately 6 kilometres away. In addition, the temporary closure was advertised on the Victoria Police website.

Victoria Police has also advised that since the opening of the Wyndham North Police Station in March this year, the Wyndham Police Service Area (PSA) normally has two police vehicles operating. During busy periods a third vehicle will also operate in the PSA.

It should be noted that these patrols are supplemented by the PSA Family Violence Unit, which has uniformed officers also responding to calls, and the Tasking Unit which operates over five days and assists with incidents of antisocial behaviour. The Traffic Management Unit is also available as a back up if required. Wyndham has also benefited from extended operations conducted by the Operational Response Unit during June, July and August this year.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Police: freedom of information requests

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 24 June 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement, public order and road safety operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. This will be the biggest ever increase over a five-year period, building on the previous decade.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993.

The Chief Commissioner of Police is the Principal Officer for Victoria Police for the purposes of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (the Act) and the person responsible for making decisions pursuant to section 26 of the Act. Decisions in regard to access to Victoria Police documents, including appeals relating thereto, are matters for the Chief Commissioner and the Minister has no role in this process. In this instance, the role of the Minister is restricted to section 65AB(2)(b) of the Act, which requires that the responsible Minister in respect of the agency seeking leave to appeal must cause a brief statement of the reason or reasons for seeking leave to appeal to be published in the *Government Gazette* and to be tabled before each House of Parliament.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

City of Banyule: street lighting

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mrs Kronberg

Raised on: 27 July 2010

REPLY:

The Victorian Government's recently released *Taking Action for Victoria's Future: Victorian Climate Change White Paper — The Action Plan* states that the Premier will host a Local Government Climate Change Summit in October 2010.

A priority for this Summit will be to work with local government, and electricity distribution businesses, to develop finance options to upgrade public lighting infrastructure with low carbon technologies.

The aim is to ensure that this transition can be undertaken effectively, at low cost, and in the shortest possible time frame.

Black Forest Drive: traffic management

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 27 July 2010

REPLY:

The Coalition's announcement came a month after the Government had already taken action.

After concerns were raised by the local member, Joanne Duncan, on behalf of the local community, I immediately had VicRoads suspend works on the 25 June 2010. VicRoads has now re-instated all line marking on the northern section of Black Forest Drive near Woodend.

The re-configuration of traffic lanes on the northern section of Black Forest Drive was part of a larger \$1.35 million project aimed at improving the safety on this road.

Since the Calder Freeway opened, Black Forest Drive has continued to have a poor crash history despite a reduction in traffic volumes. There have been 19 recorded casualty crashes, including three fatalities, along Black Forest Drive since December 2001, with 9 of these being 'run-off the road' crashes.

As part of the community consultation process already under way, VicRoads will work with the community and stakeholders to identify a solution for Black Forest Drive that best addresses the safety issues and concerns that have been raised by the community.

During the consultation, VicRoads will also monitor the safety and operation of the southern section of Black Forest Drive. A final decision will be made on the future direction of the works following completion of the comprehensive consultation process.

Nagambie Preschool and Child Care: funding

Raised with: Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 28 July 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Nagambie Preschool and Child Care Centre recently applied for a \$200,000.00 grant under the 2009–10 Children's Capital Grants Program. The number of high calibre applications received greatly outnumbered the grants that were available resulting in Nagambie's application not being successful.

The Nagambie Preschool and Child Care Centre has been invited to apply for the 2010–11 funding round of the Capital Grants Program which opened on Thursday 29 July and closed on 14 September. The 2010–11 grants are designed to enable community-funded kindergarten services to provide additional kindergarten places to meet the increasing demand for kindergarten and maintain other early education and care programs. The grants will also complement the implementation of a range of national early childhood reforms including the Universal Access to 15 hours per week of kindergarten.

Officers from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Hume Region met with representatives of the Nagambie Preschool and Child Care Centre on 24 August to support the Centre to develop an application that would address the funding criteria. Two representatives from the Nagambie Preschool and Child Care Centre also attended a regional information session on Friday 30 July 2010 to discuss the grants application process.

Applications for the 2010–11 Children's Capital Grants Program Renovation will be assessed according to the Priorities and Key Selection Criteria within the Renovation and Refurbishment grants guidelines.

Torquay Kindergarten: facility upgrade

Raised with: Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 28 July 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The provision of kindergarten has been a successful partnership between the State Government, local governments, kindergarten service providers, early childhood staff and parents. This demonstrated, ongoing commitment is a significant reason Victoria has maintained consistently high levels of participation in kindergarten programs in the year before school.

The National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education was signed in November 2008, with the aim that every child will have access to a quality early childhood education program for 15 hours per week in the year before school. The Commonwealth Government has committed \$970 million over five years for this reform, including \$210.6 million for Victoria.

The Victorian Government has committed \$238 million this year for kindergarten programs, resources and infrastructure. This represents a 225 per cent increase in funding over the past decade.

To successfully implement 15 hours of kindergarten the Victorian Government has undertaken ongoing consultation, communication and engagement with families, kindergarten service providers, early childhood staff, local government and other key stakeholders.

Pilots and innovative approaches which will inform the state-wide implementation of universal access are being undertaken. These pilots will help develop strategies on how 15 hours of kindergarten can be delivered in a range of settings, including the identification of approaches to maintain three-year-old access.

Local councils have been funded a total of \$3.1 million since August 2009 to undertake municipal planning to assess the capacity for the implementation of universal access in their municipality. Surf Coast Shire received \$50 000 to undertake this work with the results in a Capacity Assessment Report to be collated by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The 18-month review of the implementation of the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education by Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is currently under way and will consider the adequacy of funding provided under the agreement to achieve specified outcomes as well as the implementation time lines of the initiative. The Department has used information provided by local councils in the Capacity Assessment and Final Reports to compile a submission to the review.

Kindergartens: government support

Raised with: Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 29 July 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The commitment by all Australian governments to a range of reforms in early childhood education and care, including the NPECE, will improve accessibility to quality early childhood services for families and their children.

The Victorian Government recognises that the achievement of universal access will require major sector transformation in Victoria. To successfully implement 15 hours of kindergarten for all children in the year before school, the Victorian Government has undertaken ongoing consultation, communication and engagement with families, kindergarten service providers, early childhood staff, local government and other key stakeholders.

Partnership arrangements have also been established between the State Government and peak bodies, representing local councils, kindergartens, kindergarten cluster managers and the community and private child care providers.

The Commonwealth Government has committed \$970 million over five years for the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (NPECE), including \$210.6 million for Victoria. In the early years of the Agreement funding is being directed to support planning by local councils, pilots and trials, to determine the cost of the additional hours, implementation of the workforce strategy and infrastructure grants for services. The majority of the funding will be received in the final years of the agreement and will support services to deliver increased hours of kindergarten.

An important part of the planning process is to understand the impact which implementation of the universal access commitment will have on other programs such as activity groups for three year old children, playgroups and other community programs, before hours are increased from 10 hours to 15 hours per week so that implementation can be managed in a manner which will meet local needs.

Local councils have been funded a total of \$3.1 million since August 2009 for municipal planning to assess the capacity for the implementation of universal access in their municipalities.

Plans for further support to councils and kindergarten providers to optimise available places and assist with implementation of universal access are currently being developed. The Municipal Association of Victoria has been funded until 2013 to support councils with planning for the implementation of universal access.

The Victorian Government has committed \$238 million in the 2010–11 financial year for kindergarten programs, resources and infrastructure. This represents a 225 per cent increase in funding over the past decade. It was recently announced that 23 services will share \$4.6 million in Renovation and Refurbishment Grants to increase their infrastructure capacity to deliver universal access and a further round of the Children's Capital Program has recently opened for kindergartens to expand their services.

Pilots and trials of innovative approaches which will inform the statewide roll out of universal access are being undertaken at 20 kindergarten programs across the state over the rest of 2010 and will continue through 2011 to help develop strategies on how 15 hours of kindergarten for all children in the year before school can be delivered in a range of settings.

The Victorian Early Childhood Workforce Strategy contains a number of actions including a qualifications fund and an incentives fund designed to support existing staff to upgrade their qualifications and to attract and retain qualified early childhood teachers, particularly in hard to staff locations and long day care.

Housing: Dandenong tenants

Raised with: Minister for Housing

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 29 July 2010

REPLY:

Ms Melanie Hastie's mother's (Mrs Margaret Basset's) tenancy commenced at 27 Burchall Grove, Dandenong North on 25 January 1987. The original household members included her daughters Ms Hastie and Cassandra Basset. Ms Hastie moved out of the property on 2 December 1988 aged 16 years and Ms Cassandra Basset vacated on 2 May 1999.

From February 2008 to March 2010 Ms Hastie has received assistance from a number of Community Housing and Homelessness support agencies including WAYSS Ltd Family Violence Crisis and Outreach Service, Hanover Welfare Services after hours response and Peninsula Youth and Family Services Family Violence Crisis Service as a result of incidents of family violence. On 13 May 2010 Ms Hastie contacted WAYSS Ltd and she was provided with short-term accommodation in a motel between the dates of 27–30 May 2010.

Ms Hastie contacted the Dandenong Housing Office on 25 May 2010 to advise that her mother had passed away. Ms Hastie further advised that her daughter aged 22 was also residing in the property at Burchall Grove, Dandenong North and would vacate within the month. On 28 June 2010 Ms Hastie contacted the Dandenong Housing Office to inform that she and her five other children (aged 14, 11, 9, 7 and 5 years) had moved into the property. At this time, Ms Hastie was advised that no consent had been given for her to do so and that she was required to vacate immediately. Ms Hastie was referred to WAYSS Ltd for assistance to secure alternative accommodation and advised of other housing and support options.

On 5 July 2010 Ms Hastie was sent an illegal occupation letter instructing her to vacate the property and advising her that the matter had been referred to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for independent adjudication to gain possession of the property. At the time Ms Hastie was sent information on how to apply for public housing including early housing assistance. Burchall Grove is a three-bedroom property and is not suitable to accommodate Ms Hastie and her children.

On 16 July 2010 Ms Hastie attended VCAT with a support worker from WAYSS Ltd. This hearing was adjourned by the chairperson to give Ms Hastie the opportunity to submit an application for tenancy rights through VCAT. An alternative hearing was scheduled by VCAT for 9 August 2010, however, the Dandenong Housing Office sought an adjournment.

WAYSS Ltd has secured a suitable transitional property in Seaford and Ms Hastie and her children moved into this accommodation on 20 August 2010. WAYSS Ltd has also arranged appropriate supports for Ms Hastie. WAYSS Ltd and Ms Hastie have arranged with the Dandenong Housing Office to return the keys to 27 Burchall Grove, Dandenong North next week when she has moved her belongings into the transitional property.

A new VCAT hearing date had been scheduled on 24 August 2010, however, the Dandenong Housing Office has sought a further adjournment to allow time for WAYSS Ltd to assist Ms Hastie as well as allow her to move her belongings to the new property. The Dandenong Housing Office and WAYSS Ltd will continue to work with Ms Hastie to apply for long-term public housing and assess her eligibility for early housing.

Ms Hastie still has the option of applying for departmental Bond Loan assistance if she is successful in securing a private rental property.

Nurses: national registration

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 29 July 2010

REPLY:

The requirement for certification of English language skills is a mandatory standard across all health professionals seeking registration in Australia to ensure the public is protected.

The registration standards was approved by the Ministerial Council on 31 March 2010 and has been available on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's ('AHPRA') website and the Nurses and Midwifery Board of Australia webpage throughout this time.

I am advised that the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia ('the National Board') has been aware that there are a number of international students that have completed their university courses mid year and are now seeking registration.

On 12 August 2010 the National Board agreed on transitional arrangements for international students to meet the national English language skills registration standard, while ensuring the public is protected. The arrangements vary for different categories of students.

International nursing and midwifery students who are currently studying and who expect to complete their course at the end of the academic year of 2010 will be required to meet the English language registration standard requirements when they apply for registration. The National Board is encouraging education providers to support currently enrolled nurses to meet the standard.

Bushfires: local government

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 11 August 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government has actively engaged with local government and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to improve bushfire safety.

In addition to substantial funding already provided to councils for bushfire management in the 2010–11 State Budget, and in response to recommendations in the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission *Final Report*, the Government has announced further funding for the following strategies:

- \$5.5 million over two years for the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to assist in the development of municipal fire management plans for high-risk bushfire municipalities, through the integrated Fire Management Planning Process.
- \$9 million over four years for local government bushfire planning and preparedness.
- \$2 million to the MAV over four years to continue its coordination and support role for local government.
- \$2.85 million over four years to increase the level of support the CFA provides to local government for fire prevention planning.
- \$6.1 million over one year for the CFA to continue supporting the Township Protection Plan program.
- \$0.25 million to the Department of Human Services to audit databases to enable vulnerable people in high-risk bushfire areas to enact their bushfire survival plans on days of fire danger by receiving information and advice through community registers, service providers and local networks.

The Government will continue to work closely with the MAV, local government and fire agencies to make Victoria as fire-safe and fire-ready as possible.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for taking the time to bring your concerns to my attention.

Ballarat Health Services: funding

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 11 August 2010

REPLY:

In each and every year of our government, every health service has received a funding increase. On July 16 this year, I visited Ballarat Health Services and announced a recurrent funding increase of an additional \$12.7 million. That equates to a 9.7 per cent increase.

Ballarat Health Services funding has increased by a record 138.6 per cent, since Labor came to government, from \$60.5m to now over \$144.4m.

All health services must manage a budget. In recognition of the extra work Ballarat Health Services was completing they received an extra 93 WIES to treat more patients. This will result in Ballarat Health Services doing

101 per cent of WIES allocation, which is within their target. This extra funding is in stark contrast to the mandatory 1.5 per cent productivity savings demanded by the previous Liberal-National government.

To further support the work of health professionals in Ballarat the Brumby Labor Government has been proud to partner with the Commonwealth Government to fund a new \$55 million cancer centre. This builds on the more than \$30 million committed to capital projects in Ballarat, like a new catheterization laboratory, redevelopment of the emergency department including a short stay unit, an upgraded renal dialysis unit and theatre works.

This government has also invested over \$4.7 million on world class equipment for the Ballarat Health Services, so that patients can continue to receive world class care, close to home.

Alpine Health: Bright campus

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 11 August 2010

REPLY:

I understand that the members for Northern Victoria, Ms Candy Broad and Ms Kaye Darveniza recently had a meeting with Mrs Judy Barlee, Chairperson, Alpine Health and Mr Bruce McDonald, Chairman, Bright Hospital Redevelopment Community Committee.

Following that meeting I have received representations from both of these members advocating strongly for future planning moneys to be allocated to this project.

I was also pleased to recently meet with Mrs Judy Barlee and Mr Bruce McDonald, who presented me with their initial planning work.

Following this meeting I have agreed to provide \$150 000 for further master planing, to inform the future redevelopment of the Bright campus of Alpine Health.

I am advised that a service plan for Alpine Health has recently been endorsed by the relevant State and Commonwealth departments. Departmental staff are continuing to work directly with Alpine Health on the implementation of that plan and the agreed service directions it outlines to ensure an appropriate range of health and aged care services continue to be available for Alpine Shire residents.

This will support the government's goal of maintaining and developing Victoria's services and facilities to best meet the needs of the local community.

Dental services: fluoride supplements

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 11 August 2010

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Northern Victoria for her question regarding fluoride supplements.

Ninety per cent of Victorians now receive fluoridated drinking water. As you have indicated, this important public health initiative helps provide protection against tooth decay, but is not always available, as some households do not have reticulated water and not all reticulated supplies can be fluoridated.

For all Victorians, whether the water supply is fluoridated or not, it is important to maintain a healthy diet and have regular dental checkups. The appropriate use of fluoridated toothpaste is also important:

- Children aged up to 18 months of age, clean with water only and no toothpaste.
- Children between the ages of 18 months and five years of age (inclusive), clean teeth twice daily with a pea-size amount of low-fluoride children's toothpaste.
- Children aged six years and over and adults, clean teeth twice daily using standard fluoride toothpaste.

For children who are at higher risk of dental decay, which may include some children in non-fluoridated areas, dental professionals may modify these toothpaste guidelines. For teenagers and adults at higher risk of dental decay, toothpastes are available with higher fluoride levels than those in standard fluoride toothpastes. These should only be used on the advice of a dental professional.

Historically, dental professionals recommended fluoride supplements for people in non-fluoridated communities. I am informed however, that since 2006, the Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health has recommended that fluoride supplements, in the form of drops or tablets to be chewed and/or swallowed, should not be used. This is primarily due to the increased risk of dental fluorosis (mottling of tooth enamel), especially in young children, or other negative health impacts, if excessive fluoride supplements are consumed. Therefore, since 2006, fluoride supplements have been phased out in Australia.

For those people who live in non-fluoridated areas, some of the benefits of water fluoridation can be obtained indirectly through the consumption of food and beverage products processed in nearby fluoridated centres. Residents from non-fluoridated areas will also gain some protection against tooth decay when they work and study in fluoridated centres. Furthermore, bottled water in Australia may now contain added fluoride to improve dental health, with mandatory labelling required to indicate the product contains added fluoride. While purchasing bottled water is an individual choice, it provides another source of fluoridated water to those who do not have ready access to fluoridated tap water.

If community members would like further information about water fluoridation or oral health information for people living in non-fluoridated communities, I would encourage them to contact the water fluoridation information line on 1800 651 723.

Electricity: western Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Energy and Resources

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 12 August 2010

REPLY:

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 12 August 2010 in relation to the reliability of electricity supply to residents of Lethbridge, Meredith and parts of Bannockburn.

The local electricity distributor, Powercor acknowledges that electricity supply reliability for residents of Lethbridge, Meredith and parts of Bannockburn has not been at a standard that the company would desire. While some of the outages experienced by residents have been the result of incidents beyond Powercor's control, the company undertook a program of reliability works in 2009 and is completing additional works in 2010. Powercor is confident that the cumulative effect of the works undertaken in the past and those planned in the near future will achieve an improvement in reliability for customers.

Powercor has an ongoing 10-year Plan to upgrade the Network to meet expected load growths and improve reliability throughout the Region. The Plan is reviewed annually with changes in the expected development of the area or proposed significant projects, if known, being considered as part of the review. The network, including this

feeder line, is progressively upgraded and/or replaced as part of Powercor's ongoing routine maintenance program and capital works program.

The Victorian Government is concerned to ensure that all Victorians have access to a secure and reliable and affordable electricity supply. In order to achieve this Victoria's electricity distribution businesses which own and maintain the local electricity networks that deliver electricity to homes and businesses operate under an independent regulatory framework that provides financial bonuses for improvements in supply reliability and penalties if reliability of supply deteriorates. In addition, the businesses must make Guaranteed Service Level payments to consumers who experience either a cumulative disruption to supply or repeated outages beyond set threshold during a year. The performance of the businesses is not managed through contracts with the State Government.

Victoria's electricity distribution businesses report annually on their performance to the Australian Energy Regulator which publishes this information. Since 2006 the distribution businesses have been required to report the annual minutes off supply experienced by the 15 per cent of customers who experience the longest time off supply each year and to identify the major causes of supply interruptions. This reporting is intended to maintain the distribution businesses focus and accountability on reliability of supply to the worst served customers.

I understand that Powercor would be happy to meet with you and provide a briefing on the outages experienced on the line, and the works undertaken to reduce the frequency of these events.

Autism: western suburbs schools

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 12 August 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Western Metropolitan Region Five-Year Strategic Autism Plan responds to all key priorities outlined in the Victorian State Autism Plan, which all key stakeholders were involved in developing through extensive consultation forums.

As part of overall planning for the provision of educational services and infrastructure, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Regions lead the determination of preferred models of provision for the support of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) within their regional context. The DEECD policy context, that is strongly based on the 10-year vision of the Autism State Plan, informs these regional educational choices.

Regional planning takes account of a range of factors including existing provision, best practice and current research, short and long term goals, regional student data and assessment of need. The provision of specialist schools and the educational models these schools are based on will vary across regions in response to these factors.

The Government has also recently announced an independent review of specialist provision for students with ASD in the Western Metropolitan Region (WMR). This will take place over 2010–11, in line with the WMR's strategic 5-year regional ASD plan and 12-month operational planning. It is expected the review will commence by the end of October, examining current and future requirements for specialist ASD provision within the region and make recommendations in light of national and international research and best practice. A major focus will be specialist ASD provision for secondary students.

The WMR strategic plan recognises that the majority of students with ASD in the region are currently enrolled in mainstream schools, and that there has been an increase in students with a dual diagnosis of intellectual disability

and ASD enrolled in special schools. As such the region's priority is to strengthen the ASD expertise of DEECD personnel working in schools.

Western Autistic School leads the specialist provision of ASD services to schools in WMR. The School provides school-based programs in the early primary years with short term intensive placement at campuses in Niddrie and Deer Park and supports long-term transition into mainstream/special schools. Western Autistic School also provides programs and supports to all schools, including special schools. All schools in the region have access on request to specialist support from Western Autistic School Outreach Support Service.

Students with a dual diagnosis of intellectual disability and ASD have access to special schools across the region that provide appropriate programs for students throughout their schooling (from ages 5–18). Additionally, many teaching staff in specialist schools, including special schools in WMR, have a post graduate special education qualification with many also having years of experience in the field. A number of teachers in these schools are also completing a post graduate qualification in the teaching of students with autism. The students within these schools who have autism are well supported by the programs offered.

Gippsland Plains rail trail: funding

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 12 August 2010

REPLY:

Rail trails provide a range of benefits to the community including improved health and wellbeing, recreation and transport and can provide economic benefits as a tourism asset.

For these reasons, rail trails are recognised as part of the nature based tourism experience and are supported under the state government's Nature Based Tourism Strategy.

Officers from several government agencies including the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Industry Innovation and Regional Development are working in partnership with the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail Committee of Management Inc, and the Shires of La Trobe and Wellington to scope a project for further development of the trail.

Using this partnership approach will provide greater opportunities for this committee to access funding, plan for the future staged development of the rail trail and keep the community informed of progress.

Country Fire Authority: funding

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Vogels

Raised on: 13 August 2010

REPLY:

I refer to the issue you raised in the Legislative Council on 13 August 2010 seeking assurance that there will be no funding cuts that will affect volunteer training or firefighting operations at the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

Following the February 2009 bushfires, the Victorian Government has over the 2009–10 and 2010–11 budgets, provided \$1.6 billion for fire fighting services and infrastructure and targeted recovery and support packages. The CFA's budget has increased 251 per cent since 1999 from \$113.6 million to \$398.98 million in 2010–11.

I have been advised by the CFA that there will be no funding cuts for volunteer training or operational firefighting.

The Government values all volunteers for the work they do all year to prepare, educate and protect the community. The ongoing effort of all emergency services and volunteers into the future is critical to ensure the safety of the Victorian community.

Local government: street lighting

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 31 August 2010

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is determined to lead Australia in finding new and innovative solutions to reduce our emissions. The Premier released a Climate Change White Paper in July 2010 which committed the Government to a series of action areas including 'Greening Government'.

Under 'Greening Government', the Government has committed to improving the efficiency of our government buildings, buying GreenPower for government departments and reducing emissions from our transport fleet.

In addition, the Government has committed to working in partnership with local government to address climate change and reduce emissions. In particular, the Government will hold a Local Government Climate Change Summit to further Victorian and local government collaboration in October this year. One of the priorities for that summit is how the Government will work with local government and energy distribution businesses to develop options to upgrade public lighting infrastructure with low carbon technologies. The Government is keen to ensure that this transition can be undertaken effectively, at low cost and in the shortest possible time frame.

Water: Dethridge wheels

Raised with: Minister for Water

Raised by: Mr Drum

Raised on: 31 August 2010

REPLY:

Goulburn-Murray Water (G-MW) has carried out an extensive testing program on Dethridge wheels including:

- initial testing in 2007 of 12 Dethridge wheels. The report of the test program is available on G-MW's website;
- testing of 43 sites across all irrigation areas in 2007–08. The report of this program is available on G-MW's website;
- testing of a further 42 sites in 2009. The report was initially available on G-MW's website but was removed to protect the privacy of individuals as it allowed the location of test sites to be identified. To resolve the privacy issues the individual locations are no longer identified and the report has now been re-released on the G-MW website; and
- the statistical analysis, Review of Flumegate and Dethridge Meter Studies (2010), summarises the results from the 95 sites tested in the three previous testing programs. This review found the average meter error is 8.42 per cent in favour of the irrigator and this review is available on G-MW's website.

The overall results from G-MW's testing programs confirm that on average Dethridge wheels do not meet the accuracy standards for non-urban water meters established in the National Framework (+/-5 per cent when the meter is installed in the field).

All meter testing reports and associated media releases are available on the G-MW website <http://www.g-mwater.com.au/projects/metertesting>.

Toorak Road, Camberwell: speed zone

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 31 August 2010

REPLY:

The current school speed zone program in Victoria involves reduced speed limits on roads that border primary and secondary schools and have an access point to the school. These are locations that could be expected to be of higher risk because of the number and diversity of movements and activities by school children and their parents.

The current policy does not include school speed zones at remote crossings. However, VicRoads is aware of the community concern in relation to safety at these sites and is currently reviewing the speed zone guidelines to determine whether provision can be made for some of these crossings.

In the meantime, I can assure you that VicRoads is assessing the conditions on Toorak Road near Camberwell South Primary School with a view to determining its eligibility for a reduced speed limit once the guidelines have been reviewed.

In relation to your comments regarding the school speed zone on Burwood Highway for St Scholastica's Primary School, I note that there is a path leading from the school to Burwood Highway through the church. Accordingly, this site is eligible for a school speed zone under the current policy.

Yanakie Isthmus: wildlife viewing project

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 1 September 2010

REPLY:

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

VicRoads inspected the Yanakie Isthmus Wildlife Viewing Area with Parks Victoria in March 2010. VicRoads provided advice on several options for a car park, including the need for minor road widening to provide safe access for tourists.

VicRoads would be pleased to work with Parks Victoria to review any plans for the car park and assist with progressing this project.

Port of Melbourne: Webb Dock

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 2 September 2010

REPLY:

Trade growth for the Port of Melbourne forecasts a doubling of throughput to 4.4 million TEU by 2020. The Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) is responsible for assessing short and long term options for additional container capacity for Melbourne to manage this growth.

The Victorian Government has asked PoMC to conduct a market sounding process with industry and the community to assess a range of options to cater for the additional container capacity needs. To this end, the *Port of Melbourne Additional Container Capacity: Market Sounding Discussion Paper* was released on 19 August 2010 by PoMC for broad consultation.

This consultation process will receive submissions until 30 September 2010. PoMC will use this process to receive input into assessment of options prior to providing advice to me on the preferred strategy for additional container capacity for the Port of Melbourne.

Webb Dock has been identified as a potential option for additional container capacity within the Port of Melbourne. This consultation process provides the Port to Port Community Group Garden City the opportunity to lodge a submission to PoMC regarding their views and concerns for the development of Webb Dock. PoMC has advised that the Port to Port Community Group Garden City has been included in the market sounding process.

Toorloo Arm Primary School: funding

Raised with: Minister for Education

Raised by: Mr Hall

Raised on: 2 September 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

At the last election, the Victorian Government committed \$1.9 billion to rebuild, renovate or extend 500 schools in four years as part of the Victorian Schools Plan to transform education infrastructure across the State. In this term of government, over 550 school building projects have been funded — over 50 more than promised. This commitment represents the largest school building program in Victorian State Government history and to date brings the State Government's investment in school buildings to \$3.7 billion since 1999.

In addition to the above funding, Victorian schools will receive over \$300 million as part of the National School Pride program and over \$3 billion as part of the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program under the Commonwealth Government's Building the Education Revolution program.

The Victorian Schools Plan, combined with the Commonwealth Government's Building the Education Revolution, is providing Victorian schools with an unprecedented opportunity to revitalise their educational facilities. These plans together represent an ambitious building program that will ensure Victorian students will have access to world-class, 21st century learning environments right across the state.

I am pleased to note that Toorloo Arm Primary School received \$75 000 under the National School Pride program and \$850 000 under the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program for new classrooms.

As you are aware, Toorloo Arm Primary School has been involved in the Rural Replacement Program through the Building Futures process. Toorloo Arm Primary School has developed a master plan and the Building the Education Revolution classroom building is the first stage of this modernisation project together with a new portable administration and classroom building. The master plan also indicates additional permanent learning and project spaces, administration and toilet facilities all under one roof. A new multipurpose facility and portable classrooms together with a new traffic management layout at the front of the school are also proposed.

The Department will continue to work with the school to meet the needs of the school and their communities. Detailed planning is to continue on these facilities to allow the project to be considered in future State budgets.

Consumer affairs: responsible service of alcohol

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 3 September 2010

REPLY:

The Responsible Service of Alcohol training course approved by the Director of Liquor Licensing provides information to participants about what a standard drink is for different types of liquor. Participants are educated that one standard drink contains the same amount of alcohol regardless of container size or alcohol type and are shown that a 285ml glass of full-strength beer contains the same amount of alcohol as 100ml of a glass of wine.

Licensees can select the most appropriate means to responsibly manage the supply of alcohol within their venues. For some licensees this may mean using an automatic measure dispenser which measures a specified amount of alcohol. Similarly many venues choose to serve wine in glasses which have a line indicating the amount that constitutes a standard serve. This helps both bar staff and consumers manage the consumption of alcohol responsibly.

There have also been a large number of consumer education campaigns over the years to inform people that one standard drink will vary between different types of alcohol and that the effects of alcohol can vary between individuals. This helps consumers understand that some glasses or bottles may contain more than one standard serve thereby helping people consume alcohol responsibly.

Thank you for bringing these issues to my attention.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 6 October 2010

Bushfires: community consultation

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 23 February 2010

REPLY:

In late 2009, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) approached a number of statewide peak body groups to establish a roundtable on planned burning.

The roundtable is an independently facilitated meeting that allows groups with an interest in planned burning to come together and collectively consider issues. It helps participants build an understanding of each other, their perspectives on the issue and, where possible, identify solutions or pathways forward on challenging and contentious issues.

It is important to note that the group is self-directed rather than managed by DSE. Collectively, the group has drafted a purpose, objectives and scope for the roundtable. They also identified which stakeholder/peak groups were to be invited to participate in the roundtable process.

DSE was tasked to organise the roundtable, including contacting the nominated peak body organisations and asking them to identify a representative to attend.

At a recent meeting, members worked on a document to formalise meeting procedures and membership eligibility. The group re-affirmed the importance of the roundtable being a representative forum.

It was agreed by the group that organisations are eligible to become members of the roundtable if they are statewide bodies, or are of statewide significance. They need to be able to contribute to and extend the knowledge and expertise of land and fire management and not duplicate existing representation. It was also agreed that there are potentially some vacancies and organisations that can apply for membership, and that there needs to be a process for gaining consensus from the roundtable as to any gaps and who may be eligible to join.

A decision about the eligibility of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association and the East Gippsland Wildfire Taskforce will be considered by the group at the roundtable planned for 24 November 2010.

The process has been judged by participants to be successful to date and DSE aims to replicate the state-wide roundtable process regionally over the next 12 months. This will allow groups with a regional focus to be involved in a locality-based roundtable where their specific knowledge of local issues will be of great value. It is anticipated that groups such as the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria and the East Gippsland Wildfire Taskforce would be included in these groups.

Police: western Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 23 March 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement, public order and road safety operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. Victoria Police has now embarked on Victoria's biggest ever police recruitment drive to achieve this substantial increase in the number of police over a five-year period.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993.

Decisions on the placement of police throughout the state are operational matters and are made by police command on the basis of assessed need. It is important that this process is not subject to political interference. I am assured by the Chief Commissioner of Police that the level of policing across Victoria is continuously monitored by the respective Regional Command Officers, with a view to maintaining optimum policing effectiveness.

Victoria Police deploys first response police across its 54 Police Service Areas using a sophisticated resource allocation model incorporating 12 characteristics of the local community that are used to predict levels of crime and road trauma; the population of an area is just one of these. Victoria Police uses this model to ensure that police resources are distributed equitably and according to demonstrated operational need. It should be noted that, since 1999, the number of first response officers has increased in all police regions across Victoria.

I am advised that a full-time police officer position for Jeparit was advertised in the Gazette on 29 March 2010. I am further advised that there was a delay in filling the vacancy due to appeal processes. The selection process was finalised in July this year with the selection of Leading Senior Constable Graham Blair of Nhill, who moved into the station and residence during August.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Public transport: Glen Waverley

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Rich-Phillips

Raised on: 25 May 2010

REPLY:

Bus timetables are framed to maximise coordination with trains, and bus timetables nominate interconnecting bus and train services.

Not every train can be effectively coordinated with bus services, as the service frequency differs between modes, with buses operating with an average 30-minute headway. Additional complexities are introduced when a bus route connects to more than one railway station and when determining what direction of travel should dictate connections.

Melink has developed a number of tools to assist passengers connect between different transport modes, including the online Viclink Journey Planner, multimodal transport maps, and timetable booklets including information about connecting services. Whenever the metropolitan train timetable is updated, metropolitan bus operators review their timetables to maintain intermodal coordination.

Rail: Melton station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 26 May 2010

REPLY:

Melton 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 Department of Transport (DOT) is introducing 474 additional weekly metropolitan bus trips in Melton from 19 July 2010, all serving Melton Railway Station.

The upgrade in bus service coverage will serve a number of car-dependent areas of Melton and is a proactive measure to reduce dependency on car use to Melton Railway Station.

I have asked DOT and V/Line to closely monitor the situation at Melton Railway Station and consider further proposals for upgrades to the station.

The \$38 billion *Victorian Transport Plan*, the largest investment in transport in the State's history, commits \$1.3 billion to extend the electrified suburban rail network to Melton in the long term. The Melton line upgrade will include the duplication of 19 kilometres of single track, the electrification of 25 kilometres of railway from Sunshine to Melton, and the construction of new passing loops and stabling for additional train services.

The upgrade will cater for increased services to Melton and Bacchus Marsh, and will utilise a new railway station to be constructed at Caroline Springs. Construction will commence on this station later this year. The Federal Government has recognised this project as a priority warranting future investment. Subject to funding, the Melton line upgrade is proposed to commence after the completion of the Regional Rail Link project.

Rail: Laverton station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 26 May 2010

REPLY:

Under *The Victorian Transport Plan* the Government committed \$92.6 million to the Laverton Rail Upgrade.

The project included the construction of the new Laverton Railway Station footbridge, which opened to the community on 5 February 2010. The new footbridge, and the installation of three new lifts provides passengers with an attractive and modern structure and improves access to the station for people in wheelchairs or those who have limited mobility.

The Department of Transport is aware of the recent lift failures at Laverton Railway Station. Most failures are due to vandalism or people tampering with lift mechanisms. For safety reasons, when this occurs the lifts are designed to automatically shut down. The affected lift is then unavailable for use until the maintenance company arrives and repairs are made. Damage to lifts causes disruption to commuters and places undue stress on lift machinery. Metro Trains Melbourne and the contractor are currently servicing the lifts every fortnight.

When lifts are out of service, Authorised Officers will assist customers to access and exit the station platforms. If a customer is unable to access the platform via the stairs, a taxi is provided to transfer them to Aircraft Railway Station to continue travel on the service. Similarly, if a customer is unable to leave the platform via the stairs, staff will advise them to travel to the next station, where a taxi is provided to transfer them back to Laverton.

Mordialloc Creek: dredging

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 23 June 2010

REPLY:

Mordialloc Creek forms part of a mostly urban and industrial catchment. It acts as a major drainage outlet and transports sediment from the catchment to the creek mouth as part of its natural cycles. It also provides opportunities for boating recreation and leisure which require the maintenance of navigation channels.

The creek incorporates a number of sections which extend from the Lower Dandenong Creek to the sea which are managed under different arrangements. The land manager for each section is responsible for its maintenance (including dredging) as follows:

From the sea to the high water mark (HWM): is managed by Parks Victoria which has a responsibility to maintain this section of the waterway for purposes of recreation, leisure, tourism and water transport under the *Water Industry Act 1994*.

Parks Victoria discharges this responsibility by undertaking biannual dredging operations at the entrance to Mordialloc Creek. The frequency of dredging depends on ongoing sediment and water levels surveys. Parks Victoria figures indicate dredging operations at the entrance to Mordialloc Creek have been undertaken at the following times:

- Dec 2008
- Feb 2009
- Nov 2009
- Mar 2010

It is anticipated that Parks Victoria will undertake another dredging operation of the entrance to Mordialloc Creek in the next few months.

From the high water mark (HWM) to the Nepean Highway: is managed by the City of Kingston, as committee of management, appointed under the *Crown Lands (Reserves) Act 1978*. The City of Kingston has the responsibility for maintaining the waterway and lands of Mordialloc Creek under its management.

Council officers have provided advice that the City of Kingston has undertaken one dredging operation in Mordialloc Creek in 2000 in partnership with Melbourne Water.

The City of Kingston has recently contacted the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) for advice with regard to current dredging needs. DSE officers are currently working with Council to identify options for dredging and sediment disposal.

The presence of heavy metal contamination of sediments and hazardous soil acidity levels has created a particular concern, as has the resultant cost of disposing of this type of spoil.

Upstream from the Nepean Highway: is managed by Melbourne Water as part of its responsibility for floodway management and for the protection and enhancement of land and waterways under the *Water Act 1989*. Parks Victoria also has a role in the management of recreation, leisure, tourism or water transport for this section of the creek.

Melbourne Water officers have advised that they have undertaken one dredging operation for this section of Mordialloc Creek in a partnership arrangement with the City of Kingston in 2000.

Since 2002, Melbourne Water has also been actively planning and implementing innovative developments to prevent sedimentation, improve water quality and to improve the flood protection and drainage of this former swampland area. These developments have involved the creation of new freshwater wetlands and the widening of the creek upstream which has improved the visual amenity of the creek and provides habitat for native birds, animals and fish.

DSE will continue to work with the agencies involved in the management of Mordialloc Creek to investigate and identify environmentally responsible, strategic and economically effective options for the future dredging of Mordialloc Creek.

Police: northern Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 10 August 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement, public order and road safety operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. This will be the biggest ever increase over a five-year period, building on the previous decade.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993.

Victoria Police deploys first response police across its 54 Police Service Areas using a sophisticated resource allocation model incorporating 12 characteristics of the local community that are used to predict levels of crime and road trauma; the population of an area is just one of these. Victoria Police uses this model to ensure that police resources are distributed equitably and according to demonstrated operational need. It should be noted that, since 1999, the number of first response officers has increased in all police regions across Victoria.

Decisions on the placement of police throughout the state are operational matters and are made by police command on the basis of assessed need. It is important that this process is not subject to political interference. I am assured by

the Chief Commissioner of Police that the level of policing across Victoria is continuously monitored by the respective Regional Command Officers, with a view to maintaining optimum policing effectiveness.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Country Fire Authority: Warburton station

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 10 August 2010

REPLY:

I refer to the issue you raised in the Legislative Council regarding the delivery of a new Warburton Fire Station.

The Government has provided record resources to the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to provide the training, equipment and facilities they need to respond to emergencies to ensure the safety of the Victorian community. Since 1999, CFA's budget has increased 251 per cent since 1999; from \$113.6 million to \$398.98 million in 2010–11.

On the 28 September 2010, the State Government announced the purchase of the site for the new Warburton Fire Station on Park Road, Warburton. The securing of this site is the result of an extensive search by the CFA with the support of the City of Yarra Ranges.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Police: Craigieburn

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 10 August 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2,000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement, public order and road safety operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. Victoria Police has now embarked on Victoria's biggest ever police recruitment drive to achieve this substantial increase in the number of police over a five-year period.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993. In the Hume Police Service Area (PSA) the crime rate fell by 15.8 per cent between 2000–01 and 2009–10.

Victoria Police has recently announced that Hume PSA is one of the 10 PSAs that will benefit from extra police numbers over the next twelve months from new police officers who will complete their training and also existing

officers who will become available due to redeployment back into front-line roles. In this context, the immediate needs of the Hume PSA will be considered in conjunction with those of other PSAs. I note that the Hume PSA has already benefited from increased resources as between November 1999 and 30 June this year the number of first response officers there has increased by 17 per cent.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Kindergartens: Drouin

Raised with: Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 11 August 2010

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The kindergarten participation rate in Victoria has increased and remained above 90 per cent since the late 1990s. The kindergarten participation rate for 2009 was 92.7 per cent.

Victoria's recent 'baby boom' poses real challenges in maintaining and increasing the levels of kindergarten participation.

The Commonwealth Government has committed \$970 million over five years for the implementation of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education (Universal Access), including \$210.6 million for Victoria, to ensure that by 2013 all children will have access to a quality early childhood education program, delivered by an early childhood teacher, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year, in the year before formal schooling.

The Victorian Government recognises that the achievement of universal access will require major sector transformation in Victoria. To successfully implement 15 hours of kindergarten for all children in the year before school the Victorian Government has undertaken ongoing consultation, communication and engagement with families, kindergarten service providers, early childhood staff, local government and other key stakeholders.

Partnership arrangements have also been established between the State Government and peak bodies, representing local councils, kindergartens, kindergarten cluster managers and the community and private child care services.

Victoria's approach in the first years of implementation focuses on planning, assessment of capacity, and pilots and trials. This approach is intended to:

- Facilitate detailed planning which responds to the unique needs of different local communities, so that challenges and capacity can be understood and assessed before hours are increased; and
- Build an evidence base for implementation to inform the State and Commonwealth Governments, local government, employers, early childhood staff and communities to support the statewide rollout of the initiative.

An important part of the planning process is to understand the impact which implementation of the universal access commitment will have on enrolment capacity before hours are increased so that implementation can be managed in a manner which will meet local needs.

Local councils were funded a total of \$3.1 million between August 2009 and April 2010 for municipal planning to assess the capacity for implementation of universal access in their municipalities and this planning will inform the next stages of implementation. This includes looking at all service providers in the municipality and ongoing work with the council.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development regional office will work in consultation with local service providers and local government to explore a range of options to maximise the opportunities for all eligible children to attend kindergarten in the Baw Baw Shire.

The Victorian Government has committed \$238 million in the 2010–11 financial year for kindergarten programs, resources and infrastructure. This represents a 225 per cent increase in funding over the past decade. Earlier this year, in April, I announced \$12.5 million for Renovation and Refurbishment grants and later, in June, I announced that 23 services would share \$4.6 million in Renovation and Refurbishment Grants to increase their infrastructure capacity to deliver universal access.

Applications for Renovation and Refurbishment Grants through the 2010–11 Children's Capital program are currently open and I have been informed that a number of services in Baw Baw Shire are intending to apply for these grants.

Cranbourne Road–Moorooduc Highway, Frankston: intersection

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports

Raised by: Mr Rich-Phillips

Raised on: 11 August 2010

REPLY:

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

The P-turn arrangement at this intersection has significantly improved travel times through this intersection, despite the number of north and southbound motorists increasing since the P-turn was implemented. Travel times are down from 12 minutes to 3 minutes for northbound vehicles in the morning peak, and from 6 minutes to 3 minutes for southbound vehicles in the afternoon peak.

The requirement of westbound through traffic to merge from three lanes into two on the western leg of the Cranbourne Road–Moorooduc Highway intersection was in place prior to the installation of the P-turn in August 2009. This traffic lane arrangement is typical of many intersections in the metropolitan area and is designed to maximise the capacity of traffic travelling through the intersection on the green signal.

It is not VicRoads' policy to install signs on the approach to a signalised intersection advising drivers of traffic arrangements beyond the intersection. Such signs can cause confusion to motorists and distract them from the driving task, particularly observing the traffic lights.

VicRoads will paint angled merge pavement arrows on the far left through lane of Cranbourne Road, west of the intersection, to improve motorists' awareness of the traffic arrangements at this location by the end of the year.

Rail: Frankston line

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 12 August 2010

REPLY:

The Department of Transport has raised your concerns about the lighting at Chelsea Railway Station and the station car park with Metro. Metro conducted a full test of all car park and station lighting and found that the car park lighting was not operating correctly due to faulty light sensors. The fault was rectified and all lighting is now operating as normal.

The 2010–11 State Budget allocates \$83.7 million for 20 new Premium staffed stations, including Chelsea Railway Station. Once upgraded to Premium status, Chelsea Railway Station will be staffed from first to last train, seven days a week, and will offer improved security and services for passengers.

Health: federal government plan

Raised with: Minister for Health

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 12 August 2010

REPLY:

The National Health and Hospital Network Agreement (NHHN Agreement) creates a blueprint for change across the Australian health care system and provides an opportunity to continue to build on Victoria's health and hospital system.

The NHHN Agreement secures more than \$900 million for Victorian patients over the next four years and has resulted in 'guaranteed' benefits from the Commonwealth to the value of \$3.8 billion over the 10 years to 2019–20. The Commonwealth has also agreed to invest a further \$386 million in Commonwealth-run health services in Victoria over the next four years. This includes funding for general practice and primary health care services, more health workers, aged care and mental health services.

Officials from my Department and the Commonwealth Department of Health have been engaged in discussions regarding implementation of the NHHN Agreement. These discussions are essential to ensure successful implementation of initiatives requiring a strong and robust Commonwealth-State partnership to improve the health outcomes for Victorians.

I have been advised by my Department that the documents in subject were for discussion purposes only and have no official status.

Public transport: myki ticketing system

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 13 August 2010

REPLY:

The Government is committed to the rollout of myki to V/Line train and coach services.

As part of the staged rollout of myki, people travelling on regional town buses were the first to use the new ticketing system, which has been available in Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour, Warragul and the Latrobe Valley since May 2009.

In December 2009, myki was implemented on metropolitan trains, including V/Line services in Zones 1 and 2 to Melton and Sunbury. Many V/Line customers now use myki to travel to and from Melton and Sunbury each day.

The Transport Ticketing Authority (TTA) is preparing for the rollout of myki to all V/Line services. Myki equipment (including myki readers and card vending machines) has already been installed at many V/Line stations across Victoria.

Further detail on how myki will operate on V/Line services will be available before full implementation begins on these services.

Southern Metropolitan Region: health services**Raised with: Minister for Health****Raised by: Ms Huppert****Raised on: 31 August 2010****REPLY:**

In 2010–11, the Targeted Medical Equipment Program provided Alfred Health with \$2 516 064 to purchase specific medical equipment across the Alfred, Caulfield and Sandringham Hospitals.

Rail: Laverton station**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mr Finn****Raised on: 31 August 2010****REPLY:**

As you are aware, works to upgrade Laverton Railway Station have recently been completed and included substantial improvements to station facilities, including a covered pedestrian overpass and *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 compliant elevators to all platforms. The upgrade also included the provision of 100 additional parking spaces and a new bicycle cage. These works have improved access to the station and complement the Government's recent \$4.6 million upgrade to bus services in the area.

The matter you have referred to will be monitored and, if it causes ongoing concern, the Government will consider the fitment of canopies to the stairways. Further works will need to be considered for funding against other priorities across the network.

Bendigo: bus depot**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Ms Lovell****Raised on: 1 September 2010****REPLY:**

At its Council meeting on 16 June 2010, the City of Greater Bendigo requested that any necessary signal changes at the Queen Street/Mitchell Street and Pall Mall/View Street intersections be implemented and an assessment of the changes on the traffic flows be undertaken, with a report then being presented by Council officers to Council on those matters.

The City of Greater Bendigo, as the local road authority, and VicRoads, which is responsible for the operation of traffic signals, are working collaboratively to achieve an outcome that will best meet local and through-traffic needs.

The City of Greater Bendigo is also finalising designs for kerb realignment which will assist in improving the flow of traffic down View Street into Mitchell Street.

As the lead organisation for the redevelopment of Mitchell Street, the City of Greater Bendigo is responsible for informing stakeholders about the project outcome.

Queenscliff: boating facilities

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 1 September 2010

REPLY:**QHPL Lease and Development**

The Queenscliff Harbour development undertaken by QHPL has delivered world class maritime and shore-based facilities, increased employment and reinvigorated the maritime based tourism industry in Queenscliff.

The QHPL lease area does not include the area at the western end of the wharf known locally as the Dingy Basin which includes a public access pontoon.

No grounds exist (under the terms of the lease) that would warrant the Crown seeking an excision of the Fishermans Wharf precinct from the QHPL Lease area.

Fishermans Wharf Reconstruction

Parks Victoria submitted a planning application to Council to rebuild the Fishermans Wharf on 18 June 2010. This application and proposed scope of works has received significant community interest. Parks Victoria in consultation with Council has recently deferred the application to enable extended community consultation.

The project team has received valuable input from the community to date and is integrating this input to further inform the project planning and scope of works.

Berthing Access

The rebuilt Fishermans Wharf will be made available by QHPL for berthing by commercial fishing vessels and commercial recreational charter boats. This access supports the Queenscliff fishing industry and continued rapid growth of marine based recreation and tourism services in Queenscliff.

Public and emergency access berthing on the Parks Victoria managed pontoon will be retained.

Refuelling

QHPL has worked cooperatively with local fuel suppliers to deliver competitive pricing resulting in many vessel owners now opting to utilise the new state of the art refuelling facilities located within Queenscliff Harbour.

Parks Victoria is presently reviewing procedures for re-fuelling of vessels at its local ports in accordance with Australian Standards. All known fuel supply companies utilising the Fishermans Wharf pontoon are required to demonstrate compliance with Australian Standards.

Emergency Services Access

In consultation with Parks Victoria, the Rural Ambulance Victoria elected to establish the floating pontoon situated adjacent to the Swan Island Bridge as their preferred emergency vessel access location.

QHPL provides additional access arrangements in Queenscliff Harbour for the Rural Ambulance Service as required.

Victorian Water Police preferred seasonal berthing location is the Swan Island Department of Defence facility. QHPL support Victoria Police with seasonal and casual berthing access free of charge in Queenscliff Harbour.

Waterbirds: protection

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 1 September 2010

REPLY:

I refer to your request to have a five-year moratorium on duck shooting until a proper scientific analysis can be conducted on the game bird population.

The sustainable use of wildlife in Victoria, including duck hunting, is provided for under the *Wildlife Act 1975* and government policy supports duck hunting that is conducted on a sustainable basis.

I am informed that the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) reviews a number of scientific analyses including population, habitat and environmental indicators to establish the status of waterfowl populations across eastern Australia and throughout Victoria.

This information comes from many sources, including surveys such as the Eastern Australian Aerial Waterfowl Count conducted by Professor Richard Kingsford, the DSE November and Summer Waterfowl Counts, and information regarding Australia's climate and rainfall.

This process captures information regarding a range of game and non-game waterbird species, including threatened species and will continue during improved conditions to ensure that duck populations are harvested sustainably. This information provides the basis to determine whether a duck season can be sustained, or whether the season should be cancelled or modified for the following year.

In addition, over the next 12 months scientists from the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research will be testing a new model to determine the sustainable harvest rates for Victorian Waterfowl. This has been recently developed by an expert panel comprising Australian and international scientists. If the model proves to be accurate in predicting the impacts of hunting and environmental factors on waterfowl populations, and practical to implement, it will be adopted as part of the process for determining seasonal arrangements.

The Government will continue to manage duck hunting on the best scientific and environmental data available and will work closely with community groups to ensure that duck hunting is conducted in a sustainable, safe and responsible manner.

Emergency services: Tamboon South helipad

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 1 September 2010

REPLY:

As noted by Mr Davis, Tamboon South is an extremely remote village made up of some 19 freehold lots surrounded by Croajingolong National Park. The village abuts sand dunes behind the ocean beach at the south-western extremity of Tamboon Inlet in East Gippsland. Owners generally use the properties as holiday houses.

There is no road access to the village and owners gain access by boat across Tamboon Inlet from the small Tamboon township at the northern end of the inlet on the eastern shore, and representatives of the village are concerned about emergency evacuation in the case of illness or accident in the village or on the adjoining waterway.

In February 2006 the Department of Sustainability and Environment wrote to the then Chair of the DERPC advising of the outcome of an assessment of options. The assessment indicated that the two sites close to the village proposed by the Progress Association were unsuitable due to the adequacy of the flight paths whilst a third option to land on the open sandy ocean beach offered a clear approach path.

Parks Victoria is unclear whether this advice was forwarded to the Tamboon Progress Association at the time.

Since August 2010, Parks Victoria has been in discussion with Victoria Police about this matter. A prepared landing site or other proposal to facilitate emergency access in the Croajingolong National Park adjacent to Tamboon South can certainly be considered, pending further advice about aviation requirements.

Bushfires: fuel reduction

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Vogels

Raised on: 1 September 2010

REPLY:

The government is committed to actions that reduce the risk of bushfires including fuel reduction along roadsides. This includes both fuel reduction burning and other vegetation management operations such as the removal of dangerous trees.

The government is also developing a new exemption in Victoria's Planning Provisions to allow for other roadside works for fire prevention, consistent with the findings of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. DSE is consulting widely with local councils, VicRoads and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to develop and introduce the exemption and ensure it meets the requirements of road managers. In addition, the government has provided extra funding to the CFA to enhance its current roadside vegetation management program.

Consumer affairs: retirement village maintenance fees

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 2 September 2010

REPLY:

I refer to the matter you raised in the Legislative Council on 2 September 2010 in relation to retirement villages.

One of the functions of Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) is to deal with issues raised by residents of retirement villages under the *Retirement Villages Act 1986* and other consumer legislation. As part of CAV's dispute resolution and dispute reduction function, its officers will often meet with residents and managers of retirement villages to assist in resolving issues raised by residents and to provide information to assist in preventing future disputes.

I am advised that some residents of a retirement village have contacted CAV because they believed that the operators of their village had been charging maintenance fees in excess of that permitted by the Act. Under the Act and the relevant Regulations, maintenance fees can only be increased in accordance with a formula specified in the Regulations and related to the Consumer Price Index. The Act provides for exceptions to that, for example, where an increase has been approved by a resolution of a majority of residents or by a resolution of the residents' committee.

I am advised that one resident has raised with CAV the contention that the Act does not allow an operator of a village to charge different fees to individual residents. CAV advised the resident that it did not agree with that contention. The resident wanted to apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for a determination of this issue and requested that CAV provide advocacy assistance. CAV arranged for a specialist community legal centre to provide advice to this resident and CAV also decided to obtain its own independent legal advice from senior counsel.

I am advised that the advice provided to CAV from senior counsel is that the Act does permit operators to charge different fees to individual residents. Having regard to that advice, CAV has decided that it is not in the public interest for it to fund an application to VCAT by the community legal centre on behalf of the resident in relation to this issue.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Police: South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 15 September 2010

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to providing safe streets and homes for Victorians by ensuring Victoria Police is highly professional and well resourced. By the end of this year, the State Government will have increased the net number of police by almost 2000 since coming to office. This includes an additional 120 police officers for the new Operational Response Unit to carry out targeted law enforcement, public order and road safety operations. The Government has also committed over \$460 million to fund the construction or refurbishment of over 160 police stations and residences across the state, in Victoria's largest ever police station building program.

The 2010–11 State Budget includes increased funding to Victoria Police to a record of nearly \$2 billion. While the last decade has seen the greatest ever increase in police numbers, the Government has announced an extra 1966 front-line police in the next five years including 1700 new police and the release of 266 police officers from behind desks back into front-line roles. Victoria Police has now embarked on Victoria's biggest ever police recruitment drive to achieve this substantial increase in the number of police over a five-year period.

The Government's additional support to Victoria Police is showing good results. Victoria's crime rate has fallen 30 per cent since 2000–01, with crime now at its lowest rate since the introduction of computerised recording in 1993. It is encouraging that between 2008–09 and 2009–10, the crime rate fell in all five Police Service Areas (PSAs) in the South Eastern Metropolitan Region.

The Operational Response Unit (ORU) carries out targeted operations focusing on alcohol and weapons offences and dangerous and irresponsible driver behaviour. With specially recruited and trained police, the ORU is now being deployed where they will have the strongest impact across the State in the CBD, metropolitan, regional and rural areas. This initiative builds on the Government's comprehensive package to address safety in central Melbourne and entertainment precincts across the state, by creating a more visible police presence, stronger enforcement, a greater onus on patrons and licensees to act responsibly as well as addressing the culture of alcohol and violence.

Victoria Police deploys first response police across its 54 Police Service Areas using a sophisticated resource allocation model incorporating 12 characteristics of the local community that are used to predict levels of crime and road trauma; the population of an area is just one of these. Victoria Police uses this model to ensure that police resources are distributed equitably and according to demonstrated operational need. It should be noted that, since 1999, the number of first response officers has increased in all police regions across Victoria. Further, the number of first response officers in the Frankston, Casey, Dandenong, Monash and Kingston PSAs has risen by 36.4 per cent since November 1999.

Police have increased high visibility operations in a number of trouble spots to tackle the rise in street robberies, particularly around railway station precincts. The 2009–10 State Budget included funding for 50 extra transit police to boost safety on the public transport network. Police are targeting their operations at railway stations across Melbourne and are sending a strong message to offenders that their actions will not be tolerated. Public transport in Victoria is now safer with the overall crime rate (per million trips) on and around public transport declining by 48.4 per cent since 2000–01.

Decisions on the placement of police throughout the state are operational matters and are made by police command on the basis of assessed need. It is important that this process is not subject to political interference. I am assured by the Chief Commissioner of Police that the level of policing across Victoria is continuously monitored by the respective Regional Command Officers, with a view to maintaining optimum policing effectiveness.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Portarlinton: foreshore

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 16 September 2010

REPLY:

The Victorian Government has delegated responsibility for the management of the Portarlinton foreshore to the Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management (BBFCOM) and the Portarlinton Harbour to Parks Victoria.

I understand the community support for the Portarlinton Safe Harbour Master Plan. Works have commenced on elements of the plan including the Portarlinton Town Square and on the adjoining foreshore regarding traffic management and revegetation works.

As stated in the master plan, further works are subject to detailed design and business planning and will be staged over a 10-year period.

Beyond the desktop studies for the master plan, extensive environmental and technical studies were undertaken including marine sediment testing, mapping the extent of the basalt flora and fauna, indigenous cultural heritage assessment and traffic studies. I am confident Parks Victoria and the steering committee considered these findings in the final master plan.

Maintenance dredging is undertaken at the Portarlinton Pier every 3–4 years and will also be undertaken regularly at Point Richards within the existing approvals process and guidelines.

I am advised that the car park associated with the newly constructed Point Richards boat ramp is in need of upgrade. The BBFCOM has applied to the Department of Transport for a grant to commence detailed design and community consultation to undertake this work. The Department of Sustainability and Environment will continue to work with the BBFCOM to explore further funding options once this study is complete.

The issue at Steeles Rock is one of many similar erosion issues along the Bellarine Bayside Foreshore. The BBFCOM has commenced a detailed coastal process study for the foreshore to determine locations of potential future erosion along this stretch of coastline and then identify appropriate mitigation strategies to protect the foreshore.

I anticipate this study will make appropriate recommendations for the protection of the foreshore in the vicinity of Steeles Rock.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 7 October 2010

Gaming: Pink Hill Hotel

Raised with: Minister for Gaming

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 28 July 2010

REPLY:

The Victorian Commission for Gambling Regulation (VCGR) on 23 July 2010 approved the Pink Hill Hotel, Beaconsfield, as premises suitable for gaming.

The VCGR is the independent body responsible for the regulation of Victoria's gambling industry. As one of its statutory functions, the VCGR receives and considers applications in accordance with the *Gambling Regulation Act 2003* (the Act), including applications under Part 3 of the Act for approval of a premises as suitable for gaming.

New premises approval applications are considered by the VCGR at a public hearing at which interested parties, including members of the public, are able to attend. At the hearing the applicant and the responsible authority, typically the local council, may present information in support or opposition of the application. In this case the Cardinia Council opposed the application and provided a submission to the VCGR.

The VCGR then examines all of the material before making a determination. The VCGR must not grant an application for approval of premises as suitable for gaming unless it is satisfied that the net economic and social impact will not be detrimental to the local community impacted by the application. A council that makes a submission on an application may appeal the VCGR decision to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

The proposed Pink Hill Hotel is to be a purpose-built, architecturally designed building and, as stated in the VCGR's media release of 28 July 2010, the plans for the proposed venue show that when it is built a wall, lounge and lobby will separate the gaming and play areas. Attached is a copy of the plans for the Pink Hill Hotel which confirm this to be the case.

I have recently reminded the VCGR that the national responsible gambling principles agreed by the Ministerial Council on Gambling in July 2009 include that "minors should not ... be exposed to gambling areas within venues".

Frankston Reservoir: future

Raised with: Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Rich-Phillips

Raised on: 12 August 2010

REPLY:

Frankston Reservoir Natural Features Reserve (NFR) is a bushland park of 90.51 hectares which incorporates the 10 hectare Frankston Reservoir.

The land was transferred to the Crown on 29 November 2007 and the reserve was proclaimed on 22 January 2008 by the Governor in Council. This classification acknowledges the site as an important conservation area and appropriate for recreation activities to occur.

Up to now the reserve has been closed to the public. Therefore there are no public facilities in the park such as seating or toilets and consideration must be given to public safety before the former utility site is opened. There is a range of drainage structures and pits throughout the park that must be made safe.

In late 2009 responsibility for the planning and management of the reserve was transferred to Parks Victoria. Melbourne Water retains responsibility for 4 hectares of land which supports the water supply infrastructure. Melbourne Water has undertaken extensive works on the site including construction of a new spillway which was completed in March 2010. It was inappropriate to have members of the community using the reserve during this period.

Parks Victoria is working with Melbourne Water to ensure an adequate water level in the reservoir is maintained. Water in the reservoir is no longer part of the supply system and is not being pumped from an external source. Investigations into redirection of stormwater to supply the reservoir are proceeding and will require further construction works.

Parks Victoria held a Discovery Open Day on 25 July 2010 attended by me, Dr Alistair Harkness, MP, the Friends of Frankston Reservoir and over 200 local residents. It was a very successful day. Further 'Discovery Days' were held on 29 August and 29 September and another will be held on 31 October. These days are intended to provide interim access and provide residents with an opportunity to understand the nature of the reserve as part of the community consultation process.

Parks Victoria has commenced development of a master plan for the reserve including details of the visitor facilities. They are drawing heavily on the previous community consultation undertaken by DSE and Frankston City Council. More recently, the on-site Discovery Days have provided an opportunity for community members to talk directly with Parks Victoria staff about their concerns and aspirations for the reserve.

Parks Victoria initially anticipated a draft master plan would be released for public consultation in October 2010. However, a number of issues have been raised by local community interest groups and residents which will require further investigation in order to reach a satisfactory balance between nature conservation, community enjoyment and neighbour amenity. Once Parks Victoria and I are satisfied that there is resolution of these issues, the draft master plan will be displayed for a period of six weeks for comment by the broader community.

Following completion of the master plan, capital works will be undertaken in the reserve including landscaping of the proposed car park, construction of a toilet facility and installation of picnic tables.

It is expected the reserve will be fully open to the public in mid 2011, when full community consultation has been completed, the conservation assets of the environment protected and the reserve made safe and enjoyable for visitors.

Black Forest Drive: traffic management

Raised with: Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 31 August 2010

REPLY:

The management of Black Forest Drive, including changes to the design of the road, is the responsibility of VicRoads, and falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Roads and Ports. I am advised that VicRoads consults with affected parties, including police and emergency services, when proposing or implementing changes to the design of roadways.

In regard to the use of Black Forest Road by the emergency services I am advised that appropriate evacuation routes, including the use of Black Forest Road, would be determined based on a risk assessment by relevant emergency services.

I trust this information is of assistance and thank you for taking the time to bring your concerns to my attention.

Buses: SmartBus route 903

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 16 September 2010

REPLY:

The level of service on Route 903 has been designed in accordance with the Department of Transport's (DOT) published SmartBus standard which is as follows:

On weekdays the service operates:

- every 15 minutes between 6.30 a.m. and 9.00 p.m.;
- on average every 30 minutes between 5.00 a.m. and 6.30 a.m.; and
- on average every 30 minutes 9.00 p.m. and midnight.

On weekends the service operates:

- on average every 30 minutes between 6.00 a.m. and midnight on Saturdays; and
- on average every 30 minutes between 7.00 a.m. and 9.00 p.m. on Sundays.

Observations of the loading pattern on SmartBus Route 903, and advice from the bus company, indicate that while loadings on weekends are high at times, buses do not exceed the authorised carrying capacity. It is not unusual for buses at peak times to carry some standing passengers. DOT has no evidence of passengers being unable to board Route 903 buses at Doncaster Shoppingtown due to overcrowding. Patronage counts do not show overcrowding occurring at this location.

DOT will continue to monitor passenger numbers on these services to help inform any future timetable changes.

Recently, there have been several redevelopments of Chadstone Shopping Centre, which included a significant upgrade of the bus terminal and a major bridge building project at Middle Road. While these projects were being completed there were delays operating into and out of Chadstone.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Thursday, 7 October 2010

COUNCIL

5377

To date, a number of bus priority measures have been implemented along this bus route, including the installation of bus lanes and queue jump lanes, and more will be progressively rolled out over time. DOT believes these measures will reduce bus travel times on the most congested legs of the route. Further opportunities for improvement will be explored by DOT and VicRoads; however, the interests of other road users need to be considered to achieve a balanced outcome.