

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee 2016–17 Budget Estimates Hearing – 6 May 2016

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AND FURTHER INFORMATION AGREED TO BE SUPPLIED AT THE HEARINGS

Hon Daniel Andrews MP

PREMIER

1. Please provide a list of names and titles of members of the central bargaining unit.

(Page 7 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

At present, the Central Bargaining Unit (CBU) has a total of 10 staff:

- Director, Jesse Maddison
- Assistant Director, Darren Driscoll
- Senior Legal Policy Adviser (VPS 6) - two positions
- Senior Policy Adviser (VPS 6) - four positions
- Policy Adviser (VPS 5) - one position
- Policy Analyst (VPS 4) - one position.

It is not appropriate to provide the names of non-executive public service staff.

2. Please outline what the Premier's Jobs and Infrastructure Fund is anticipated to achieve during 2016–17.

(Pages 11-12 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

The Fund comprises several key initiatives, including:

- \$60 million LaunchVic initiative, which over the next four years will develop Victoria's start-up ecosystem
- \$116 million Investment Attraction and Assistance Program to attract key investors that generate high value jobs. It will also be supported by a global business marketing campaign, promoting inbound and outbound trade missions and the Victorian Government Business Office Network
- \$24 million Globally Connecting Business initiative is a strategic component of the new Trade and Investment Victoria agenda and will support the growth of inbound trade missions and establish a new liveability Victoria International initiative to promote Victoria's liveability capabilities globally.

The Fund has previously supported several job-creating projects, including for Avalon Airport to secure Jetstar's operations over 10 years, for Zendesk to open its Asia Pacific Software Engineering Centre in Melbourne, and for NBN to move its support centre and cyber security operations to Melbourne.

3. Please describe how policies affecting social procurement on Government projects will affect providers, such as the Oakleigh centre for the intellectually disabled.

(Pages 13-14 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

Minister Noonan is leading a Social Enterprise Ministerial Committee, which is focused on growing social enterprise in Victoria. Social procurement will be one component of a broader strategy to support the growth and development of the social enterprise ecosystem. The priority areas in developing the strategy include:

- raising the profile of the social enterprise sector;
- building social enterprises business capability; and
- enabling better market access.

The Committee will develop a whole-of-government view on social procurement, and how Government projects can leverage the strengths of providers such as the Oakleigh Centre. Harnessing the efforts of the community sector through procurement will deliver important social benefits, including employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged Victorians.

4. Please advise the cost of the paramedics' EBA and how it aligns with the Government's wages policy.

(Pages 16-17 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

In March 2016, the Fair Work Commission handed down its recommendations regarding the ambulance paramedic work value review and the Government has accepted the recommendations.

The work value outcome is not considered to be covered by wages policy as it is an agreed term in the current enterprise agreement where the parties had committed to the Fair Work Commission determining the matter in line with the work value principles.

This ruling was specific and unique to ambulance paramedic work and Government expects the successor enterprise bargaining agreement to be negotiated within wages policy.

The financial impact of the ambulance paramedics work value case was included in Labor's Financial Statement.

The Ambulance Victoria Enterprise Agreement 2015 provides for the following wage outcomes:

- wage increases of 6 per cent (1 January 2015) 3 per cent (1 July 2015) and 3 per cent (1 July 2016)
- a one-off bonus of \$3 000 per FTE (pro rata)
- other conditions including a 2 per cent increase payable to certain classes of workers (communications and transport officers) and increases to allowances (including temporary reserve and crib meal allowances).

The previous agreement reached its nominal expiry date on 12 November 2012. The current agreement was approved by the Fair Work Commission on 7 May 2015 and reaches its nominal expiry date on 31 December 2016.

5. Please provide and describe the DPC rules and guidelines in regard to advertising.

(Pages 23-4 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

DPC's rules and guidelines in relation to advertising are available on the DPC website at dpc.vic.gov.au.

In addition, the Government announced in March 2016 that ministers and departments had been asked to reduce the amount of advertising that appears in metropolitan newspapers. The Government has also recently introduced the Public Administration Amendment (Public Sector Communication Standards) Bill 2016 into Parliament. The Bill sets out standards and requirements for Government advertising and other communication. The Bill is available at legislation.vic.gov.au.

6. Please present any modelling that has been carried out on the effects of the coal royalty increase on households.

(Pages 30-2 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

Modelling on the impacts of the increase in coal royalties was commissioned to inform Cabinet's 2016-17 Budget deliberations. As such, DPC is unable to provide this modelling to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

7. Please explain effects that decisions made by the Federal Government have had on the eligibility criteria of pensioners and health care card holders for electricity concessions.

(Pages 32-3 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

The Commonwealth Government determines eligibility for income support payments. From 1 January 2017, the Commonwealth Government will increase the assets test taper rate for pensions. This means that the rate at which the pension reduces will increase, leaving some Australian pensioners losing all or a portion of their entitlements.

The eligibility criteria for Victorian Government concessions has not changed. Individuals who hold a Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card, Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card or Veterans' Affairs Gold Card will continue to be eligible for Victorian Government energy concessions.

8. With respect to the Hazelwood mine fire inquiry, is the Government providing any additional resources to the emergency management commissioner?

(Page 34 of the Premier's transcript)

Response:

The 2016–17 Budget allocates \$1.004 million over three years to support the work of Emergency Management Victoria in implementing the recommendations of the 2014 and reopened Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry (Inquiry) Reports. This funding includes:

- \$0.246 million over two years to extend the duration of the EMV Latrobe Valley Coal Mine Taskforce, chaired by the Emergency Management Commissioner (EMC), which facilitates collaboration between the Latrobe Valley Coal Mines, Latrobe City Council, Government and emergency services organisations to promote emergency preparedness
- \$0.250 million over two years to appoint a community engagement officer, based in the Latrobe Valley, to develop and implement a community engagement strategy for emergency management planning (position is fixed-term 1.0 FTE for 24 months)
- \$0.340 million over two years to develop and deliver a State Communications Strategy for emergency management

- \$0.168 million to appoint a project manager to support implementation of the Inquiry Report recommendations by EMV (position is fixed-term 1.0 FTE for 12 months).

The EMC has not received any additional resources directly in the 2016–17 Budget as part of the Government’s response to the Inquiry.

9. Please explain changes in expenditure between 2015–16 and 2016–17 on:

- a. the use of contractors
 - i. for the Department of Premier and Cabinet
 - ii. for the Government as a whole

- b. the use of consultants
 - i. for the Department of Premier and Cabinet
 - ii. for the Government as a whole

(Page 38 of the Premier’s transcript)

Response:

Expenditure for 2015–16 is not yet finalised and 2016–17 expenditure is not yet available, therefore the comparative information requested cannot be provided.

10. Does the 2016–17 Budget provide funding to increase operating hours at police stations, including Pakenham, Mooroolbark, Reservoir, Ashburton, Somerville, Greensborough, Epping and Craigieburn?

(Pages 38-40 of the Premier’s transcript)

Response:

Out of the \$659 million provided in the Budget for police and crime prevention, there is no specific funding relating to the opening hours of police stations, including those of Pakenham, Mooroolbark, Reservoir, Ashburton, Somerville, Greensborough, Epping and Craigieburn police stations.

The Chief Commissioner has sole discretion over Victoria Police operational matters, including the efficient deployment of resources to anticipate and respond to crime and other public safety hazards. This discretion extends to the operations of police stations, including opening hours, which are determined in a way that best serves the community.

One aspect of operational reform recognises that in the digital age, there is a reduced need for face-to-face services, and that police are often better deployed on the front-line, out in the community, rather than behind the front-desk. As a result, there can be a reduction in counter-services provided at police stations. The Chief Commissioner is responsible for this decision and the Government is confident that Victorians will continue to receive the accessible and quality services they are used to, as well as a more visible police presence in the community.