

## Written questions tabled at the hearings

Portfolio:	Special Minister of State – Gavin Jennings MLC
Committee member:	Richard Riordan, Deputy Chair

**QUESTION 1:**

250,000 enrolled voters failed to attend and register at polling booths at the 2018 Victorian State Election, and recently the VEC sent 190,000 of those voters' fines for failing to vote. Can you provide the committee a breakdown of those 190,000 fines being issued for each electorate in Victoria?

*Topic: VEC*

*Reference: Budget Paper 3, p. 295.*

**Response:**

The breakdown of the 191,452 infringement notices mailed to non-voters by district is below.

District Code	District Name	Total
301	Albert Park District	3,351
302	Altona District	3,066
303	Bass District	2,812
304	Bayswater District	1,706
305	Bellarine District	1,368
306	Benambra District	2,629
307	Bendigo East District	2,132
308	Bendigo West District	2,157
309	Bentleigh District	1,225
310	Box Hill District	1,098
311	Brighton District	1,756
312	Broadmeadows District	4,482
313	Brunswick District	2,948
314	Bulleen District	1,317

## Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

District Code	District Name	Total
315	Bundoora District	1,537
316	Buninyong District	2,001
317	Burwood District	1,306
318	Carrum District	2,469
319	Caulfield District	2,073
320	Clarinda District	1,921
321	Cranbourne District	3,838
322	Croydon District	1,365
323	Dandenong District	3,188
324	Eildon District	1,716
325	Eltham District	944
326	Essendon District	2,134
327	Euroa District	2,326
328	Evelyn District	1,499
329	Ferntree Gully District	1,330
330	Footscray District	3,809
331	Forest Hill District	920
332	Frankston District	2,890
333	Geelong District	2,023
334	Gembrook District	2,302
335	Gippsland East District	2,130
336	Gippsland South District	1,652
337	Hastings District	2,462
338	Hawthorn District	1,352
339	Ivanhoe District	1,668

## Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

District Code	District Name	Total
340	Kew District	1,166
341	Keysborough District	1,891
342	Kororoit District	3,284
343	Lara District	2,726
344	Lowan District	1,358
345	Macedon District	1,330
346	Malvern District	1,443
347	Melbourne District	3,517
348	Melton District	4,111
349	Mildura District	3,062
350	Mill Park District	2,110
351	Monbulk District	1,337
352	Mordialloc District	1,344
353	Mornington District	1,439
354	Morwell District	2,829
355	Mount Waverley District	1,056
356	Mulgrave District	1,383
357	Murray Plains District	2,337
358	Narracan District	2,295
359	Narre Warren North District	2,159
360	Narre Warren South District	2,737
361	Nepean District	2,254
362	Niddrie District	1,464
363	Northcote District	1,794
364	Oakleigh District	1,580

## Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

District Code	District Name	Total
365	Ovens Valley District	1,790
366	Pascoe Vale District	2,730
367	Polwarth District	1,520
368	Prahran District	3,753
369	Preston District	2,490
370	Richmond District	3,635
371	Ringwood District	1,278
372	Ripon District	1,932
373	Rowville District	1,180
374	Sandringham District	1,264
375	Shepparton District	2,930
376	South Barwon District	1,502
377	South-West Coast District	1,864
378	St Albans District	3,381
379	Sunbury District	2,170
380	Sydenham District	2,329
381	Tarneit District	3,477
382	Thomastown District	2,585
383	Warrandyte District	1,066
384	Wendouree District	1,924
385	Werribee District	2,787
386	Williamstown District	2,317
387	Yan Yean District	2,617
388	Yuroke District	4,023
<b>Totals</b>		<b>191,452</b>

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**QUESTION 2:**

There were 28,405 postal vote applications cancelled by the VEC during the campaign. Anecdotal evidence from some of those stated that they never received ballot papers and were also not informed their postal vote application was cancelled. Can you advise how many of the 28,405 people whose postal vote applications were cancelled ended up receiving fines for failing to vote?

*Topic: VEC*

**Response:**

None of the 28,405 people whose postal vote applications were cancelled received a fine for failing to vote.

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**QUESTION 3:**

Can you provide the committee a breakdown per state electorate of electors who had postal vote applications cancelled and received a fine for failing to vote?

*Topic: VEC*

**Response:**

As discussed above, none of the 28,405 people whose postal vote applications were cancelled received a fine for failing to vote.

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**QUESTION 4:**

Given the large number of cancelled postal vote applications and the lowest voter participation rate the VEC has recorded at a State Election since 1999, does the income from the fines go into consolidated revenue or will the money from those fines go into education and civics programs at the VEC?

*Topic: VEC*

**Response:**

Penalties recovered by the VEC are paid into the Consolidated Fund, as required by the *Electoral Act 2002*.

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**QUESTION 5:**

One option a voter has is to take the VEC to court to contest the fine. Has the VEC estimated in its Budget how many of these 190,000 fines will end up in court? If so, what is the figure, and what is the legal budget of the VEC to be represented in court on these matters?

*Topic: VEC*

**Response:**

- During compulsory voting enforcement following the 2014 State Election, 63 non-voters sought to have their non-voting matter heard in the Magistrates' Court.
  - The VEC has estimated that around 75 matters will proceed to court this calendar year.
  - A budget of \$350,000 has been included in the 2019/20 financial year to cover the legal costs.
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**QUESTION 6:**

BP3 page 301 and the \$52.9 million of funding for Digital Government and Communications, encompassing Service Victoria. Minister, what is the total funding to date that has been allocated to Service Victoria for 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23?

*Topic: Service Victoria:*

*Reference: Budget Paper 3, p. 301*

**Response:**

The Pre-Election Budget Update reports \$20m allocated to Service Victoria for 2019/20. This is the final remaining funding from the initial program and no further funding has been allocated.

In June 2018, Service Victoria delivered the initial three-year Service Victoria program on time and under budget. The remaining program funds were sufficient to enable the continued operation of Service Victoria for an additional two years to 30 June 2020.

Government will consider the future funding requirements for Service Victoria once program funds have been exhausted.

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**QUESTION 7:**

Minister, I refer to BP3 pages 92 & 93, I note the only new initiative for the 2019/20 year under this item is \$3.6 million over the next two years to pay for social media monitoring and analysis within the Premier's Office. How much of this funding is for advertising?

*Topic: Digital Government and Communications*

**Response:**

None of the funding has been allocated towards advertising. The funding will be used to integrate existing government data with social and traditional media, to better understand the needs of the citizens and use those insights to better inform the design and implementation of policies and services.

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**QUESTION 8:**

Minister, why you have replaced the performance measure for Service Victoria with a “customer satisfaction rating” instead of “delivery of projects within an agreed timelines” in the 2019/20 Budget?

*Topic: Service Victoria*

*Reference: Budget Paper 3, p. 301*

**Response:**

The project to establish Service Victoria was delivered on time and under budget. Therefore, the previous measure “delivery of projects within agreed timelines” is no longer appropriate. The new customer satisfaction target measures Service Victoria’s operational performance as a customer service agency.

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### QUESTION 9:

Expected spending for 2018 on Digital Government was \$92.7 million. This is a \$45 million more – nearly double – the actual 2018 Budget of \$47.5 million. Explanatory notes in the Budget state that this is “primarily due” to funding Service Victoria for the next stage of the Customer Digital Services Platform. This extra funding has been such a drain on the budget, that the 2019 -20 Statement of Finances for the Department of Premier and Cabinet cites increased funding to ‘Service Victoria’ as contributing to their operating deficits in 2018/19 and 2019/20. Minister, why is forward-planning at Service Victoria so inadequate that the annual budget blew out by nearly 200%?

*Topic: Digital Government and Service Victoria*

*Reference: Budget Paper 3 p. 301*

### Response:

This question is based on a series of false assumptions.

Funding for the establishment of Service Victoria was contained within the 2015-2016 Budget. As the project was classified as high value and high risk, the majority of the funding was held by Treasury in central contingency and released to Service Victoria in stages as milestones were completed. The breakdown of Service Victoria funding across financial years is below.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
Total appropriation	\$11.86m	\$24.34m	\$38.8m	\$32m	\$29.1m	\$136.1m

In June 2018, the Service Victoria platform was delivered on time and under budget. Remaining program funds were sufficient to enable the continued operation of Service Victoria for an additional two years, and were re-phased.

The target spending for 2018-19 for Digital Government and Communications published in the 2018-19 budget papers had not included funding held in contingency by Department of Treasury and Finance for Service Victoria. Whereas the expected outcome for 2018-19 reported the funds released from contingency and carried-over funds from 2017-18.

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**QUESTION 10**

Minister with a track record of poor implementation at Service Victoria, Budget blow-outs and now, no meaningful measurement for assessing if projects are delivered on time, How do you assure Victorians that you can adequately measure the success of Service Victoria taking over some of VicRoads online services?

**Response:**

Service Victoria is already delivering registration renewals and checks for VicRoads, with a forecast user satisfaction for 2019-20 of 95 per cent. Similarly, the Road Operations customer service is measured by “Road vehicle and driver regulation – user satisfaction with vehicle registration and driver licensing”, with a target for 2019-20 of 85 per cent.

The Department of Transport will continue to plan for the transition of customer-facing and identity management functions of the VicRoads’ registration and licensing division.

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**QUESTION 11:**

Minister, the government has promoted Service Victoria as the central portal for Victorians to access government services online. You advised PAEC in 2015 that Victorian government entities had 538 websites and 55 million transactions taking place between the government sector and the Victorian public. **Can you report to the Committee on how many services, websites and transactions are now operated through the Services Victoria central portal?**

*Topic: Service Victoria*

**Response:**

The following agencies use Service Victoria to deliver services: the Victorian Fisheries Authority, Working with Children Check Victoria, Victoria Police, VicRoads, Ambulance Victoria, and the Solar Homes Program.

In addition, DELWP and Worksafe Victoria use the platform capabilities to support their own service delivery while Kmart stores (as third-party providers of government services) sell fishing licences using Service Victoria's secure system.

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### QUESTION 12:

Question: Under the measurement of Digital Government and Communications, the 2015/6 Budget Papers (BP 2015/16 Chapter 3, page 314) show **the actual number of monthly visits to the vic.gov.au website in 2013/4 was 377,906, which under this year's Budget has reduced to a target of 310,000, which is still 40,000 less than last year's outcome.** Can you explain how the huge investment in Service Victoria has in real terms, allowed more Victorians to engage with the Victorian government online?

*Topic: Service Victoria*

### Response:

More than 450,000 people have used Service Victoria with a satisfaction rate above 95 percent taking on average 25 per cent less time to complete their transactions.

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**QUESTION 13:**

The average number of monthly visits to vic.gov.au has been included in the Budget Papers as a target for at least the last five years. What is the reason for not a similar breakdown in the statistics of average number of monthly visits to service.vic.gov.au to measure the performance of Service Victoria?

*Topic: Digital Government*

*Reference: 2015/16 Budget Paper 3 p.314*

**Response:**

Service Victoria is following the modern IT and technology start-ups practice of focusing on improving a product and customer journey on a small scale in order to learn from real customers and address any issues before scaling to the millions of transactions a week that the platform is capable of handling.

Service Victoria's most important outcome-focused performance measure is now customer satisfaction, which is currently tracking above the 95 per cent target.

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**QUESTION 14:**

What significant difference does the Service Victoria website offer to Victorians?

*Topic: Service Victoria*

**Response:**

Service Victoria makes it easier, simpler and faster for Victorians to access government services.

The platform was built with customer needs at its core. Significant features delivered on the platform so far include increasing the availability of payment methods, bank-level security and privacy features, one-click PayPal payments, SMS to pay functions, saving details for future transaction, sending email and SMS reminders, and scheduling recurring payments.

New features include digital credentials in a government wallet and giving the public the ability to securely prove their identities remotely from the comfort of their own homes.

Many of these features were not available to Victorians before Service Victoria was established. As these features are rolled out, more and more people will benefit from using the platform.

Service Victoria continues to listen to and learn from its customers and is adding more transactions and features which will make a real difference to people's lives and the way they interact with government departments and agencies.

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