

**Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied by the
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning**

- 1. Regarding the *Better Apartments* initiative, was there any submission that talked about the ratio of parking per apartment? Was there any view on this offered in the submissions?**

(Page 10 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

Car parking was one of 14 key issues identified in the *Better Apartments – A Discussion Paper*. A comprehensive report of the findings of public engagement process was released in December 2015. The public engagement process included written submissions, a community survey, workshops and interviews with key stakeholders. Over 1,700 people participated and 145 submissions were received.

The community survey and written submissions process asked people to rank the 14 issues identified in the Discussion Paper by importance. The result of this ranking exercise shows that car parking is considered a less important issue for apartment living in comparison to some other issues. It was rated as the 8th most important issue of 14 issues.

The top five issues of importance affecting apartment amenity were identified as:

1. access to daylight,
2. provision of adequate functional apartment space,
3. good natural ventilation,
4. internal and external noise,
5. energy and resource efficiency.

Few respondents commented on the ratio of parking per apartment. The predominant comment was that car parking rates should be based on the apartment site's location and surrounding context.

- 2. For all reprioritisations affecting 2014-15 and subsequent, please advise:**

- a. the year of the reprioritisation**
- b. the area that funding was reprioritised from**
- c. the amount reprioritised**
- d. the area that funding was reprioritised to.**

(Page 11 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

As part of the 2014-15 budget, funding was reprioritised towards the following new initiatives within the Environment, Climate Change and Water, Planning and Local Government portfolios:

- \$7.2 million over four years for Improving biodiversity outcomes for Victorians and Urban fringe weed management. This funding was redirected from unallocated Metropolitan Parks Charge expenditure.
- \$0.5 million over four years for the Victoria Design Review Panel. This funding was sourced from areas where projects came in under budget or where further efficiencies could be achieved.
- \$2.5 million per annum for the Local Government Inspectorate which was generated through efficiencies.

Further detail on the phasing of these initiatives over the forward estimates is provided in the table below:

Table 1: Output initiatives

	2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	2015-16 \$m	2016-17 \$m	2017-18 \$m
Improving biodiversity outcomes for Victorians					
Total Funding Announced	..	0.3	0.5	1.2	1.2
Reprioritisation	..	-0.3	-0.5	-1.2	-1.2
Net Impact	..	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Urban fringe weed management					
Total Funding Announced	..	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Reprioritisation	..	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0
Net Impact	..	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Victorian Design Review Panel					
Total Funding Announced	..	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7
Reprioritisation	..	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
Net Impact	..	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6
Local Government Inspectorate					
Total Funding Announced	..	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Reprioritisation	..	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5	-2.5
Net Impact	..	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

It should be noted that following machinery of government changes, departmental responsibility for the Victoria Design Review Panel and Local Government Inspectorate initiatives was transferred to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

As part of the 2015-16 Budget, no reprioritisations were identified.

3. Following reprioritisations affecting the Environment and Climate Change portfolio, were any programs cut as a result of these reprioritisations?

(Page 11 of the Department of Environment, Land, *Water* and Planning transcript)

No programs were cut as a result of these reprioritisations.

4. Please advise how many jobs were cut from the EPA through the *Sustainable Government* initiative.

(Page 13 of the Department of Environment, Land, *Water* and Planning transcript)

As part of the former Victorian Government's *Sustainable Government* initiative, the EPA had a reduction in staff of 63.07 FTE between 15 December 2011 and 31 December 2013.

Please further advise:

a. how many of these were employees with a scientific capacity as part of their positions

Of the 63.07 FTE, 10.84 FTE had a scientific background as part of their position with the EPA.

b. the breakdown (of the total) by gender.

Of the 63.07 FTE, 25.67 FTE were female and 37.4 FTE were male.

Note:

These figures differ to the FTE figures in EPA's annual report as the annual report refers to the FRD 29 - Workforce Data Disclosure reporting rules. Under these reporting rules, various categories of employee are excluded, such as employees on leave without pay for the whole of the pay period; casual employees who did not work during the relevant pay period; contractors and labour hire. For the purposes of this question, all categories of employee have been included.

5. Regarding the 46 billion litres of water recycled by Melbourne Water in 2014-15:

(Page 13 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

a. please break this figure down by purpose (agricultural, horticultural, watering of community assets, etc).

As stated in Melbourne Water's annual report, recycled water from the Eastern and Western treatment plants is used for many end uses including conservation, agriculture, horticulture, community open space, industrial, residential and treatment process.

The amount of recycled water used for each application is shown in the table below as both a percentage of total volume used and annual volume. The recycled water provided to South East Water generally fits into the same use categories as those listed (but also includes all of the residential use via 'third pipe' systems, for example garden watering and toilet flushing) however Melbourne Water does not have visibility of the breakdown of recycled water volumes by use for these end customers.

End Use	Per cent of total	Annual Volume (million litres)
Conservation	38.9	18,129
Agriculture	22.4	10,445
Horticulture	8.4	3,938
Community Open Space	0.3	163
Industrial	0.5	236
Treatment Process	17.5	8,182
South East Water Customers	12.0	5,531
Total	100.0	46,624

b. was this recycling exercise revenue neutral?

Consistent with the recycled water pricing principles authorised by the Essential Services Commission, the cost of producing recycled water is recovered from wholesale recycled water customers in accordance with the negotiated price, which is influenced by ability/willingness of the recycled water retail customers to pay for the service.

Any recycled water revenue shortfall (relative to cost of service provision) is recovered from sewerage customers through the wholesale sewerage price, to signal the benefits of improved sewage quality.

6. Regarding planned burns during 2014-15: please provide a map of the locations of planned burns. Please advise:

(Page 13 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

- a. how many planned burns were cancelled?**
- b. how many cancelled burns were rescheduled ?**
- c. how many planned burns were cancelled due to reasons other than weather and climate?**

Planned burning is the most effective way to reduce bushfire fuel loads over large areas. Being the deliberate introduction of fire into the landscape, planned burning is highly dependent on weather and other conditions such as fuel moisture.

Each year DELWP and Parks Victoria develop a Fire Operations Plan (FOP) which provides a three year schedule of planned burns and other activities to reduce the risk of bushfire to people, communities and the environment.

Details of fire operations activities in each DELWP fire district, including burn areas and locations, is provided at <http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/managing-bushfire-risk/fire-operations-planning/approved-fire-operations-plan#map>

The map shows all approved planned burns and other fire operations activities for 2015-16 to 2017-18, as of 25 September 2015.

The planned burns identified in the FOP exceed the annual planned burning target to provide flexibility for seasonal weather conditions. The 2014-15 to 2016-17 FOP contained over 1,800 planned burns, covering 1.2 million hectares compared to a target of 825,000 ha over the corresponding three year period (assuming 275,000 ha per annum).

Fire operations may be carried out in any year over the three year period of the plan. For example, a planned burn scheduled for 2016-17 may be brought forward and ignited in 2014-15 if weather conditions are favourable, or burns may be deferred if weather conditions aren't suitable.

Given the dependency on weather and other condition it is frequently necessary to change or reschedule planned burns, or remove or add new planned burns to the FOP, due to seasonal conditions and bushfires.

As part of our ongoing engagement with the community, input may be received regarding the conduct and timing of a planned burn. Whilst all community input is considered, the need to reduce the risk of bushfire to protect human life is our primary consideration.

- d. how many planned burns escaped containment?**
- e. how does the Department define a planned burn escaping?**

In 2014-15, 10 out of a total of 670 planned burns (or about 1.5% of the total planned burns undertaken) were considered breaches. These are listed in detail in the Fuel Management report, available on the DELWP website. Of the 10, three damaged private assets.

A planned burn is considered to have 'escaped' when it moves beyond the area designated in the burn plan (by breaching control lines) and if it cannot be contained within 30 minutes and/or requires additional resources and/or impacts private land. The burn plan may include designated contingency areas and an escape that is contained within the contingency area is not considered to be a breach.

In 2014-15 the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning recognised five categories of planned burn breaches, ranging from 1(a) a minor breakaway or spot overs in the immediate vicinity of burn with no suspicious circumstances and quickly controlled with onsite resources, through to category 4 which may have one or more of the following criteria:

- threat to public safety;
- significant private or public assets including public infrastructure threatened or damaged;
- powers to enter private property and take actions to extinguish exercised;
- significant environment issue; or
- a large area affected.

Of the 10 reported breaches in 2014-15, one was classified as a category 4, six category 3 and three category 1.

7. Regarding issuing of planning permits: please advise how many permits are not issued and how many are issued, broken down:

a. by geographic region

b. by nature of use.

(Page 15 of the Department of *Environment, Land, Water and Planning* transcript)

It is understood that the Committee's question is referring to planning permit applications, and has been interpreted and responded to as:

Regarding issuing of planning applications: please advise how many applications do not result in permits being issued, and of those that result in permits being issued, what are the numbers broken down:

a) by geographic region

b) by nature of use.

a) Distribution of permits across metropolitan regions, by use type:

Sector	Residential / Accommodation	Commercial / Retail	Other	All uses
Regional Victoria	7,076	1,564	3,662	12,302
Inner Metropolitan	4,799	1,443	436	6,678
Western Metropolitan	2,706	420	700	3,826
Southern & Eastern Metropolitan	7,894	895	1,431	10,220
Northern Metropolitan	3,964	495	614	5,073
Total	26,439	4,817	6,843	38,099

- b) The number of planning permit applications lodged in Victoria between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015¹:

Victorian Planning Permits	Number	Per cent
Applications lodged	46,713	
Outcome: Permit issued	38,099	81.6
Outcome: Permit not issued	5,963	12.8
Not yet determined:	2,651	5.7
<i>Of the 38,099 permits issued:</i>		
Residential / Accommodation	26,439	69.4
Commercial / Retail	4,817	12.6
Other	6,843	18.0

8. Please advise the revenue foregone for Parks Victoria from the reduction on camping fees of December 2015.

(Page 16 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

In late December 2015, following a review undertaken by Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to find the right balance between affordable holidays and funding for new facilities, fees for camping at sites with a mid-level of service were reduced from \$38.90 per night to \$28.00 per night at 47 campgrounds.

The annual reduction in revenue as a result of this change, based on the 2015-16 fees, is estimated to be \$1.16 million.

9. Please advise, for 2013-14 and 2014-15, the amounts from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account that went to:

(Page 21 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

a. Parks Victoria-managed land

As part of the 2013-14 financial year, \$87.1 million in funding from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account was provided to Parks Victoria to carry out activities on Parks Victoria managed land.

For the 2014-15 financial year, \$85.4 million in funding from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account was provided to Parks Victoria to carry out activities on Parks Victoria managed land.

b. the Royal Botanic Gardens

As part of the 2013-14 financial year, \$13.8 million in funding from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account was provided to support priority activities and projects within the Royal Botanic Gardens.

¹ New applications only; i.e. excludes applications to amend permits etc.

As part of the 2014-15 financial year, \$14.5 million in funding from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account was provided to support priority activities and projects within the Royal Botanic Gardens.

c. the Shrine of Remembrance

As part of the 2013-14 financial year, \$0.9 million in funding from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account was provided to the Shrine of Remembrance.

As part of the 2014-15 financial year, \$0.9 million in funding from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account was provided to the Shrine of Remembrance.

10. Please disaggregate expenditure on parks and reserves into:

a. those within the metropolitan area

b. those outside the metropolitan area

(Page 21 of the Department of *Environment, Land, Water and Planning* transcript)

For 2014-15 Parks Victoria had a total operational spend of \$199.72 million, comprised of funding from the Parks and Reserves Trust Account and State Appropriations.

Broadly, this expenditure can be categorised into three areas:

1. On-ground delivery in the metropolitan area: \$48.95 million.
2. On-ground delivery outside the metropolitan area: \$73.73 million.
3. Planning, shared and support services which enable on-ground delivery across both metropolitan and outside metropolitan: \$77.05 million.

11. Please explain the policy basis under which plan assets for the defined benefits superannuation scheme for Melbourne Water exceed the present value of their obligations.

(Page 22 of the Department of *Environment, Land, Water and Planning* transcript)

Melbourne Water's Defined Benefit Superannuation Plan (Plan) provides lump sum (or in limited instances pension) benefits based on length of service and final superannuable salary for employees engaged prior to 31 December 1993. Melbourne Water contributes to the Plan based on its commitments under the Employee Participation Agreement and Contribution Policy set and managed by the independent Trustee of the Plan, Equisuper.

The Trustee is responsible for governance of the Plan, including management and investment of the Plan assets. The current investment strategy adopted by the Trustee is to invest in 65 to 75 per cent growth assets and the balance in defensive assets. The Trustee, with assistance from the fund actuary (Mercer) also completes six monthly reviews of the funding ratio level (assets/liabilities) of the Plan to determine the recommended contribution rate for Melbourne Water. The target funding ratio is 105 per cent over 5 years with a minimum ratio of 100 per cent over 3 years.

For annual statutory reporting purposes, a net liability or asset is recorded for the Plan based on the difference between the present value of employee accrued benefits and the net market value of the assets at the end of the financial year. This valuation measurement is performed annually by the independent specialist actuary, Mercer. Historically the Plan net position has fluctuated between a liability and an asset year to year depending on performance of the market value of the assets (driven by the investment strategy of the Trustee) and changes to the present value of employee benefits in each financial year (driven by variables such as discount rate, salary increase rate, membership profile and movements etc.). The last time the Plan was in a net liability position was 2011-12.

At 30 June 2015 Melbourne Water's Plan was in a net asset position of \$19.5 million with a funding ratio in excess of the 105 per cent target. Due to the strong funding ratio Melbourne Waters required contribution rate to the Plan is currently zero. This healthy surplus position is primarily driven by strong market performance in the value of assets over the last few years and provides a buffer against future potential volatility in investment returns and changes to the present value of employee benefits. Should the Plan remain in a net asset position, Melbourne Water is unable to claim back any surplus funds until all the outstanding liabilities have been paid out to members.

12. Regarding the fox-baiting program in the Grampians National Park, please outline:

(Page 25 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

a. actions taken under this program

The Grampians Ark project, led by Parks Victoria, is one of Victoria's four flagship landscape-scale fox control projects. A dedicated fox baiting program has been running for twenty years to initially help protect the declining Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (BTRW) population and allow further BTRW releases. It has evolved to protect a range of other threatened small mammal species.

In 2010, the program began including surrounding private land baiting in the Victoria Valley, delivered in collaboration with Panyyabyr and Mirranatwa Landcare groups.

Significant effort is spent on evaluating the effectiveness of predator control and small mammal condition and response in cooperation with Arthur Rylah Institute, DELWP and university institutions. This includes continuous fox activity monitoring since 2003 and changes in method from sand-pads to remote camera monitoring. A long-term small mammal monitoring partnership has also been in place with Deakin University since 2008.

b. amounts spent on this program in 2013-14 and 2014-15

For 2013-14 and 2014-15, a total of \$800,000 (\$400,000 per annum) was allocated to this program.

c. outcomes of this program, if known.

The January 2014 Northern Complex fire impacted a minor area covered by the program. However, the baiting program was extended to protect small mammals affected by the fire, focusing particularly on the Wartook basin.

The 2014-15 baiting program was delivered without major disruption. Minor issues were experienced as a result of the Black Range fire in summer which restricted some access over winter.

Intensive fox remote camera monitoring in 2013-14 was able to demonstrate a very low fox density of 0.23 per/km² within the baited area which can be attributed to the program.

Deakin University, Museum Victoria and Melbourne University small mammal monitoring has improved knowledge of threatened species requirements and identified core refuge areas for the persistence of significant species through fire and drought. This has provided a focus for intensive fox control to protect these values.

Declining bait-take on private land reflects lower fox activity with continued high community input into the baiting program.

13. Please advise the value of the flood mitigation works carried out at Rochester since 1 December 2014.

(Pages 27-28 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

The flood mitigation works were identified through development of a detailed flood investigation for Rochester, after the town suffered significant flooding in 2011. The plan was developed by North Central CMA and Campaspe Shire Council, working closely with the Rochester community.

The plan investigated a range of potential flood mitigation options for the town, drawing on the ideas, knowledge and experiences of residents.

The Rochester flood management plan was completed by June 2013.

The following expenditure has occurred since 1 December 2014:

- Detailed design and construction of a levee south of Rochester to the value of \$87,000.
- Flood warning infrastructure upgrades to the value of \$30,000.

14. Please advise what allocations to Parks Victoria funds by program, including invasive species and weed control.

(Page 29 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

Parks Victoria is responsible for the management of a vast network of public land, including national parks, marine parks and sanctuaries, wilderness areas, state and metropolitan parks, thousands of Aboriginal and post-European cultural and heritage sites, and around 70 per cent of Victoria's coastline. Parks Victoria is also the Local Port Manager for Port Phillip Bay, Western Port and Port Campbell and the Waterways Manager for the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers.

Part of the core services includes protecting habitats from invasive weeds and animals. Managing invasive species is fundamental for the protection of habitats and is a key delivery area for Parks Victoria, with programs conducted in most parks across the state. In 2014-15, over 30,000 hectares of invasive weeds were treated and over two million hectares were treated to manage populations of invasive animals.

In addition to this expenditure on core services, there is approximately \$19 million for specific programs for fire management and firefighters, \$10 million for works at specific sites around the state (including Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve and the Yarra River), as well as \$1 million for specific weed and pest management initiatives.

15. Please list all projects or programs that were funded out of the Sustainability Fund for 2014/15.

(Pages 31-2 of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning transcript)

For a list of all projects or programs funded out of the Sustainability Fund for 2014-15, please refer to *Appendix Four Sustainability Fund Allocations* (pages 92 to 112) in the Sustainability Victoria 2014-15 Annual Report <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/publications-and-research/publications/publications-a-b>