

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

4 September to 17 September 2015

(Extract from book 13)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
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Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
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Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

Speaker:

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER

Deputy Speaker:

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

Acting Speakers:

Mr Angus, Mr Blackwood, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Carbines, Mr Crisp, Mr Dixon, Ms Edwards, Ms Halfpenny,
Ms Kilkenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Ms McLeish, Mr Pearson, Ms Ryall, Ms Thomas,
Mr Thompson, Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Mr Watt.

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. J. GUY

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Ms S. RYAN

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 A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn ¹	Polwarth	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent ²	South-West Coast	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ³	Gippsland South	Nats
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian ⁴	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
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Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Koroit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
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McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP
McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Resigned 3 September 2015

² Resigned 3 September 2015

³ Elected 14 March 2015

⁴ Resigned 2 February 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; Greens — The Greens;
Ind — Independent; LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals.

Legislative Assembly committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Allan, Ms D’Ambrosio, Mr Morris, Ms Neville, Ms Ryan, Ms Sandell, Mr Scott and Mr Wells.

Standing Orders Committee — The Speaker, Ms Allan, Ms Asher, Mr Brooks, Mr Clark, Mr Hibbins, Mr Hodgett, Ms Kairouz, Mr Nardella, Ms Ryan and Ms Sheed.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.
(*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh. (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge.

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.
(*Council*): Mr Elasmarr and Mr Melhem.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon, Mr Northe and Ms Spence.
(*Council*): Ms Patten, Mr Somyurek.

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson, Mr Tilley and Ms Ward. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Young.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards, Ms Kealy, Ms McLeish and Ms Sheed. (*Council*): Mr Finn.

House Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Hibbins, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Richardson, Ms Thomson and Mr Wells. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes.

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley. (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Ms Patten.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward. (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kealy, Ms Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto. (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva.

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ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers and published in the questions on notice database in the period shown.

4 September to 17 September 2015**Bentleigh electorate****Question 341**

Question asked by: Member for Bentleigh
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

I am sorry to hear about the two recent accidents at this intersection. I can appreciate that they must have been distressing for the local community.

I regret that my other commitments prevented me from meeting with your constituents at this time. However, VicRoads recently met with Father Michael Sierakowski, as well as representatives from the local community and Victoria Police on site to discuss possible improvements to road safety at the intersection of Centre Road and Bignell Road. Following on from the discussions, VicRoads will work with the Glen Eira City Council, Victoria Police and the local community to investigate concerns regarding road safety at Centre Road and Bignell Road as well as Jasper Road, Brewer Road and Higgins Road. VicRoads expects to complete its investigation by November 2015.

Euroa electorate**Question 372**

Question asked by: Member for Euroa
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 4 August 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for your question regarding McIvor Farm Foods farm gate sales. I understand your concerns that this business has recently ceased trading from their farm gate after a discussion with the local government environmental health officer.

In order to protect public health and safety, all food businesses are required under state legislation to be licensed and registered with the relevant food regulator and meet applicable national standards. I have been advised that McIvor Farm Foods is operating a business that comes within the scope of the Meat Industry Act 1993 and therefore needs to be licensed with PrimeSafe. I understand that PrimeSafe has been contacted by Belinda Hagan from McIvor Farm Foods for advice on the Victorian meat licensing requirements and that most recently, PrimeSafe has offered to meet with Belinda and Jason Hagan to explain the requirements.

The Victorian Government is keen to see small businesses such as McIvor Farm Foods have every opportunity to grow and develop and I would like to assure you that I take seriously the concerns that have been raised with me. That is why I have requested the new PrimeSafe board undertake a comprehensive review of issues raised by businesses in their interactions with PrimeSafe and report back to me by the end of August.

Dandenong electorate**Question 401**

Question asked by: Member for Dandenong
Directed to: Minister for Industry
Asked on: 6 August 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is looking to the future and investing in industries with high growth potential, as well as supporting the businesses and workers from slowing parts of the economy to transition into these growth sectors.

The Victorian Government has identified sectors where Victoria has a competitive advantage and where there is potential to create high-quality jobs for Victoria's growing population, including those from the automotive industry. These sectors are:

- Medical technology and pharmaceuticals;
- New energy technology;
- Food and fibre;
- Transport, defence and construction technology;
- International education; and
- Professional services

The \$200 million Future Industries Fund will accelerate growth in these priority sectors. To ensure this investment is directed to where it is most needed, we are consulting closely with industry on the development growth plans for each of the priority sectors. Consultation sessions are underway for four of the sectors, with the remainder to commence shortly.

The Government is also developing a new transition strategy for the automotive industry. This will provide targeted support for automotive workers and businesses to transition and compete in new markets after vehicle production ends in Australia in 2017. It will also support the growth of businesses located in the regions most affected by the transition of the automotive industry, particularly local manufacturers. The Victorian Government is committed to growing a dynamic manufacturing sector in Victoria.

Furthermore, the Victorian Government is committed to alleviating unemployment in our State by investing in our economy, creating new jobs and growing industries.

Our *Back to Work Plan* aims to create sustainable and high value jobs for all Victorians by growing our traditional industries and investing in emerging sectors to foster employment. Along with the \$200 million committed to the Future Industries Fund we have committed to the establishment of:

- The *Back to Work Scheme* — a \$100 million fund to support new job creation through the provision of payroll tax relief to employers who hire unemployed young people, the long term unemployed and retrenched workers;
- The Premier's Jobs and Investment Panel — an independent body, supported by a \$508 million fund, which will provide advice to the Premier on economic policy directions to underpin job creation and long term prosperity in Victoria; and
- The Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund — a \$500 million fund to help drive jobs growth and economic opportunities in Regional Victoria.

Additionally, the 2015–16 Victorian Budget outlines a number of major transport infrastructure projects we have committed to, including:

- Building the Melbourne Metro Rail Project;
- Removing 50 of our most dangerous and congested level crossings;
- Delivering the Murray Basin Rail Project;
- Widening CityLink and the Tullamarine Freeway, from the Burnley Tunnel to the Melbourne Airport; and
- Duplicating the Chandler Highway Bridge over the Yarra River.

I thank the Member for her question and her ongoing commitment to manufacturing in Dandenong and the greater north-east of Melbourne.

Warrandyte electorate

Question 409

Question asked by: Member for Warrandyte
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 18 August 2015

REPLY:

A well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing, is critical to keeping communities safe.

In May 2010, Labor committed funding for an additional 1,966 police to the frontline. This led to an increase of 54 police in the Eastern Region Division 1 police service region, which includes the Manningham Local Government area in which Warrandyte is located.

The Andrews Labor Government's first budget in 2015-16 delivered a record \$2.5 billion to Victoria Police to continue their important work in keeping our community safe.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to redeploy 400 police to our communities where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 400 custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria.

The custody officers may also be progressively deployed to other locations over time, depending on the resourcing needs and allocation of resources by Victoria Police, allowing police officers to return to the frontline where they belong. The new custody officers will initially work at six police stations.

Under Victorian law, I cannot direct the chief Commissioner about the allocation or deployment of police officers to or at particular locations in accordance with section 10 of the *Victoria Police Act 2013*.

However, I can assure you that the residents of Warrandyte will continue to be supported by a 24-hour police response from frontline officers every day of the year. If any Warrandyte resident requires urgent police assistance, they should contact Victoria Police on the emergency number '000'. Calls made to '000' are processed and responded to by the closest appropriate police personnel.

I am advised that the Warrandyte Police Service Area (PSA) works in conjunction with police from the Doncaster PSA. Resources are managed via a single roster aimed at ensuring appropriate police resourcing for both the Doncaster PSA and Warrandyte PSA, based on seasonal demands and priorities.

During the bushfire season, from November to April, Operation Fire Setter initiates proactive police patrols to reduce bushfire risk. Warrandyte police also support various community events and road safety operations targeting drink and drug driving, liquor licensing and Automatic Number Plate Recognition operations.

During the 12 months to 31 March 2015, there was an overall decrease in offences recorded in the Manningham Local Government Area, including Warrandyte. Crimes against the person decreased by 19.99 per cent, drug offences decreased by 13.36 per cent and property and deception offences decreased by 4.02 per cent.

The government is working with the Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community, including family violence and the use of Ice and other illicit drugs. These issues remain a key priority focus for Victoria Police.

Actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-16 State Budget, with the government investing \$81.3 million including \$40 million for the Royal Commission into Family Violence and \$4 million to support stakeholder engagement.

On 5 March 2015, the government released the Ice Action Plan, which was developed on the advice of the Premier's Ice Action Taskforce. The government's new investment of \$45.5 million, also outlined in the 2015-16 State Budget, focuses on priority initiatives to reduce the supply, demand and harm of a drug that is ruining lives.

Under the Plan, the government will spend \$18 million over four years to expand drug and rehabilitation services, helping to address the disproportionate impacts that Ice is having on communities.

A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website-www.ice.vie.gov.au have already been set up to support families, service providers and other community members as part of a \$4.7 million investment in broader community support services.

The government is investing \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 10,000 roadside random drug tests per year for the next two years, taking more alcohol and drug affected people off our roads.

The State Budget also announced the government's investment of \$4.5 million, as part of the Ice Action plan, to help police track down and close clandestine drug labs more quickly by hiring additional forensic scientists for the Forensic Drug Branch.

I am assured by the Chief Commissioner of Police that the allocation of police resources across Victoria is continuously monitored by respective command officers, with a view to maintaining an optimum law enforcement response.

The government understands the impact crime has on local communities and believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to preventing crime.

One of the most important approaches to keeping the communities safe is to provide young people with opportunities to encourage them to make positive choices for their future, through education, training, jobs and appropriate support, instead of being caught in a cycle of crime and incarceration.

Prahran electorate

Question 411

Question asked by: Member for Prahran
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 18 August 2015

REPLY:

The Government is committed to delivering its election commitment to review the PAO along Punt Road within the City of Stonnington. On 17 February 2015, I approved Terms of Reference for the review and requested the Chief Member of Planning Panels Victoria to appoint a Ministerial Advisory Committee to conduct the review under Section 151 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The VicRoads background report was released on 24 August 2015. VicRoads is also preparing an options report that will provide more information on traffic projections, future options for Punt Road and how each future option might affect the PAO.

I have recently approved revised Terms of Reference for the Ministerial Advisory Committee to allow additional time for potential submitters to get the opportunity to view both VicRoads reports before making their submission. The Ministerial Advisory Committee submission process is due to commence in late October 2015, with public hearings early next year. The revised timelines shown on the Department's website are:

Step	Timing (to be advised)
VicRoads Background Report published	August 2015
VicRoads information sessions	August / September 2015
VicRoads Options Report released	Late October 2015
Request for submissions close	Late November 2015
Advisory Committee Directions Hearing	December 2015
Advisory Committee Public Hearings	February 2015
Advisory Committee report to Minister	April 2016

The changed timeframes will enable a much more informed and transparent discussion about the options for Punt Road.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Question 412

Question asked by: Member for Pascoe Vale
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 18 August 2015

REPLY:

The *Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009* allows for shorter vehicle registration periods of less than 12 months for eligible pensioners, Health Care cardholders and for some vehicles operated by, or on behalf of, incapacitated persons. Current legislation does not provide for discretion to offer short-term periods more generally.

VicRoads is currently reviewing the system of registration options, including the ability to pay registration in six-monthly instalments. The community will be advised if there are any changes as a result of this review.

Rowville electorate

Question 413

Question asked by: Member for Rowville
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 18 August 2015

REPLY:

The subject area is comprised of land managed by both the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Knox City Council. Melbourne Water also has an interest in the land that borders the Corhanwarranbul Creek. DELWP is working with both Knox City Council and Melbourne Water to ensure the land is properly maintained.

Ivanhoe electorate

Question 414

Question asked by: Member for Ivanhoe
Directed to: Minister for Industrial Relations
Asked on: 18 August 2015

REPLY:

The Productivity Commission has released its draft report of the workplace relations framework. The report makes a number of recommendations that if implemented could be devastating for workers. The Victorian Government made a submission to the Inquiry and will be responding to the draft report.

The Victorian Government believes that penalty rates have a legitimate role in compensating employees for working long hours or at unsociable times and that they should be maintained. The Victorian Government strongly

rejects the concept that some workers should receive lower penalty rates than others, based solely on the industry in which they work—seriously disadvantaging vulnerable, low paid workers who have little bargaining power.

The Commission's recommendation that Sunday penalty rates be reduced to the Saturday rate in some sectors, is not backed by evidence that this will increase employment or productivity. This recommendation if implemented would have a significant impact on employees. Junior retail employees, some of the lowest paid workers in the country, could face an 11 per cent pay cut, or up to five thousand dollars per year, if the Commission recommendations are taken up.

The retail and hospitality sectors are a significant source of employment in Victoria. It is estimated that in the Ivanhoe district in 2011, there were in the order of 2 600 sales workers and 1100 people working in cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services. Together, these workers constituted more than 12 per cent of the district's working population in 2011.

Cutting penalty rates will reduce the amount of disposable income within the economy. The Retail Council point out that 30 per cent of retail jobs are located in regional and remote areas and that the wages earned by retail staff in those communities is spent in those communities. Cutting wages will only hurt local businesses, which rely on the custom of local workers.

Mordialloc electorate

Question 426

Question asked by: Member for Mordialloc
Directed to: Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade
Asked on: 19 August 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian Government recognises that high quality broadband infrastructure, and affordable broadband services are needed to support Victoria's competitiveness, productivity, economic development, business investment and jobs growth. This is true for businesses across the economy, including those in emerging and transitioning industries.

In relation to south-eastern industrial areas, *The Need for High Speed Broadband in SE Melbourne's Industrial Precincts* highlights that approximately one third of the enterprises in the region have poor or very poor internet service. This is entirely consistent with the Government's understanding of broadband supply across the state, which is that around 34 per cent of Victorian businesses cannot access the broadband services they want to. This is clearly an economic priority for Victoria.

As the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade, the Premier has charged me with the responsibility of advocating to the Commonwealth Government to ensure Victoria benefits from the rollout of the National Broadband Network (NBN), particularly in areas of current and future economic growth.

The recent NBN 2016 Corporate Plan highlights some major project changes impacting Victorians, including that there is less fibre being constructed, there are increasing project costs, and that Victoria is receiving a slow rollout relative to other jurisdictions, with almost 60 per cent of Victorian premises in the fixed line rollout not being constructed until after mid-2017. This is of concern for Victoria. I will be taking these issues up with the Commonwealth and NBN, and working to achieve the best outcomes for Victoria.

Morwell electorate

Question 427

Question asked by: Member for Morwell
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 19 August 2015

REPLY:

Latrobe Planning Scheme Amendment C87 (the amendment) proposes to introduce changes to the Latrobe Planning Scheme that reflect the recommendations of the Traralgon Growth Areas Review Framework (the framework). The framework has assessed where future urban growth can best be accommodated around Traralgon while taking into account the need for buffers around major industries such as the Loy Yang Power Station and mine and the Australian Paper Mill.

Both the preparation of the framework and the amendment have been the subject of considerable community consultation by the Latrobe City Council (council) with land holders and government agencies. The amendment was formally exhibited between September and October 2014 with 42 submissions being received by council.

An independent planning panel which heard from submitters and council has recently released its report on the amendment. The panel has made recommendations on the extent of the urban amenity buffer surrounding the Australian Paper Mill and the introduction of a strategy into the planning scheme to increase the width of the Environmental Significance Overlay between the Loy Yang mine and Traralgon township. Both these recommendations have potential implications that could restrict the extent of urban development that was proposed in the framework.

The council is now consulting with government agencies so it can make an informed decision about the progress of the amendment.

As the framework and amendment are both currently the responsibility of council it is appropriate that council is the lead authority for informing its community about these matters.

Carrum electorate

Question 428

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Industrial Relations
Asked on: 19 August 2015

REPLY:

The Productivity Commission has released its draft report of the workplace relations framework. The report makes a number of recommendations that if implemented could be devastating for workers. The Victorian Government made a submission to the Inquiry, and will be responding to the draft report.

The Victorian Government believes that penalty rates have a legitimate role in compensating employees for working long hours or at unsociable times and that they should be maintained. The Victorian Government strongly rejects the concept that some workers should receive lower penalty rates than others, based solely on the industry in which they work--seriously disadvantaging vulnerable, low paid workers who have little bargaining power.

The Commission's recommendation that Sunday penalty rates be reduced to the Saturday rate in some sectors, is not backed by evidence that this will increase employment or productivity. This recommendation, if implemented, would have a significant impact on employees. Junior retail employees, some of the lowest paid workers in the country, could face an 11 per cent pay cut, or up to five thousand dollars per year, if the Commission's recommendation is taken up.

The retail and hospitality sectors are a significant source of employment in Victoria. Cutting penalty rates is also likely to reduce the amount of disposable income within the economy. The Retail Council point out that 30 per cent of retail jobs are located in regional and remote areas and that the wages earned by retail staff in those communities

is spent in those communities. Cutting wages will only hurt local businesses, which rely on the custom of local workers.

Essendon electorate

Question 434

Question asked by: Member for Essendon
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 19 August 2015

REPLY:

Thank you to the Member for Essendon for his constituency question.

I commend the local groups for the fantastic work they have done to improve the Moonee Ponds Creek for native wildlife and for community to enjoy.

I have requested that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Melbourne Water investigate what opportunities are available to improve vegetation for native wildlife around the south section of the Moonee Ponds Creek and I will keep the Member updated on these investigations.

Gippsland East electorate

Question 438

Question asked by: Member for Gippsland East
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 20 August 2015

REPLY:

Ride parks currently operating in Victoria are generally located on land leased from local government and are managed privately by independent committees. Both owners and operators carry a duty of care to people who use these venues. It is the responsibility of both the land owners and the committees of management to maintain venue standards.

Motorcycling Victoria is the state sporting association which represents motorcycle sport and recreation in Victoria. Affiliation with both Motorcycling Victoria and Motorcycling Australia is voluntary. Motorcycling Victoria has a set of standards which affiliated clubs and venues need to adhere to and they are continually working with stakeholders, such as local councils to increase the safety of motorcycle parks where appropriate. I would encourage all owners and operators of Ride parks to make contact with Motorcycling Victoria to ensure that appropriate standards are being applied.

Eltham electorate

Question 443

Question asked by: Member for Eltham
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 20 August 2015

REPLY:

The Abbott Government announced significant reforms to the child care system through its Families Package. Despite introducing a single subsidy designed to simplify the existing system, the new eligibility rules are multi-tiered and introduce additional complexity.

Increased investment will see many families benefit from additional subsidies but only if they are working or studying. The changes put workforce participation ahead of young children's development. Instead of all families being eligible for 24 hours of subsidised child care per week, a work and study test may result in many low and

middle income families missing out. It will also create significant complexity for families with varying working hours, including casual and shift workers.

Analysis by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling shows 44%-over 1.4 million families-will be worse off and families with children earning below \$75,000 will be hit the hardest, with 80% losing out overall.

Under the new rules, at risk children may also miss out on the sustained support they need to promote child development. They may only receive additional child care subsidies for six weeks in the first instance (compared to the current thirteen weeks). This fails to recognise the usually long-term higher needs of these children.

These reforms will adversely impact families in Eltham. I have written to Scott Morrison along with my colleague from South Australia, Minister Susan Close, to raise these concerns. I have also raised these concerns at meetings of the Council of Australian Government's Education Council and will continue to advocate for Victorian families and children.

Bentleigh electorate

Question 445

Question asked by: Member for Bentleigh
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 20 August 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for the question on Tucker Road Primary School. I acknowledge the advocacy of the Member for Bentleigh for the local school communities in his electorate. The Andrews Labor Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure, and this has been demonstrated through the allocation of \$730 million to school facilities in the 2015-16 State Budget. This investment was the first step in addressing the chronic underinvestment in school capital under the previous government.

In 2012, a state-wide condition assessment audit of all Victorian Government schools was undertaken to establish a clear and consistent picture of schools' maintenance and capital needs. The results of the condition assessment will inform the Government's new infrastructure and asset management model and will be used to guide long-term asset planning. Tucker Road Primary School will be considered against competing state-wide priorities within future funding rounds.

I am planning a number of visits to schools across the state and I would be please to visit Tucker Road Bentleigh in that schedule.

Ivanhoe electorate

Question 496

Question asked by: Member for Ivanhoe
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 2 September 2015

REPLY:

I am pleased to advise that the Andrews Labor Government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to redeploy 400 police to our communities where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying 400 police custody officers to supervise people in police custody at an initial 22 police stations across Victoria.

Heidelberg will be among the first police stations to receive police custody officers, along with Ballarat, Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Geelong and Sunshine.

Police custody officers will undertake custody management duties including processing and supervising detained people, managing visitors to police cells, facilitating access to health services and appearance before court.

I can assure you that the government works closely with the Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle law and order issues facing the Victorian community, including family violence and the use of ice and other illicit drugs.

As you would be aware, the custody officers program is part of a suite of policies designed to increase community safety. Indeed, the Andrews Labor Government's first budget in 2015-16 delivered a record \$2.5 billion to Victoria Police to continue their important work in keeping our community safe.

In addition, actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-16 State Budget, with the government investing \$81.3 million to boost family violence support services and protect victims, including \$40 million for the Royal Commission into Family Violence and \$4 million to support stakeholder engagement.

On 5 March 2015, the government released the Ice Action Plan which was developed on the advice of the Premier's Ice Action Taskforce. The government's new investment of \$45.5 million, also outlined in the State Budget, focuses on priority initiatives to reduce the supply, demand and harm of a drug that is ruining lives.

The government also understands the impact crime has on local communities and believes that a comprehensive and multi-layered approach needs to be taken to prevent crime. One of the most important approaches to keeping the communities safe is to provide young people with opportunities to encourage them to make positive choices for their future, through education, training, jobs and appropriate support, instead of being caught in a cycle of crime and incarceration.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Caulfield electorate

Question 503

Question asked by: Member for Caulfield
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 2 September 2015

REPLY:

Special Religious Instruction (SRI) has been a valuable part of many school communities, and the Government's new approach respects the role SRI has played and continues to play. From term 1, 2016, young people in Victorian government schools will continue to have access to SRI, where there is sufficient demand and resources, outside of core curriculum time-before or after school, or at lunchtime.

For SRI programs being run in lunch time or before or after school, schools will still provide an appropriate place for the SRI instruction to take place, as well as ensuring that there is a supervising teacher. However, the change to allowing SRI to be offered before or after school does not prevent school councils from hiring and licensing school facilities where they are not required for ordinary school purposes and will not impact on the independently run cultural and religious programs already operating after hours.

While up to 20% of primary school students participate in SRI, other students are missing out on essential learning time. The move frees up 30 minutes of valuable class time per week, and means that teachers and students will be able to focus on core curriculum, learning the lessons and skills to be their best.

Victoria is a multicultural and multi-faith society, and our diversity is one of our greatest assets. Strengthening this is critical, and the Andrews Labor Government's two key curriculum changes-the inclusion of respectful relationships, and education about key world faiths and secular belief structures, will assist in ensuring that students have the knowledge they need to understand the world around them, and to act with tolerance and respect.

Caulfield electorate**Question 526**

Question asked by: Member for Caulfield
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 3 September 2015

REPLY:

The Community Crime Prevention Program was left with an uncertain future due to the former Government's failure to continue to ensure funding in the forward estimates.

The Andrews Labor Government has delivered a fresh injection of \$5.8 million so this critical program can continue while a review is undertaken by the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice.

This funding has provided for a further round of the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund grants which provide up to \$250,000 for councils to use urban design and technology such as CCTV and lighting to improve safety in public places.

The most recent round of this competitive grants program closed on 21 August 2015. I am advised that Port Phillip City Council did not apply for funding for CCTV in Carlisle Street.