

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Tuesday, 4 August 2015

(Extract from book 10)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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Ms Kilkenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Ms McLeish, Mr Pearson, Ms Ryall, Ms Thomas,
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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

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Council — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

¹ Resigned 2 February 2015

² Elected 14 March 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, Mr Mulder, 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 Elasmr, Mr Melhem and Mr Purcell.

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.

Tuesday, 4 August 2015

Niddrie electorate**Question 176**

Question asked by: Member for Niddrie
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 5 May 2015

REPLY:

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

The CityLink Tulla Widening project is a major freeway upgrade that will increase capacity, ease congestion and improve safety along 24 kilometres of the Tullamarine Freeway, CityLink and the West Gate Freeway from Melbourne Airport, Tullamarine, through to Power Street in Southbank.

The \$1.28 billion project will be delivered in two sections. VicRoads will manage the Melbourne Airport to Bulla Road section and an Expressions of Interest has been released for the delivery of the works. The Bulla Road to Power Street section will be managed by Transurban.

As part of the Melbourne Airport to Bulla Road section, the English Street Bridge will be reconstructed to facilitate additional lanes on the Tullamarine Freeway. This will provide additional capacity at the interchange by making the bridge wider to assist with the expected growth in this important business hub. There will also be an improvement in the visual amenity of the area around Matthews Avenue and the English Street Bridge.

Detailed design of the interchange at Matthews Avenue and the English Street Bridge will be undertaken once a contractor is appointed later this year. VicRoads will continue its engagement with key stakeholders as the designs are progressed.

Major construction will commence in late 2015 and is expected to be completed in 2018.

Yuroke electorate**Question 188**

Question asked by: Member for Yuroke
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 6 May 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads is working closely with the Hume City Council on a Corridor Study for Craigieburn Road.

The study is seeking to identify a suitable road layout that meets the future traffic, pedestrian, bicycle and public transport requirements for the length of Craigieburn Road between the Hume Highway and the future Outer Metropolitan Ring Road. The study will also assist in determining its priority for future investment.

The study, which is jointly funded by the Hume Council City and VicRoads, commenced earlier this year and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2015.

Caulfield electorate**Question 246**

Question asked by: Member for Caulfield
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

Under the current code for the Disabled Persons Parking Scheme, a person may hold only one disabled persons parking permit. This is to reduce the misuse of permits.

Valid users of the parking permits continually report that designated disabled parking spaces are often taken up by vehicles displaying a valid permit, but neither the driver nor the passenger appear to have any disability. As only one permit can be used by the permit holder at any given time, the code allows for only one permit to be issued.

I appreciate that this may cause some users an element of inconvenience, however please be assured that the intent of this requirement is to help minimise fraudulent use, and maximise the availability of disabled parking spaces.

Brighton electorate**Question 250**

Question asked by: Member for Brighton
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

I advise that Victoria Police is continuing its work to deploy Protective Services Officers to the rail network. The government has no plans to change the current deployment model.

Oakleigh electorate**Question 251**

Question asked by: Member for Oakleigh
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian 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.

The funding provided through the Budget represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State, and we will continue to invest in school infrastructure throughout this term of government.

Glen Eira College was allocated \$950,000 in the 2015-16 State Budget to commence the initial scoping and planning of its building project. This project is a priority for me and the balance of the \$9.5 million commitment will be provided in a future State Budget within this term of Government.

Mordialloc electorate**Question 255**

Question asked by: Member for Mordialloc
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 26 May 2015

REPLY:

In 2012 a decision was made in agreement between the City of Kingston and Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to relocate the short term car park, then located at the southern end of the bus interchange on the eastern side of Como Parade, to the western side of Como Parade. This was due to significant safety concerns related to a series of traffic incidents resulting from conflicting bus and car movements in the area. For this reason I have been advised that PTV does not support the proposal to reinstate the short term car park at this location.

Instead, representatives from PTV and the City of Kingston met on 23 June 2015 to discuss the proposal and investigate alternative options for providing a short term car space on the east side of Como Parade, close to the station entrance without negatively impacting on the safety and convenience of the existing bus to train connections at this location.

An alternative option was identified in this meeting for further investigation and consideration by Council. PTV will continue to work with the City of Kingston to provide an appropriate and safe solution for both public transport customers and the wider community.

The bus stops located on the eastern side of Como Parade cater for over 4,000 passenger interchanges per week and are providing an extremely important and well utilised service to the station and surrounding community.

Carrum electorate**Question 257**

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government supports a whole-school approach to building resilience and promoting respectful relationships that includes a range of initiatives and strategies to prevent and respond to bullying, cyber-bullying, abuse and unacceptable behaviour.

The prevention of bullying is a shared responsibility and school communities are supported by a range of staff whose role it is to implement wellbeing strategies at the whole-school level, including Primary Welfare Officers, Student Wellbeing Coordinators, Chaplains and Student Support Service Officers.

In February 2015, the Being Cool Online campaign was launched and ran in the lead up to the 2015 National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA) on 20 March 2015. Being Cool Online activities included online netiquette quizzes for primary and secondary students and a live blog on the Herald Sun website with adolescent psychologist Dr Andrew Fuller. The campaign culminated with an event with Dr Andrew Fuller at Monbulk College where there was a presentation to year 7 students on the NDA.

A fourth round of Bully Stoppers Grants closed on 26 May 2015. Schools from all sectors were able to apply for grants of \$5,000 (single schools) or \$10,000 (clusters) to implement strategies or programs to prevent and respond to cyberbullying. Successful schools have been notified.

Building Resilience in School Communities Grants Program is a new grants program for Victorian government schools, designed to develop key resiliency skills in students and support the continued take-up by schools of Building Resilience: A model to support children and young people that aims to support resilience and engagement. Applications for this program closed on 2 June 2015 and schools have been notified.

It is expected that this Program will enhance students' optimism, confidence, social and emotional learning skills and resilience, and support schools to increase the engagement of children and young people who are at risk of disengagement, displaying anti-social behaviours (including criminal behaviour or risk of radicalisation), identified as at risk of developing mental health problems, or those exposed to family violence.

Eildon electorate

Question 258

Question asked by: Member for Eildon
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads reduced the speed limit on the Goulburn Valley Highway between Yea and Molesworth, from 100km/h to 80km/h in April 2015, as an interim safety improvement in response to a high number of fatal crashes and safety concerns along this length of road. A reduction in speed limit at this location will reduce the likelihood of a crash occurring, and more significantly, will greatly reduce the severity of crashes, if they do occur.

VicRoads understands that for head-on collisions, when vehicles are coming towards each other, the body can withstand approximately 70km/h to a 140km/h head-on impact speed. With a 100km/h closing speed, even with some braking, its unlikely speeds will reduce to a surviving speed, and will result in one or both parties involved being severely injured or killed.

Over the past five years, 11 crashes have occurred at this location—eight people have died and 13 people have been seriously injured. A large percentage of crashes have involved a vehicle crossing the centre line. Action had to be taken to address this problem.

In conjunction with the reduced speed limit, VicRoads has also installed high crash warning signs and a tactile line or “rumble strip” along the centre of the Highway.

VicRoads, together with the road safety partners, is developing options for further infrastructure improvements on this section of the Goulburn Valley Highway. These options will be considered for funding as part of a future program.

Gippsland South electorate

Question 260

Question asked by: Member for Gippsland South
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

Thank you for your question about a proposed business case for the northern towns project submitted by South Gippsland Water (SGW). The proposal was not successful.

SGW is working closely with the government on a long-term strategy to secure the water supply for the townships of Korumburra, Poowong, Loch and Nyora. They are also exploring:

- how best to maintain and upgrade existing water storages, and/or
- using Lance Creek as the primary source of water supply with connection to the Melbourne Supply System.

In the interim, SGW is accessing additional water during summer from the Tarwin River and considering any demand management requirements.

Bass electorate**Question 264**

Question asked by: Member for Bass
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

The capital redevelopment of Wonthaggi Secondary College was not an election commitment made by the Labor Party.

The 2015-16 State Budget focuses on delivering resources to commitments made during the state election. Through the Budget, \$730 million will be invested in school infrastructure to ensure that our students are educated in high quality learning environments.

The funding provided through the State Budget represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State, and the Government will continue to invest in education infrastructure throughout this term of government. The capital needs of all schools, including Wonthaggi Secondary College, will continue to be considered when determining future priorities for the Government's capital works program.

Footscray electorate**Question 265**

Question asked by: Member for Footscray
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 27 May 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads, on behalf of the Victorian Government, will be managing the delivery of the West Gate Distributor Project—Northern Section. The project includes the construction of a separate shared use path bridge over the Maribyrnong River, with connection to existing bicycle facilities on the eastern and western side of the river.

Shortlisting through an Expression of Interest phase was completed in May 2015. Tender documents were issued to shortlisted tenderers on 30 June 2015, with award and commencement of construction expected in late 2015.

Construction is expected to take approximately 18 months, with completion in mid 2017.

Ferntree Gully electorate**Question 266**

Question asked by: Member for Ferntree Gully
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian 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 funding represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State, and the Government will continue to invest in school infrastructure throughout this term of government.

State Budget constraints do not allow for all school building projects to be immediately funded, and the needs of all government schools must be balanced and prioritised accordingly.

The Government is aware that schools such as Fairhills High School may have maintenance or capital needs. While the 2015–16 Budget focused on resourcing our election commitments and other priority projects, the capital needs of all schools will be considered when determining future priorities for the capital works program. The Government

will continue to use all available data, including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, when allocating funding in future State Budgets.

Eltham electorate

Question 267

Question asked by: Member for Eltham
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

Animal welfare is a high priority for the Victorian Government. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (the POCTA Act) protects the welfare of animals in Victoria and applies equally to all species and uses of animals.

Greyhounds

This Government has taken swift action in relation to live baiting in the greyhound racing industry and I have been in close contact with Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Charles Milne, who I asked to lead this government's investigation into animal welfare and cruelty in the greyhound industry.

Reports by Dr Milne and Racing Integrity Commissioner Sal Perna were released on Thursday 11 June and all recommendations from both reports put to the Government will be accepted. Recommendations for the GRV are supported in principle with GRV and Government to work through the practical implications of their implementation.

Recommendations include strengthening our animal welfare legislation in relation to live baiting including increasing penalties, improving powers of inspectors and mandating reporting of animal welfare breaches to relevant authorities. In addition a new integrity model will be developed for all three racing codes.

Poultry

With regard to the farming of poultry, the POCTA (Domestic Fowl) Regulations 2006 set out mandatory standards under which layer and broiler hens can be housed, including minimum cage floor space requirements and cage design.

A national review of the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Poultry is planned and expected to commence in the near future. Departmental staff will be participating in this review process. The intention of the review is to develop national standards and guidelines for the welfare of poultry for adoption into legislation by all jurisdictions.

Puppy farms

The Victorian Government is committed to phasing out puppy farms and improving animal welfare and we are implementing measures to discourage the establishment of new intensive breeding establishments and support welfare.

We are providing \$5 million over the next four years to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for the investigation, seizure and treatment of dogs and cats seized from illegal and cruel breeding establishments. As a result the RSPCA has recently established a Special Investigations Unit and a 'tip off' line for the reporting and investigation of intensive breeding establishments.

The government is also progressing its other puppy farm related commitments:

- On July 1 the Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses 2014 was amended to require mandatory pre-mating veterinary checks for all female dogs;
- We will limit the maximum number of female dogs in domestic animal facilities to ten by the year 2020; and
- restrict pet stores to selling dogs and cats that are sourced from registered animal shelters and pounds.

We will also work with online sellers to identify concerns with pet sales.

Sunbury electorate

Question 269

Question asked by: Member for Sunbury
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 28 May 2015

REPLY:

I am aware of, and acknowledge, the community's concerns regarding this intersection. VicRoads has begun the process of collecting traffic data at the roundabout of Gap Road and Horne Street as part of preliminary investigations into developing a proposal to reduce congestion at the site.

I will keep the Member informed as the investigations progress.

Yan Yean electorate

Question 285

Question asked by: Member for Yan Yean
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

In response to safety issues identified at the Plenty Road/Wallan Road/Laurel Street intersection, and concerns raised by stakeholders and the broader community, VicRoads has been investigating safety treatment options to address the crashes at this intersection. VicRoads is currently assessing the following three options:

- (a) installation of a roundabout;
- (b) installation of traffic signals; and
- (c) installation of traffic signals with raised platforms.

VicRoads will engage with key local stakeholders including the Whittlesea City Council, Whittlesea Primary School, the Anglican Church, Whittlesea Secondary College and the Country Fire Authority, to discuss the problems at this site, present the three options being considered to date, obtain feedback on the options and identify any specific stakeholder issues and requirements such as pedestrian access, drop off points, etc. VicRoads intends to engage with the key stakeholders by the end of July 2015.

The preferred intersection treatment proposal will be submitted for funding consideration later this year.

Euroa electorate

Question 286

Question asked by: Member for Euroa
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

I am advised that:

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of volunteer firefighters of the Broadford Country Fire Authority (CFA) Fire Brigade who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community. I am aware that that the Broadford CFA Brigade responds to a wide range of emergencies including grass and bushfires, structural fires, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous material incidents and floods.

The CFA has advised that land for a new Broadford fire station is included in its 3-year Capital Works Program. CFA is currently looking at options for sites for the new station, including a council site, for potential purchase.

The Victorian Government is committed to strengthening Victoria's emergency services response by investing in major upgrades to CFA assets. The Government's 2015 Budget initiatives include commencing the recruitment of an additional 350 CFA career firefighters; new CFA stations and upgrades; installation of toilet and washroom facilities at up to 100 rural CFA stations; delivery of 70 trucks comprising of 40 heavy tankers, 20 medium tankers and 10 medium pumpers; and expansion of the Emergency Medical Response Program across the CFA's integrated brigades.

Furthermore, the Andrews Labor Government has committed to implementing presumptive legislation for career and volunteer firefighters.

The Victorian Government is also working on a State-wide framework that will ensure the best use of its resources to support emergency service organisations. Emergency Management Victoria is developing an asset strategy to identify the current and future equipment and facility needs of emergency service organisations. This strategy will include identification of service co-location opportunities and will take a sector-wide approach to achieve joined up outcomes that are community focused.

Narre Warren South electorate

Question 287

Question asked by: Member for Narre Warren South
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

I can confirm funding of \$13.7m has been provided in the budget over four years to establish breakfast clubs in 500 of the most disadvantaged government primary schools in Victoria.

Funding is being provided to food welfare agency Foodbank Victoria to establish a School Breakfast Club program and to deliver free, healthy breakfast food products to 500 participating schools from the start of the 2016 school year.

The Department is currently working with Foodbank on detailed implementation, including a process of identifying eligible schools for participation in the program (based on the commitment to provide breakfast clubs in the most disadvantaged schools). Further details will be announced before the end of school term 3, 2015.

Evelyn electorate

Question 288

Question asked by: Member for Evelyn
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring that every Victorian has an equal right to the best start to life, regardless of their background, their personal circumstances or where they live.

For this reason the 2015–16 State Budget commits significant funding to support children and young people experiencing disadvantage, including:

- \$32 million to work with disengaged and at-risk youth through the Local Learning and Employment Networks,
- \$16 million for the Affordable School Uniforms program in partnership with State Schools' Relief,
- \$14 million for School Breakfast Clubs to help over 25,000 students start the day ready to learn,

- \$148 million Camps, Sports and Excursions funding to help the families of over 200,000 students with the cost of these essential experiences.

The Couch Surfing Secondary Students: Yarra Ranges Youth Homelessness Prevention Project (CSSS) takes a close look at youth homelessness in the Shire of Yarra Ranges and I would like to congratulate Anchor Youth Services, the Outer Eastern Local Learning and Employment Network, Swinburne University and the University of Western Australia Centre for Social Impact for highlighting this important issue.

As the CSSS project report emphasised, youth homelessness is a cross-sectoral issue that falls within both the educational and community services context.

The Government acknowledges that schools have a key role to play in ensuring young people are engaged and supported throughout their schooling years, which is a key focus of the recently launched Education State consultation.

Extensive research demonstrates that to best meet the varying needs of disengaged young people, we need to develop reengagement models that are characterised by:

- a strong focus on identification and early intervention to address issues of disengagement before they become exacerbated and/or entrenched, and preferences school as the first choice education setting;
- clear accountabilities for schools, other government agencies and local service providers;
- locally brokered partnerships;
- flexibility to address the varying barriers to engagement, with a focus on case management and empowering young people to build on their interests and skills; and
- building the capacity of educators and other professionals to adopt evidence-based and innovative solutions to address disengagement.

The Education State Schools Consultation Paper proposes this integrated approach to ensure that all students remain connected to schools and engaged in their learning. The Government welcomes feedback on this proposal from students, parents, carers, teachers, principals, school council members, businesses and community groups as part of a two-month consultation process to make Victoria the Education State.

Shepparton electorate

Question 290

Question asked by: Member for Shepparton
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is aware the Dookie rail line is currently not available for use as the line was closed in 2007 due to its deteriorating condition. I am advised that GrainCorp has identified Dookie as one site in its Project Regeneration program. The Government will continue to liaise with GrainCorp on its project. The priority of re-opening the Dookie line relative to upgrading other sites across the State will be considered as part of this process.

Dandenong electorate**Question 291**

Question asked by: Member for Dandenong
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government. In the 2015-16 State Budget, the government confirmed a \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund that will facilitate the upgrading of community sports facilities over the next four years. Sport and Recreation Victoria are currently developing programs, after which I will be in a position to announce how local government authorities and community organisations can apply for funding.

Given local government authorities will be instrumental in developing and supporting projects for consideration under this initiative, I encourage the Dandenong City Soccer Club to liaise directly with the City of Greater Dandenong to develop a project that may be eligible for future funding.

Ringwood electorate**Question 292**

Question asked by: Member for Ringwood
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian 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.

I am pleased that funds were allocated to Norwood Secondary College to commence construction of a new performing arts centre as part of the 2015-16 State Budget. I have no doubt that this will be a highly functional and flexible asset for the college.

While I am aware that Norwood Secondary College may have additional capital needs, the needs of all government schools must be balanced and prioritised accordingly. The infrastructure requirements of all schools, including Norwood Secondary College, will be considered through the State Budget process and when determining future priorities for the capital works program.

The funding provided through the Budget represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State, and we will continue to invest in education infrastructure throughout this term of government.

Carrum electorate**Question 293**

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 10 June 2015

REPLY:

I am pleased to confirm that as part of the 2015 State Budget, the Government has committed \$547,000 in congestion relief funding at the Dandenong-Frankston Road and Thompsons Road roundabout, which will provide an additional lane on the southbound approach to the roundabout, as well as adjustments to the metering signal timing. These changes will reduce queue lengths and create more capacity through the roundabout.

In addition to the above, the State Government is also investing \$20 million to undertake planning and pre-construction works to complete the duplication of Thompsons Road between Dandenong-Frankston Road in Carrum Downs, and Berwick-Cranbourne Road in Clyde North. As part of these planning and pre-construction works, traffic modelling will be undertaken to assess the operation of the existing roundabout at Thompsons Road and Dandenong-Frankston Road to inform the design of any further improvements to the roundabout.

Caulfield electorate

Question 310

Question asked by: Member for Caulfield
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

Strata Plan, the building manager of Dudley House (7-13 Dudley Street), Caulfield East, contacted Public Transport Victoria (PTV) on 28 May 2015 to request access to railway land so that graffiti at this site could be removed. As the rail reserve is managed by Metro, PTV referred the matter to them. Metro contacted the building manager at Strata Plan on 17 June 2015, advising that permission is required to enter the rail reserve to remove the graffiti. Metro provided details of qualified contractors who have rail safety accreditation who are available to remove graffiti in instances where Metro are not required to do so. I am advised that the building manager was appreciative of this information.

The removal of graffiti from property that is not publicly or easily accessible, such as property adjacent to railway tracks, requires staff or contractors to be specifically trained in the relevant safety procedures.

Under its agreement with the Government, Metro is required to remove graffiti at railway station precincts and on trains. Metro is required to remove graffiti from trains within 24 hours when notified, or where not reported, within 72 hours of occurrence. Graffiti of an offensive nature on trains is required to be removed immediately. Metro is also required to remove graffiti from all parts of a station precinct which is publicly accessible within 24 hours, graffiti from rail pits at station precincts on a monthly basis and offensive graffiti from parts of station precincts that are not publicly accessible within 7 days.

Essendon electorate

Question 311

Question asked by: Member for Essendon
Directed to: Minister for Energy and Resources
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

In February 2015, the Victorian Government initiated a review into the practices of energy retail companies when dealing with customers experiencing payment difficulties. The Government believes it is important that energy companies do everything they can to assist customers manage their consumption and avoid accumulating debt.

The Essential Services Commission's (ESC) review into this will examine the policies, practices and procedures that energy retailers use to help customers in financial hardship avoid disconnection. It will also make recommendations to ensure that energy companies use best practice to help customers struggling with their bills.

The ESC released an Issues Paper on 27 March 2015 (with submission due by 1 May 2015). Following that, the ESC conducted a formal consultation process which included:

- reviewing submission made to the Issues Paper
- holding workshops with energy retailers
- requesting further information from retailers

- meeting with consumer advocacy groups and other stakeholders; and
- conducting roundtable discussions

A total of 22 submissions were received. 10 submissions were received from retailers and groups representing retailers; nine from consumer groups; submissions were also received from the Energy and Water Ombudsman; Frankston City Council and one customer.

The ESC contacted more than 40 special interest groups and met with 17 retailers and seven consumer groups, as well as other regulators both here and in other states. A newsletter is currently being drafted and will be distributed to stakeholders in June 2015.

The Terms of Reference, the Issues Paper and copies of the submissions are available on the ESC website at esc.vic.gov.au

In addition to the submission and consultation process, the ESC also engaged with independent experts to review the current regulatory framework and examine the current day-to-day experience customers have with their retailers.

The ESC will provide a draft report, including draft recommendations to myself and the Finance Minister in late August 2015 following which there will be a further round of consultation, including public meetings, to hear from customers. Dates for these public meetings will be advertised on the ESC website, and in newspapers. Further details will be made available on release of the draft report. During this time the general public, including your constituents Mr Pearson, may take the opportunity to engage in the process and express their concern.

The ESC then plan to consult on the draft report, before releasing a final report in late 2015.

Morwell electorate

Question 312

Question asked by: Member for Morwell
Directed to: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

I acknowledge the concerns of residents at Gwalia Street and assure them that the Government places a high priority on ensuring that all members of the community have quiet enjoyment of their homes.

The Government is also committed to ensuring that vulnerable members of our community have access to good quality, affordable housing and are linked to services that can assist them to improve and maintain their quality of life.

The Department of Health & Human Services is currently working in partnership with Victoria Police, local Government and community sector agencies. This is to put in place a range of strategies to increase security and the availability of support services. This includes the installation of closed circuit television cameras and greater support from local Government and community sector agencies.

These strategies will be monitored and regularly reviewed.

Mordialloc electorate**Question 313**

Question asked by: Member for Mordialloc
Directed to: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

I would like to thank the member for raising this important issue regarding how people who are interested in participating in the public hearings of the Royal Commission are able to do so. The Royal Commission into Family Violence is well underway, having concluded its submission process and community consultations across Victoria. The Commission is expected to start its public hearings on Monday, 13 July and will conclude on Friday, 14 August. The Royal Commission received nearly 1000 submissions that will help the inquiry find long-lasting and practical solutions.

The Commission is currently in the process of determining who will be called as a witness. This process has been influenced by the submissions, community consultations and roundtable discussions. For anyone requiring further information regarding this process, I would encourage them to get in contact directly to the Commission on 1800 365 100 or www.rcfv.com.au. Anyone who wishes to attend the public hearings are able to do so, and the hearings will also be web-streamed.

The Royal Commission will provide a root and branch investigation into how our system can best respond and prevent family violence. The Royal Commission is due to provide its report and recommendations to the government by Monday, 29 February 2016.

Bass electorate**Question 314**

Question asked by: Member for Bass
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

I regret to hear of the impact that these changes will have on your constituent. I assure you, the decision to apply a consistent pick up and set down policy across the network was not taken lightly.

As you know, since 21 June 2015, passengers using Pakenham and Sunbury stations have been required to board more frequent Metro services when travelling to the city, as has long been the case for people using stations such as Sunshine, Broadmeadows and Dandenong.

This coincided with the start of Regional Rail Link, which sees more regional services than ever entering the metropolitan network, and was required to provide customers with a consistent and reliable timetable, reducing delays in the metropolitan area.

V/Line timetables (effective 21 June 2015) will denote these stations as d–Set down only (for services towards the City) and u–Pick up only (for services from the city).

The initial focus of the new pick up and set down restrictions will be on communication and encouraging changed behaviours for passengers using Pakenham and Sunbury stations, with a view to exploring further enforcement options from 1 January 2016 if necessary.

Pascoe Vale electorate

Question 315

Question asked by: Member for Pascoe Vale
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

VicRoads is investigating a proposal to implement a permanent 40km/h speed limit along Bell Street, between Service Street and Budds Street, and on Sydney Road, between Bell Street and O'Hea Street, Coburg.

As part of the investigation, VicRoads has so far consulted with the City of Moreland, Victoria Police, Coburg Traders' Association, Public Transport Victoria and Yarra Trams. VicRoads will undertake further consultation in order to better understand the benefits and impacts to the community of a reduced speed limit on Bell Street and will use the feedback obtained during the consultation to determine whether a part-time or permanent 40km/h speed zone is appropriate for this section of road and whether static or electronic signs are required.

VicRoads is not currently investigating any proposal to build an overpass near the Coburg Primary School. There is an existing pedestrian-operated traffic signal crossing, adjacent to the Coburg Primary School, to enable safer movement of pedestrians across Bell Street. Any improvement proposals for this location will be considered for funding in a future program. In the meantime, VicRoads will continue to monitor this location.

Prahran electorate

Question 316

Question asked by: Member for Prahran
Directed to: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

In recent months the department has cleaned levels one to four of the north west corner of the building and levels one to twelve over the North East corner over the foyer area at 150 Inkerman Street St Kilda and levels one to six of the Eastern face and levels one to eight in the north west corner of the building at 1 Surrey Road, South Yarra.

The department continues to clean windows of its buildings on a regular basis, as appropriate.

Sunbury electorate

Question 317

Question asked by: Member for Sunbury
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

I am pleased to advise that the Andrews Labor Government is moving to end confusing rules and inequity for some V/Line passengers by applying a consistent pick up and set down policy across the network.

From 21 June 2015, passengers using Sunbury and Pakenham stations have been requested to board more frequent Metro services when travelling to and from the city, as has long been the case for people using stations such as Sunshine, Broadmeadows and Dandenong. This rule is being applied to coincide with the start of Regional Rail Link, which will see more regional services than ever entering the metropolitan network, and an increase in patronage on these regional lines.

The initial focus of the new pick up and set down restrictions will be on communication and encouraging changed behaviours for passengers using Sunbury and Pakenham stations, with a view to exploring further enforcement options from 1 January 2016 if necessary.

South Barwon electorate**Question 318**

Question asked by: Member for South Barwon
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

The intersection of Reserve Road will receive interim treatments, including turning provisions, as part of a developer funded contribution. VicRoads advises me that it expects the works to be completed in 2016.

The intersection of Boundary Road will be signalised as part of the Armstrong Creek development contributions plan. These works are triggered by future development and VicRoads expects these works to complete within the next two to five years.

Funding of \$100,000 was made available for VicRoads to undertake a preliminary planning investigation to refine the concept design for the duplication of Barwon Heads Road, particularly between Barwarre Road and Reserve Road.

This design will include a grade separation option over the Geelong-Warrnambool rail line, and will inform the planning for the Marshall Precinct Structure Plan. VicRoads is currently undertaking this preliminary planning investigation, and expects it to be completed by the end of 2015.

VicRoads is working closely with the City of Greater Geelong to plan and develop an appropriate transport corridor for the entire length of Barwon Heads Road.

Narre Warren South electorate**Question 319**

Question asked by: Member for Narre Warren South
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 11 June 2015

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

I would like to thank Ms Graley for joining me on the 29 June to a visit to Chisholm Institute's Berwick Campus, when I announced that Chisholm had been granted \$4.3 million in funding to deliver four initiatives in:

- Manufacturing-Competitive systems and sales (\$0.994 million)
- Contemporary food and cleaning in health (\$0.497 million)
- Vinyl design and application (\$0.716 million)
- Pre-fabricated construction (\$0.693 million)

Victoria's economy is facing a number of key challenges, including an unemployment crisis. Victoria has the highest rate of youth unemployment of all mainland states, with regional areas hardest hit.

This is why the Government established the \$50 million TAFE Back to Work Fund, to support the Victorian Government's Back to Work Plan to grow jobs and get people back to work, while improving the financial viability of TAFE Institutes and supporting the skills needs of local communities.

I am pleased to hear that Ms Graley and the young people and families in Narre Warren South share my enthusiasm for rebuilding and growing the TAFE sector. The TAFE Back to Work Fund, along with the Government's \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund, are providing opportunities for TAFEs like Chisholm Institute to deliver more training for young people to get the right skills to get a job.

Melbourne's south east is very well serviced by Chisholm Institute, the National Training Provider of the Year in 2014.

I have already started announcing successful TAFE Back to Work Fund projects, and look forward to announcing more soon, including at Chisholm Institute.

Gembrook electorate

Question 322

Question asked by: Member for Gembrook
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

The Victorian government greatly values the work of Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) volunteers, including volunteers of the Emerald SES unit who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

As previously conveyed to you, under the present arrangements, local government is primarily responsible for the provision of SES Unit accommodation, and I would encourage the Unit to continue to work with the council on this matter. Day-to-day operations costs for SES Units are provided by the Victorian government through a municipal subsidy, with an understanding that local councils will match the government's subsidy.

The Victorian government is currently working on a State-wide framework that will ensure the best use of its resources to support emergency service organisations. Emergency Management Victoria is developing an asset strategy to identify the current and future equipment and facility needs of emergency service organisations. This strategy will include identification of service co-location opportunities and will take a sector-wide approach to achieve joined up outcomes that are community focused.

I look forward to visiting the Emerald SES unit in the future and meeting with its members.

St Albans electorate

Question 323

Question asked by: Member for St Albans
Directed to: Minister for Mental Health
Asked on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

I acknowledge the constituency question raised by the Member for St Albans in relation to availability of funding to help cohealth improve its St Albans youth residential rehabilitation facility to ensure family members and visitors can visit and support the young people who are treated there.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring mental health facilities meet contemporary standards regarding physical amenity, space and safety for patients and staff.

I am pleased to report that under the Enhanced Community Mental health Initiative, this government has allocated \$3 million for capital improvements to existing Mental Health Community Support Services. Recently a total of 22 grants have been provided under this initiative, including two grants to cohealth:

- a grant of \$148,990 provided to cohealth St Albans to upgrade the existing youth residential rehabilitation service to ensure disability access for consumers, family members and visitors.
- A further grant of \$13,460 to cohealth Essendon, Moonee Ponds and St Albans for lighting to improve safety and security at night.

I would like to reiterate that the Andrews Labor Government is committed to providing a world-leading service system for Victorians experiencing mental health problems and disorders.

Dandenong electorate

Question 325

Question asked by: Member for Dandenong
Directed to: Minister for Mental Health
Asked on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

Thank you to the Member for Dandenong for the question regarding upgrading existing facilities at Ermha service offices in Dandenong. The Andrews Labor Government is committed to providing support and services to people experiencing mental illness and their families. We are committed to improving facilities to meet contemporary standards regarding physical amenity, space and safety for all residents. I am pleased to advise that I have approved \$150,000 through the Enhanced Community Mental Health Initiative as capital funds to upgrade the Dandenong property. The Enhanced Community Mental Health Initiative funding will provide appropriate access, improved reception security, counselling rooms and group training spaces, and opportunity for the co-location for other service providers conducive to recovery-orientated practice. This funding improves the safety and amenity to residents and staff. Overall this government has invested \$3 million in capital funding through the Enhanced Community Mental Health Initiative to support improvements to existing Mental Health Community Support service providers.

Oakleigh electorate

Question 327

Question asked by: Member for Oakleigh
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has a vision to make Victoria the Education State, and this starts with the early years.

I was pleased to have recently announced up to \$83.7 million over four years in additional funding to support Victorian kindergarten services to implement improved teacher to child ratios. Improving educator to child ratios will allow staff to give more individual care and attention to children. Research shows that higher numbers of staff to children aged three to five years are associated with important social and learning outcomes, including increased literacy skills. Unfortunately, there was no funding contribution by the Federal Government towards the cost of the new ratios.

While the Andrews Labor Government is investing more in the critical early years, it is disappointing that the Federal Government continues to leave the future of its investment in 15 hours of kindergarten in the year before uncertain. Leaked details from the Abbott Government's Federation Green Paper revealed Tony Abbott's Government is considering options to walk away from kindergarten funding.

This would have a significant impact on access and affordability of 15 hours of kindergarten for families in electorates such as Oakleigh. The Productivity Commission found that 15 hours of kinder is essential to supporting children's development and improving school readiness, and recommended the Federal Government continue to provide funding.

Instead of considering more cuts, the Abbott Government should be providing more certainty for families with young children by extending their funding commitment beyond just two years.

The Andrews Labor Government will continue to advocate for ongoing and fair funding from the Federal Government for the delivery of high quality, flexible early childhood education and care for Victorian families.

Narracan electorate**Question 328**

Question asked by: Member for Narracan
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 23 June 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 69 police in the Eastern Region Division 5, which includes the Baw Baw and Latrobe police service areas.

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

This is in contrast to the first Ballieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

I assure you that the residents within the Narracan electorate receive a 24-hour police response. If any person 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.

During the twelve months to 31 March 2015, there was a decrease of 3.8 per cent in the overall number of offences recorded in the Baw Baw Local Government Area, with a decrease of 24.6 per cent in property and deception offences. Drug offences increased by 58.4 per cent reflecting the targeting of police operations to address this serious issue.

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. In supporting rural and regional communities across Victoria, the government also provided \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new secure, encrypted digital radio network.

The upgrade will enable police working in regional areas to communicate more securely, preventing members of the public from listening in on police operations.

Actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-2016 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. Local police have also been involved in the Family Violence Action Group and Say No To Violence Against Women Action Group.

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 2015-2016 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 especially in rural Victoria, helping to address the disproportionate impacts that ice is having on rural and regional communities. A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website—ice.vic.gov.au have already been set up to support rural families, service providers and other community members as part of a \$4.7 million investment in broader community support services.

The government is also investing \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 100,000 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 to help police track down and close clandestine drug labs more quickly by hiring additional forensic scientists for the Forensic Drug Branch.

Recent projects and campaigns in the Narracan electorate include the 'Dob In A Dealer' campaign to encourage reporting to Crime Stoppers to assist in the detection and disruption of use of the drug Ice. A community forum has also been facilitated by Victoria Police around harm minimisation in dealing with the drug, with the assistance of several community groups, school representatives and local traders. Moe Police also sponsored an anti-drug 'Dob In A Dealer' message on a commuter bus servicing the local community.

Victoria Police advises the 'Dob In A Dealer' campaign has resulted in a 275 per cent increase in reported drug activity in the Latrobe police service area.

Action has been taken to address the challenge of alcohol related crime with police recently co-ordinating a forum to seek assistance with the rise in associated alcohol thefts from licensed establishments. A campaign will be conducted to address antisocial behaviour traditionally experienced after the Moe Cup in October, with all licensed venues agreeing to close in the Moe area at 6 pm on the day of the event.

Regular police foot patrols, conducted in areas where crime has been reported, has seen a dramatic decrease in crime and reassured local community members about feeling safe and supported.

Local police are establishing positive relationships and breaking down barriers between police and children, many of whom may be only interacting with police during interventions in the family home. Through the introduction of the 'Adopt A School Program' police are delivering a program in each primary school in Moe, on a monthly rotation basis. The Police Youth Resource Officer and local police officers are also strengthening community connections with youth in the area through sporting groups and clubs.

I am assured by the Chief Commissioner of Police that the allocation of police resources across the 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 our 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.

Bendigo West electorate

Question 329

Question asked by: Member for Bendigo West
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

\$1 million funding was allocated in the 2015-16 State Budget to support Kalianna School to develop plans to meet the school's long term enrolment growth and ensure students are accommodated in outstanding 21st Century

learning facilities. I would be pleased to visit Kalianna School and meet with the school community to discuss the development of the school masterplan. My office will be in contact shortly to have this meeting arranged.

Nepean electorate

Question 330

Question asked by: Member for Nepean
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrew's Labor Government is committed to investing in school infrastructure, and ensuring that all students are educated in the environments they deserve. Our challenge, however, is balancing and prioritising the needs of over 1500 schools across Victoria, all in varying condition.

I am pleased to learn of individual schools taking such a strong approach to supporting the wellbeing and engagement of their school community. I applaud Rosebud Secondary College for taking such decisive, preventative measures to support student mental health, particularly within the context of the traumatic incidents the school has experienced.

While the recent Budget focused primarily on funding our election commitments, the Government is aware that other schools also have capital needs. I can assure you that we will closely monitor the capital needs of Rosebud Secondary College, and that these will be considered throughout the State Budget process, and when determining future priorities for the Victorian Government's capital works program.

In the interim, however, I encourage Rosebud Secondary College to proactively explore ways to raise funds locally within the community. This could include seeking grants from philanthropic organisations, or co-contributions from local organisations.

The funding provided through the recent Budget represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State, and we will continue to invest in education infrastructure throughout this term of government.

Carrum electorate

Question 331

Question asked by: Member for Carrum
Directed to: Minister for Mental Health
Asked on: 23 June 2015

REPLY:

Thank you to the Member for Carrum for the question regarding necessary maintenance upgrade works at the NEAMI managed residential rehabilitation service in Seaford. The Andrews Labor Government is committed to providing support and services to people experiencing mental illness and their families. We are committed to improving facilities to meet contemporary standards regarding physical amenity, space and safety for all residents. I am pleased to advise that I have approved \$273,803 through The Enhanced Community Mental Health Initiative as capital funds to upgrade the Seaford property. The Enhanced Community Mental Health Initiative funding will sound proof private meeting rooms for residents, painting and replacement carpet for the staff office, the enclosure of the outdoor pergola, insulation installed at the property, new LED lighting and sustainable plumbing to bathrooms and the installation of solar panels. This funding improves the safety and amenity to residents and staff. Overall this government has invested \$3 million dollars in capital funding through the Enhanced Community Mental Health Initiative to support improvements to existing Mental Health Community Support service providers.

Croydon electorate**Question 340**

Question asked by: Member for Croydon
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has committed \$20 million to deliver additional car parking at train stations.

I have requested an audit be conducted of land in the vicinity of train stations with the potential to convert into car parking.

PTV and VicTrack are currently finalising an audit of all metropolitan and regional car parking.

Once appropriate sites have been identified, the Andrews Labor Government will deliver additional car parking spaces across the entire train network.

Mooroolbark will be considered within this program of works.

Mildura electorate**Question 342**

Question asked by: Member for Mildura
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

The Labor Government has removed basic camping fees in over 500 basic camping sites across Victoria to ensure families can have an affordable holiday and experience our great National Parks. Camping permit fees remain in place for camp sites that provide middle, high and very high levels of services and facilities.

Camping permit fees remain in place for the two campgrounds located in Hattah-Kulkyne National Park. Lake Hattah and Lake Maunpall campground services include pit toilets, camper shelter for groups, shared picnic tables, barbecues, refuse and recycling, and ranger patrols which are all classified as mid-level services.

Both campgrounds have recently been upgraded with new toilet facilities, fencing, bollards, resurfaced tracks and roads, and barbecues. The park also has a Visitor Information Centre and interpretive walks. Campers are able to book online, as well as by phone to Parks Victoria's Information Centre. The Andrews Labor Government has committed \$20 million to deliver additional car parking at train stations.

Burwood electorate**Question 344**

Question asked by: Member for Burwood
Directed to: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

Markham Estate is an outdated estate identified as having high levels of social disadvantage. This is amplified by the poor condition of the properties. The estate is in need of replacement in order for the housing to meet the client needs, amenity and community standards.

It is most disappointing, but far from surprising, that the local member has chosen to oppose public housing, embarking upon a scare campaign against the upgrade and improvement of the Markham public housing estate.

The Government committed at the last election to demolish Markham Avenue Estate and start again. We will deliver on that commitment that Victorians voted for. The Department of Health & Human Services is currently considering options for the redevelopment of the estate, and we will ensure the interests of the local community are appropriately considered in that process.

Essendon electorate

Question 345

Question asked by: Member for Essendon
Directed to: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

I would like to thank the Member for inviting me to join him at the Moonee Valley Legal Service, to discuss their work in supporting those who are impacted by family violence. I would also like to acknowledge the Member's own advocacy in addressing this harm within his electorate of Essendon.

There is no harm more devastating than family violence, which for too long has challenged the very fabric of our community. I have instructed my office to arrange for an opportunity for the Moonee Valley Legal Service together with the Member to be able to discuss their efforts and experiences.

Bass electorate

Question 346

Question asked by: Member for Bass
Directed to: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

I would like to thank the Member for raising this very important matter with me, in relation to the Parliament of Victoria committing to participate in the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program. I would also like to acknowledge the Member's own advocacy to prevent this harm, which for too long has lingered across our community. There is no community that is immune to this violence, and bipartisanship is essential for its eradication.

In relation to the Parliament of Victoria undertaking this program, I have contacted the Speaker's Office and have been advised that this request has been successful, with work currently underway to implement this initiative. I hope that applying this program to the parliamentary environment will further signify the importance of eradicating this harm.

Niddrie electorate

Question 347

Question asked by: Member for Niddrie
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with building Melbourne Metro. The Project is critical to Melbourne's rail network, unblocking the city loop allowing 20,000 more people to catch the train at the busiest times.

Melbourne Metro will enable the creation of seven independent end-to-end metropolitan train lines which will increase capacity and reliability of train lines servicing Melbourne's growing north, west and south eastern suburbs, delivering more frequent train services to help meet the demands of our growing city.

Upon completion of Melbourne Metro, commuters on the Craigieburn line will enjoy more frequent and reliable services.

Melbourne Metro removes two of our busiest rail lines—Cranbourne/Pakenham and Sunbury—from the City Loop, giving the Craigieburn and Upfield lines dedicated space in the City Loop and allowing space for more Craigieburn line services.

Melbourne Metro will connect Craigieburn commuters to some of the State's key medical, education and commercial precincts by rail for the first time.

Commuters on the Craigieburn line will access the new Melbourne Metro services via one seamless interchange at either Flinders Street or Melbourne Central station.

Ripon electorate

Question 348

Question asked by: Member for Ripon
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 24 June 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 270 police in the Western Region, which services the Ripon electorate.

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

This is in contrast to the first Ballieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

Victoria Police has introduced an operational safety policy to enhance the safety and well being of all employees. The safety policy was developed in consultation with police officers and The Police Association and focuses on operational safety equipment, single officer activities and the security of marked police vehicles.

Police are encouraged to conduct risk assessments before and throughout their duties and apply a consistent and common sense approach when responding to operational duties and responsibilities.

Victoria Police advises that there will be no reduction in patrols or police response and Executive Command will continue to evaluate the impact of these measures.

I can assure you that the residents of Ripon will continue to receive a 24-hour police response. If any members of the community have immediate concerns for their safety, or need to report a crime in progress, they need to continue to report these matters to Victoria Police through the emergency number '000'. Calls to '000' are recorded and responded to by the closest appropriate police personnel.

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. In supporting rural and regional communities across Victoria, the government also provided \$11.5 million to deliver on its commitment for a new secure, encrypted digital radio network.

The upgrade will enable police working in regional areas to communicate more securely, preventing members of the public from listening in on police operations.

Actions to address the key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-2016 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 2015-2016 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 especially in rural Victoria, helping to address the disproportionate impacts that ice is having on rural and regional communities. A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website—ice.vic.gov.au have already been set up to support rural families, service providers and other community members as part of a \$4.7 million investment in broader community support services.

The government is also investing \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 100,000 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 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 the 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 our 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.

Thomastown electorate

Question 349

Question asked by: Member for Thomastown
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 24 June 2015

REPLY:

I would be pleased to visit Thomastown West Primary School and Lalor Gardens Primary School. I will arrange for my office to be in contact with you shortly.

The Andrews Government has made a significant commitment to improving the quality of school facilities across Victoria. I look forward to meeting with the communities of Thomastown West Primary School and Lalor Gardens Primary School to discuss their facilities and future plans.

Ferntree Gully electorate**Question 359**

Question asked by: Member for Ferntree Gully
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

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 funding represents a crucial first step in creating the Education State and addressing the chronic under investment in infrastructure under the previous Government.

The Victorian Government is aware that schools such as Knox Park Primary School may have maintenance or capital needs. State Budget constraints do not allow for all school building projects to be immediately funded, and the needs of all government schools must be balanced and prioritised accordingly.

While the 2015-16 Budget focused on resourcing our election commitments and other priority projects, the capital needs of all schools will be considered when determining future priorities for the capital works program. We will continue to use all available data, including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, when allocating funding in future State Budgets. Knox Park Primary School is advised to address maintenance issues as they arise, using funds allocated annually through its Student Resource Package.

Pascoe Vale electorate**Question 360**

Question asked by: Member for Pascoe Vale
Directed to: Minister for Industry
Asked on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

The Government is alert to the important role played by the Brunswick Business Incubator in supporting new businesses and driving employment outcomes.

To ensure the future of the Incubator we have taken steps to transfer the property it leases from the Victorian Government from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR).

The Minister for Health has written to me recommending the transfer and I have accepted that recommendation. The administrative arrangements for that transfer to take place are now being managed by the respective departments.

I spoke to a member of the Board of the Brunswick Business Incubator on 3 July 2015 and the Board understands the Incubator's tenancy is secure while this process takes place.

Once the transfer of the property to DEDJTR is finalised, it is our intention to negotiate an appropriate lease to secure the future of the Incubator.

Yuroke electorate**Question 362**

Question asked by: Member for Yuroke
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

I am pleased to hear that the Craigieburn community is excited about the new school. The Andrews Labor Government is committed to building educational facilities where they are needed across the State, and ten communities will see new schools delivered through funding allocated in the 2015–16 State Budget. This is a clear demonstration of our commitment to creating the Education State.

Through the State Budget, \$12 million has been provided to build the new Craigieburn North West Primary School. The Department of Education and Training is currently developing the master plan for the project, and we expect construction to begin in January 2016.

The specific opening date for the school will be confirmed through the project's tender process; however, I am advised at this stage that Craigieburn North West Primary School is due to open its doors in 2017.

Polwarth electorate**Question 363**

Question asked by: Member for Polwarth
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is aware of community concerns around the condition of Foxhow Road.

In early 2014, a 1.2km section of Foxhow Road was upgraded from the bridge over Gnarkeet Chain of Ponds Creek to south of Collins Lane. VicRoads has also recently completed re-grading of the gravel shoulders to improve their condition.

As part of Project 10,000, the Victorian Government has committed \$1 billion to upgrade and repair unsafe and congested roads. Funding to upgrade Foxhow Road will be considered as part of future programs.

The Princes Highway is the primary arterial route in south-western Victoria and \$545 million has been invested by the Federal and State Governments towards its upgrade. This project will improve the safety and reliability of this vital highway, as well as freight viability between the south-west part of the State and Geelong, and on to Melbourne.

Ballarat-Colac Road is a more suitable north-south route between the Princes Highway and the Hamilton Highway, and \$3.8 million has been invested into this section of road since 2013 to bring it to a higher standard. Approximately \$2.4 million in further road renewal projects have been announced for 2015-16 to continue improving this road.

Mordialloc electorate**Question 364**

Question asked by: Member for Mordialloc
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

This disappointing decision to cease the Inborn Error of Metabolism Program from 31 December 2015 was made in the Commonwealth budget of 2015-16.

The Inborn Error of Metabolism Program has provided people with desperately needed financial assistance necessary to purchase the foods vital to prevent serious health problems. Many of the low protein medical foods that are purchased by people via the funding provided by this program are not readily available in the local supermarket. There are only three suppliers in Australia which makes home delivery costs a serious impost.

There are just over nine hundred Australians accessing this program and the total cost to the Commonwealth is less than \$3 million annually. There are one hundred and forty eight Victorians currently accessing the vital assistance that this program provides and for them cessation of this program will be another hard knock in their already difficult journey through life.

This program is a vital preventative measure to ensure that individuals with genetic metabolic diseases can access the medication, supplements and specific foods they need.

I will urge the Commonwealth Minister for Health, The Hon Sussan Ley to reverse this cut and reinstate this vital health program.

Melbourne electorate**Question 365**

Question asked by: Member for Melbourne
Directed to: Minister for Employment
Asked on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to ensuring that all Victorians have the opportunity to benefit from economic growth and job opportunities in the State.

Our Back to Work plan aims to create sustainable and high value jobs by growing our traditional industries and investing in emerging sectors to foster employment.

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;
- The Future Industries Fund—a \$200 million fund which will support the development of six sectors with high growth potential; and
- The Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund—a \$500 million fund to help drive jobs growth and economic opportunities in Regional Victoria.

It is essential however, that vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians, including refugees and recently arrived migrants, receive additional support in order to enter the workforce and remain employed over the long term.

While the Commonwealth Government has primary responsibility for employment services, it is clear that some disadvantaged groups are not being adequately assisted by these services at present. Furthermore, Commonwealth job services provide limited employment assistance to people who are ineligible for Commonwealth income support.

To ensure that disadvantaged jobseekers receive the support they need, I have instructed the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) to conduct a review of employment programs, which is considering the effectiveness of employment programs across government, best practice in labour market programs and the policy implications of changes occurring in the labour market. The review will assist with the development of future programs that are aligned with Victorian Labor's Plan for Jobs and Growth.

Narre Warren South electorate

Question 366

Question asked by: Member for Narre Warren South
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 25 June 2015

REPLY:

The Andrews Government has allocated \$2.7M to provide 1000 defibrillator and training packages to sporting clubs and facilities over four years.

Currently, the Department of Health and Human Services is preparing tender documentation for an organisation to provide the 1000 defibrillator and training packages for the program. The tender specifications will include; quality standards for the defibrillator, provision of accredited defibrillator and CPR training, consideration of defibrillator installation and maintenance.

Clubs will be able to apply for a defibrillator through a formal application process. The guidelines for applications are under development. In allocating defibrillators consideration will be given to the level of public accessibility to the defibrillator, current rate of sudden cardiac arrest by area, and the current provision of defibrillators across Victoria. To guide the implementation of this Program a working party has been established within the Department of Health and Human Services. This working party is made up of representatives of Ambulance Victoria, the Victorian Cardiac Clinical Network, the Ambulance and Population and Preventative Health branches of the Department of Health and Human Services and Sport and Recreation Victoria.

Brighton electorate

Question 367

Question asked by: Member for Brighton
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 25 June 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 43 police in the Southern Metro Region Division 2, which includes Brighton.

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

This is in contrast to the first Ballieu Coalition Government budget in 2011, where they cut over \$113 million from the Victoria Police budget. This led to a reduction of 310 police support staff (unsworn members). This demonstrates that the Coalition Government drove the axe into Victoria Police at their first opportunity.

I am assured by the Chief Commissioner that the Bayside Police Station will remain a 24-hour police station within the Glen Eira police service area (PSA). The Glen Eira PSA also operates a Precinct Policing Community Engagement model which focuses on police understanding and responding to local community needs.

Glen Eira PSA has nine precinct crews engaging with the community. Six precincts are locally based and include Brighton/Brighton East, Hampton, Cheltenham/Highbury, Sandringham, Black Rock and Beaumaris. An additional three precinct crews focus on the foreshore, vulnerable road users and public transport users.

A recent operational initiative targeting theft from motor vehicles at Black Rock involved a visible police presence through additional patrols and use of the community caravan at relevant hot spots, with police officers engaging with local residents and traders in the shopping strip to promote safety. Brighton traders have also provided positive feedback about recent interactions with police.

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 these key drivers of crime were also announced in the 2015-2016 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 2015-2016 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 in Victoria, helping to address the disproportionate impacts that ice is having on our communities. A new Ice Help Line and dedicated website—ice.vic.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 also investing \$17.7 million for new drug and booze buses and to maintain the current level of 100,000 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 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 the 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 our 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.