

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Tuesday, 26 May 2015**

**(Extract from book 7)**

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**Deputy Speaker:**

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Mr Thompson, Ms Thomson, Ms Ward and Mr Watt.

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

The Hon. M. J. GUY

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

*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Party</b>
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McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP			

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 2 February 2015

<sup>2</sup> 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 Perera 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*): Mr Dalidakis and Ms Patten.

**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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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.  
Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Assembly.  
Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.  
The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.*

**Tuesday, 26 May 2015**

**Education**

**127.** **Mr WAKELING** to ask the Minister for Education — With reference to future funding for the Victorian Virtual Learning Network (VVLN):

- (1) Will funding be allocated for the VVLN for 2016 to 2018.
- (2) What will the allocation of VVLN funding be each year for 2016 to 2018.
- (3) Will any VVLN funding be reduced or withdrawn during 2016 to 2018; if so, which year(s) and how much will the funding be reduced or withdrawn by.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

- The VVLN is one of six key virtual providers in the state.
- The VVLN has received over \$2m in funding since its inception in 2009 through a range of Commonwealth and state government initiatives, with the aim of becoming self-funding.
- In 2014, VVLN adopted a fee for service model, charging students 0.2 of the Student Resource Package (SRP) pro rata (\$1508) for participation per subject. This service model can continue and support VVLN course delivery.
- In 2015, the Department has engaged an independent financial advisor to work with the VVLN to develop a Financial Sustainability Options Analysis to assist in the VVLN becoming self-sustaining. This work will be completed by 30 June 2015 and will inform future directions for VVLN operations, including how they will cover costs associated with the administration, management and updating of VCE study designs.
- If a sustainable option cannot be agreed, students currently enrolled in the VVLN will not be disadvantaged as the Department will ensure that those students can access the subjects from alternative providers such as the Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV).

**Education**

**128.** **Mr WAKELING** to ask the Minister for Education — With reference to the Government's Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids — Breakfast Club program:

- (1) When will the promised \$13.5 million be invested into Foodbank to establish breakfast clubs at 500 government primary schools across the State.
- (2) What is the selection process that will be used to determine which 500 government primary schools will be chosen to participate as breakfast clubs.
- (3) How will the 25 000 children across the State be chosen to take part in program.
- (4) When will the 500 government primary schools be advised of their selection.
- (5) Will the schools that are not selected be advised of their non-selection and why.
- (6) What is the expected commencement date of the breakfast clubs.
- (7) Who will conduct the breakfast clubs.

- (8) Will volunteers or paid staff assist to conduct the breakfast clubs.
- (9) If paid staff are used to assist the conducting of the Breakfast Clubs, has extra funding been allocated to cover these costs.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

- (1) The Government has committed funding to Foodbank Victoria (Foodbank) to establish breakfast clubs in 500 of the most disadvantaged Victorian government primary schools, from January 2016. An Agreement will be executed between the Department and Foodbank shortly after the Budget Announcement on 5 May to support implementation of this initiative.
- (2) A target list of schools eligible for participation has been identified based on Student Family Occupation (SFO) index data. The SFO is the equity funding component of the Student Resource Package, aimed to target the allocation of funds to schools most in need. SFO is calculated based on parental occupation data collected at the school level.  
  
Schools with a high SFO have a higher density of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This indicates these schools have the highest level of disadvantage and are therefore the most appropriate schools to target for participation in line with the election commitment.
- (3) The figure of 25 000 children is based on an average of 50 students in each of the 500 schools participating in the program. This is based on Foodbank's estimates provided to the Department in their proposal.
- (4) I launched the Breakfast Club program with the Premier on May 11 at Richmond West Primary School.
- (5) Yes. All non-targeted primary schools will be sent information through existing channels. This will include an explanation of why they are not eligible for the program, including a rationale for how the Department determined the 500 most disadvantaged schools.
- (6) The breakfast club program is due to commence on the first day of Term 1 (January) 2016.
- (7) Foodbank will supply and deliver quality breakfast products to participating schools on a regular basis and will work with other organisations to provide volunteers to facilitate and support delivery of the program. Schools will be responsible for providing a safe and appropriate place for breakfasts to be served with supervision from a member of staff. If schools have locally-initiated breakfast clubs in place no disruption is anticipated—Foodbank will simply provide the food.
- (8) Volunteers will be required to assist in the running of the breakfast club. This may be in the physical helping at breakfast times, but also in promoting and supporting the program, such as developing and managing rosters. A member of staff will be required to supervise the breakfast clubs to meet duty of care obligations to the students who attend.
- (9) No extra funding has been allocated to cover the costs of paid staff members.

**Education**

**129. Mr WAKELING** to ask the Minister for Education — With reference to the Government's Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids — Camps, Sports and Excursions program:

- (1) When will the \$150 million Camps, Sports and Excursions fund (the fund) be established.
- (2) Who will be responsible for the distribution of the funds.
- (3) Will the funds be distributed to the schools or the parents.
- (4) How will the amount of the funds for each student be determined.
- (5) Is every student eligible to participate in the program.
- (6) Will every student who participates in the program receive monetary assistance.

- (7) Is the Support for our Kids — Camps, Sports and Excursions program for primary school students and secondary school students.
- (8) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of camps.
- (9) What will the cost of camps cover.
- (10) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the cost of sports.
- (11) What will the costs of sports cover.
- (12) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of excursions.
- (13) What will the costs of excursions cover.
- (14) When will the Camps, Sports and Excursions program commence.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

**(1) When will the \$150 million Camps, Sports and Excursions fund (the fund) be established.**

The government has committed \$148.3 million over four years, commencing from the 2015–16 financial year, to establish a Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

The Department of Education and Training is currently working through the details of this commitment as rapidly as possible to get support to schools and families that need it. The Department will inform schools and the community of the new program as soon as possible.

**(2) Who will be responsible for the distribution of the funds.**

Schools will be responsible for administering the program and allocating the funding towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for eligible students.

**(3) Will the funds be distributed to the schools or the parents.**

Funds will be distributed directly to the eligible student’s school, but tied to the individual student.

**(4) How will the amount of the funds for each student be determined.**

Financial assistance of \$125 per year will be paid for each primary school student and \$225 per year for each secondary school student-subject to the family meeting the eligibility criteria for the program.

**(5) Is every student eligible to participate in the program.**

Students’ participation in the program is based on the family meeting the eligibility criteria, which requires them to hold a means-tested concession card.

**(6) Will every student who participates in the program receive monetary assistance.**

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools students per year will be paid to the student’s school for every student, and for the benefit of that student who meets the eligibility criteria for the program.

**(7) Is the Support for our Kids-Camps, Sports and Excursions program for primary school students and secondary school students.**

Yes. The program is for eligible students at primary schools and secondary schools.

**(8) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of camps.**

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools per year will be paid to schools towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for the eligible student. Under this program, there will not be a separate payment for families.

**(9) What will the cost of camps cover.**

Schools will be required to use the payment towards any expenses relating to camps, such as; food, travel and/or entry fees which benefit the eligible student.

**(10) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the cost of sports.**

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools per year will be paid to schools towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for the eligible student. Under this program, there will not be a separate payment for families.

**(11) What will the costs of sports cover.**

Schools will be required to use the payment towards any expenses relating to sports, such as; participation in swimming programs or other sporting activities which benefit the eligible student.

**(12) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of excursions.**

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools per year will be paid to schools towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for the eligible student. Under this program, there will not be a separate payment for families.

**(13) What will the costs of excursions cover.**

Schools will be required to use the payment towards any expenses relating to excursions, such as; the costs associated with school trips or participation in outdoor education programs which benefit the eligible student.

**(14) When will the Camps, Sports and Excursions program commence.**

The government has committed \$148.3 million over four years, commencing from the 2015–16 financial year, to establish a Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

The Department of Education and Training is currently working through the details of this commitment as rapidly as possible to get support to schools and families that need it. The Department will inform schools and the community of the new program as soon as possible.

**Education**

**130. Mr WAKELING** to ask the Minister for Education — With reference to the Government’s Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids — Glasses for Kids program:

- (1) When will the \$500 000 to sponsor the State Schools Relief program be invested.
- (2) What is the expected commencement date of the program.
- (3) What will the funds cover with regards to the program.
- (4) What is the selection process that will determine which 250 most disadvantaged schools will have optometrists visit their schools to conduct eye tests.
- (5) How will the students from the chosen 250 schools be selected to have their eyes tested.
- (6) Will parental approval be required before selection of the students takes place.
- (7) How will the visiting chosen school optometrists be selected.
- (8) If the optometrist determines that glasses are required, who will pay for the frames for the students.

- (9) If the optometrist determines that glasses are required, who will pay for the prescription lenses for the students.
- (10) Are there likely to be any other associated costs relating to the implementation and running of the program.
- (11) Will any part of this program be covered by Medicare.
- (12) Will parents be asked to pay or claim through Medicare, or private health insurance for those who have it, for any part of this program.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

- (1) Monies will be available after the passing of the budget.
- (2) Currently there is a pilot program being undertaken in a small number of government primary schools. The program will formally commence in the second half 2015.
- (3) The funds will cover project management costs of screening clinics for all Prep-Grade 3 children at the 250 most disadvantaged government primary schools.
- (4) A number of indices of socioeconomic disadvantage are available that will allow a simple ranking of need, including Student Family Occupation. The decision is yet to be made on the final measure.
- (5) There will be universal screening of all Prep-Grade 3 children in the designated schools.
- (6) A consent form is to be completed by parents.
- (7) The screening clinics are entirely comprised of volunteers, initially from OPSM. There are other potential partners under active consideration.
- (8) All frames are provided free of charge by OneSight, OPSM's global charitable arm.
- (9) All lenses are provided free of charge by OneSight, OPSM's global charitable arm.
- (10) The funds are all inclusive.
- (11) All screenings are free. If children require follow up the costs will be bulk billed to Medicare. The costs will be covered by OneSight for any child not covered by Medicare.
- (12) Private Health Insurance does not apply to any part of the program.

**Education**

**131. Mr WAKELING** to ask the Minister for Education — With reference to the Government's Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids — Uniform program:

- (1) When will the \$15.5 million be invested to sponsor State Schools Relief.
- (2) How will the government ensure that the money is distributed fairly.
- (3) Who will decide who is eligible to receive books, stationery, software and more expensive items such as school blazers.
- (4) What are the more expensive items other than a school blazer.
- (5) When will parents be able to benefit from this program.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

- (1) The funding will be provided to State Schools' Relief over four years to enable families of disadvantaged children attending government schools to purchase school uniforms, textbooks and other essential items. The funding will extend the current State Schools' Relief school uniform distribution program. The first instalment of \$4.0 million is included in this year's Budget.
- (2) State Schools' Relief has been distributing assistance to disadvantaged children since 1930. The funding will be delivered via a Common Funding Agreement.
- (3) Provision of assistance is based on a needs assessment by individual schools according to criteria detailed by State Schools Relief. Short term crisis and long term chronic need are the primary qualifying criteria for support. State Schools Relief tracks the drivers of service demand at the point of application, including refugee status, homelessness, family violence, house fire, natural disaster, financial hardship, illness and emergency. Provision of assistance is not an extension of welfare entitlement traditionally evidenced by a healthcare or pensioner card.
- (4) The funding will assist the purchase of textbooks and other essential items for disadvantaged children attending government schools.
- (5) As part of its ongoing operations, State Schools' Relief has been distributing assistance for uniforms to disadvantaged children since the start of this school year. Assistance for the purchase of textbooks and other essential items will be available for the 2016 school year.

**Attorney-General**

**167. Mr CRISP** to ask the Attorney-General — With reference to Statutory Declarations:

- (1) Why is the operator of a Post Office unable to witness Victorian Statutory Declarations, given that the Commonwealth accepts the authority of a Post Office operator to witness a Statutory Declaration.
- (2) What is the final jurisdiction when authorising a Statutory Declaration.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

- (1) The current list of persons authorised to witness statutory declarations under Victorian legislation differs from that under Commonwealth law.

My department is currently developing options for modernising the law relating to statutory declarations in Victoria, including witnessing requirements.

- (2) The Victorian statutory declaration requirements only apply to statutory declarations required or permitted under Victorian law. Operators of post offices in Victoria are still authorised to witness Commonwealth statutory declarations (that is, statutory declarations required or permitted under Commonwealth law).