

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**19, 20 and 21 June 2012**

**(Extract from book 11)**

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## Legislative Council standing committees

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**Economy and Infrastructure References Committee** — Mr Barber, Ms Broad, Mrs Coote, #Ms Crozier, Mr Drum, Mr Finn, #Mr Leane, #Mr Lenders, #Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pulford, Mr Ramsay and Mr Somyurek.

**Environment and Planning Legislation Committee** — Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, #Mr Leane, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #Mrs Petrovich, Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, #Mr Tarlamis, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

**Environment and Planning References Committee** — Mr Elsbury, #Mr Finn, #Ms Hartland, Mrs Kronberg, #Mr Leane, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Pennicuik, #Mrs Petrovich, Mrs Peulich, Mr Scheffer, #Mr Tarlamis, Mr Tee and Ms Tierney.

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**Legal and Social Issues References Committee** — Ms Crozier, Mr Elasmr, #Mr Elsbury, Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Brien, Mr O'Donohue, Mrs Petrovich, #Mr Ramsay and Mr Viney.

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**Electoral Matters Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Finn, Mr Somyurek and Mr Tarlamis. (*Assembly*): Ms Ryall and Mrs Victoria.

**Environment and Natural Resources Committee** — (*Council*): Mr Koch. (*Assembly*): Mr Bull, Ms Duncan, Mr Pandazopoulos and Ms Wreford.

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*Council* — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr W. R. Tunnecliffe

*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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Kronberg, Mrs Janice Susan	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw	Eastern Victoria	ALP



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**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

*Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.*

**Tuesday, 19 June 2012**

**Carbon tax: health sector**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mrs Coote**

**Raised on: 17 August 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am concerned that the cost of health care will rise as a result of the carbon price and that this additional cost impost has the potential to impact on the extent and performance of health service delivery.

Due to the range of causal factors affecting emergency and elective surgery waiting times and lists, it is not possible to determine the direct impact the carbon price will have on individual health service performance. It is, however, estimated that the impact of the carbon price at Alfred Health would equate to approximately 146 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

The Department of Health has made representations to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority on the impact of a carbon price on Victorian hospitals, indicating that the additional cost needs to be considered when setting the national efficient price and the rate of indexation.

The commonwealth's clean energy package does not provide equitable support to hospitals compared to other industries generating similar levels of carbon emissions.

The government will continue to call on the commonwealth to actively consult with Victoria on the implementation of the carbon price and will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged compared to other states or to industries that are receiving support.

**Carbon tax: health sector**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Crozier**

**Raised on: 17 August 2011**

**REPLY:**

I am concerned that the cost of health care will rise as a result of the carbon price and that this additional cost impost has the potential to impact on the extent and performance of health service delivery.

Due to the range of causal factors affecting emergency and elective surgery waiting times and lists, it is not possible to determine the direct impact the carbon price will have on individual health service performance. It is, however, estimated that the impact of the Monash Medical Centre, Clayton, would equate to approximately 100 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

The Department of Health has made representations to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority on the impact of a carbon price on Victorian hospitals, indicating that the additional cost needs to be considered when setting the national efficient price and the rate of indexation.

The commonwealth's clean energy package does not provide equitable support to hospitals compared to other industries generating similar levels of carbon emissions.

The government will continue to call on the commonwealth to actively consult with Victoria on the implementation of the carbon price and will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged compared to other states or to industries that are receiving support.

### **Carbon tax: health sector**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr Finn**

**Raised on: 17 August 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

I am concerned that the cost of health care will rise as a result of the carbon price and that this additional cost impost has the potential to impact on the extent and performance of health service delivery.

Due to the range of causal factors affecting emergency and elective surgery waiting times and lists, it is not possible to determine the direct impact the carbon price will have on individual health service performance. It is, however, estimated that the impact of the carbon price at Western Health would equate to approximately 106 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

The Department of Health has made representations to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority on the impact of a carbon price on Victorian hospitals, indicating that the additional cost needs to be considered when setting the national efficient price and the rate of indexation.

The commonwealth's clean energy package does not provide equitable support to hospitals compared to other industries generating similar levels of carbon emissions.

The government will continue to call on the commonwealth to actively consult with Victoria on the implementation of the carbon price and will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged compared to other states or to industries that are receiving support.

### **Carbon tax: health sector**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr Koch**

**Raised on: 17 August 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

I am concerned that the cost of health care will rise as a result of the carbon price and that this additional cost impost has the potential to impact on the extent and performance of health service delivery.

Due to the range of causal factors affecting emergency and elective surgery waiting times and lists, it is not possible to determine the direct impact the carbon price will have on individual health service performance. It is, however, estimated that the impact of the carbon price at Barwon Health would equate to approximately 84 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

The Department of Health has made representations to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority on the impact of a carbon price on Victorian hospitals, indicating that the additional cost needs to be considered when setting the national efficient price and the rate of indexation.

The commonwealth's clean energy package does not provide equitable support to hospitals compared to other industries generating similar levels of carbon emissions.

The government will continue to call on the commonwealth to actively consult with Victoria on the implementation of the carbon price and will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged compared to other states or to industries that are receiving support.

### **Carbon tax: health sector**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 17 August 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I am concerned that the cost of health care will rise as a result of the carbon price and that this additional cost impost has the potential to impact on the extent and performance of health service delivery.

Due to the range of causal factors affecting emergency and elective surgery waiting times and lists, it is not possible to determine the direct impact the carbon price will have on individual health service performance. It is, however, estimated that the impact of the carbon price at Latrobe Regional Hospital would equate to approximately 27 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

The Department of Health has made representations to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority on the impact of a carbon price on Victorian hospitals, indicating that the additional cost needs to be considered when setting the national efficient price and the rate of indexation.

The commonwealth's clean energy package does not provide equitable support to hospitals compared to other industries generating similar levels of carbon emissions.

The government will continue to call on the commonwealth to actively consult with Victoria on the implementation of the carbon price and will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged compared to other states or to industries that are receiving support.

### **Carbon tax: health sector**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr Ondarchie

**Raised on:** 17 August 2011

#### **REPLY:**

I am concerned that the cost of health care will rise as a result of the carbon price and that this additional cost impost has the potential to impact on the extent and performance of health service delivery.

Due to the range of causal factors affecting emergency and elective surgery waiting times and lists, it is not possible to determine the direct impact the carbon price will have on individual health service performance. It is, however, estimated that the impact of the carbon price at Melbourne Health, Austin Health and Northern Hospital would

respectively equate to approximately 121, 200 and 38 elective procedures based on the average weighted cost of a surgical procedure.

The Department of Health has made representations to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority on the impact of a carbon price on Victorian hospitals, indicating that the additional cost needs to be considered when setting the national efficient price and the rate of indexation.

The commonwealth's clean energy package does not provide equitable support to hospitals compared to other industries generating similar levels of carbon emissions.

The government will continue to call on the commonwealth to actively consult with Victoria on the implementation of the carbon price and will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged compared to other states or to industries that are receiving support.

### **Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Ms Crozier

**Raised on:** 29 February 2012

**REPLY:**

I am pleased to confirm that the Baillieu government has provided \$75 000 specifically to improve awareness of ovarian cancer, its symptoms and risks to the Australian population. The following initiatives have been funded over the last 18 months:

- \$50 000 was provided in 2011–12 for a joint Ovarian Cancer Australia and BreaCan project to support consumer education, awareness raising and to identify barriers to accessing available peer support services
- \$25 000 was provided to Ovarian Cancer Australia earlier this year for the development of a mobile application 'Symptom Diary' which will provide information and support to Australian women experiencing symptoms which may be diagnostic of ovarian cancer. This mHealth 'Symptom Diary' will provide a simple, user friendly and extremely convenient tool that will capture information about women's experience of symptoms to aid diagnosis as well as providing helpful information about risk and healthy behaviours to reduce risk of ovarian cancer.
- In addition to these specific initiatives, the Department of Health provides recurrent funding of more than \$0.5M p.a. to BreaCan, a consumer-focused information and support service for people affected by breast and gynaecological cancers in Victoria.

### **Rail: Altona loop service**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 17 April 2012

**REPLY:**

The Altona loop is serviced by trains operating between Laverton and the city during peak periods. Having the trains originate at Laverton, rather than Werribee, provides a more reliable service to stations in the Altona loop, reducing the risk of late-running trains and consequent bypasses of the Altona loop, as well as increasing available capacity in the morning peak. There are currently no plans to duplicate the single track sections of the Altona loop.

**Toyota Australia: job losses****Raised with: Premier****Raised by: Ms Tierney****Raised on: 17 April 2012****REPLY:**

The Australian automotive market is one of the most open and competitive in the world, with over 60 brands competing for a relatively small market by global standards of around 1 million cars. The competitive dynamics of this market coupled with the high Australian dollar has put increasing pressure on domestic car producers.

If Australian operations of global companies in globally competitive markets are not profitable, they are unlikely to continue to manufacture in Australia. As such, it is critical that these companies maintain profitability. Toyota took action to do this — to shore up its domestic production in order to maintain the vast majority of jobs it currently supports in Victoria.

Toyota directly employs around 4200 people Australia-wide, 3700 of which are employed in Victoria. On 23 January 2012, Toyota announced plans to reduce its workforce by around 350 people. This action was taken on 16 and 17 April when Toyota advised 350 workers would be made redundant. I understand that the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union has filed Federal Court action to seek the reinstatement of 12 workers made redundant. Due to this Federal Court action, it is inappropriate for me to comment further on the redundancy process undertaken by Toyota.

The Victorian government works actively with companies when possible to reduce the adverse impact of redundancy on workers. The Victorian government assisted Toyota's affected workers on site on both 16 and 17 April through the Workers in Transition program. Through this program the Victorian government will ensure that all affected workers are offered government subsidised training through either the Victorian training guarantee, or for those that are not eligible, by receiving an eligibility exemption in order to access government subsidised training. Affected workers will be offered a range of support services including the provision of advice regarding careers, skills recognition assessments, and subsidised entry to a range of training opportunities.

The government will continue to work with Toyota and the rest of the industry for a sustainable future.

**Rail: Warragul station****Raised with: Minister for Public Transport****Raised by: Mr Viney****Raised on: 18 April 2012****REPLY:**

The coalition government is delivering its commitment to upgrade the Warragul station precinct by providing a third rail crossing and a car park and bus interchange.

The Warragul station precinct upgrade will help to alleviate congestion in Warragul's town centre and provide much needed additional car parking for the growing number of people who access trains at Warragul railway station.

Funding was provided in the 2011–12 state budget for the addition of a third rail crossing between Alfred and Queen streets.

Funding was also provided in the 2011–12 state budget for planning and development work for the car park and bus interchange project. Based on this work, the government has provided capital funding of \$10.7 million in the 2012–13 state budget for:

- at least 200 additional car parks and a bus interchange south of the station;
- access from the car park and the bus interchange to the station via a pedestrian ramp along Alfred Street and the existing western car park entry;
- signalisation of the entry to the new car park on the corner of Alfred and Howitt streets;
- upgrading of the existing western car park, including improved facilities in line with disability requirements.

The project will be completed in 2014.

### **Sunshine Hospital: intensive care unit**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr Elsbury

**Raised on:** 19 April 2012

#### **REPLY:**

The Baillieu government is committed to sustaining the current strengths of the Victorian health system and building on those strengths. The *Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012–2022* (the framework) released in May 2011 identifies the importance of developing a health system that is responsive to people's needs.

I am informed that Department of Health officers are working with Western Health to plan for the establishment of a 13-bed critical care unit at Sunshine Hospital.

Funding of \$15.1 million was allocated in the 2012–13 state budget for the development of a 13-bed critical care unit as well as the required support areas at Sunshine Hospital.

Design of the critical care facilities will be developed jointly by the Department of Health and Western Health.

This project will deliver significant benefits in the provision of timely and accessible care for patients from the western suburbs requiring critical care.

### **Wimmera: federal flood assistance**

**Raised with:** Minister for Police and Emergency Services

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 19 April 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the adjournment debate regarding assistance available through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA), for farmers and businesses in the Upper Wimmera catchment area affected by flooding on 18 December 2011.

The state is able to call on the NDRRA following an emergency, and it is the main means for the state and the commonwealth to share disaster costs. The commonwealth provides the state with partial reimbursement for state expenditure on payments to individuals, small businesses and primary producers, as well as costs for infrastructure repair for state and local government.

Under the personal hardship assistance program, emergency relief assistance grants were made available to eligible Victorians affected by the 18 December flood event. The state government has also made available Rural Finance Corporation low-interest loans to farmers and businesses in the Northern Grampians shire who were particularly affected by this flood event.

I acknowledge the strong advocacy you have provided on behalf of your local community in relation to financial assistance grants. I can advise that the Victorian government has provided comprehensive information to the commonwealth seeking assistance for Joel Joel under the NDRRA. While this requires a strict process be followed, the Victorian government remains hopeful of a positive outcome.

This government acknowledges the hardships faced by affected communities during the 18 December 2011 flood event, which has compounded the problems following on from storm and flood damage incurred during the period from September 2010 to March 2011. In addition, many of these communities have also been affected by the January 2012 floods. Information on flood recovery is available by accessing the Department of Human Services website [www.floodrecovery.vic.gov.au](http://www.floodrecovery.vic.gov.au). The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is encouraging farmers in flood-affected areas to contact DPI on 136 186.

The government thanks our volunteers, emergency services organisations and local councils who play a paramount role in protecting Victorian communities from all manner of disasters.

I thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Gas: Bulla supply**

**Raised with: Minister for Energy and Resources**

**Raised by: Mr Finn**

**Raised on: 1 May 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 1 May 2012 in relation to developing a case for an extension of the natural gas network to the town of Bulla.

Under current natural gas industry regulatory and ownership arrangements, decisions to extend the natural gas network are made by gas companies on commercial grounds. It is usually the case that they will only extend the network if the investment is supported by a commercially viable level of demand.

Under these arrangements, residents interested in having the natural gas network extended to unserved areas are able to raise the potential of network extensions where it is believed that a commercial case exists. The best way to do this is through local councils which may be able to coordinate a proposal to local gas retailers, or provide information that could assist in the economic evaluation of extending the natural gas network.

Direct council input may include information on such aspects as existing commercial activity or further subdivision proposals in the area, either of which may improve the viability of extending the natural gas network. Your intention to conduct a survey of residents' gas needs and their willingness to pay for the necessary works is therefore likely to complement any advice from the local council.

To assist you in framing the survey and in engaging with council and gas retailers on the relevant issues, you may wish to contact Regional Development Victoria (RDV), which is within the portfolio of the Minister for Regional and Rural Development, Hon Peter Ryan, MP. RDV is responsible, in consultation with local councils and the gas industry, for implementation of the government's current \$100 million Energy for the Regions program.

RDV may be able to provide useful advice to you and your constituents on your intention to pursue the connection to Bulla. The suggested contact in RDV is Mr Jim Demetrius, program director, Energy for the Regions, tel: 9452 5263.

Thank you for raising this matter with me. I trust this information has been of assistance.

### **Disability services: national insurance scheme**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 3 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I would like to assure Mrs Coote that the Victorian government is working with our commonwealth and state counterparts to make the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) a reality.

In February 2011, Premier Ted Baillieu established the Victorian NDIS implementation task force, chaired by Mr Bryan Woodford, OAM, to provide advice to the Victorian government. Its membership is drawn from leading Victorians who have a passion for disability reform and also have relevant expertise.

The Victorian government allocated \$900 000 in the 2012–13 state budget to prepare for the NDIS. We have also funded National Disability Services Victoria to develop a transition plan for the disability sector.

Victoria is now leading or co-leading the majority of reform projects for the NDIS. The National Assessment Tools Project, which is being co-led by Victoria and Queensland, is developing a suite of assessment tools so that people's need for support can be consistently assessed across the country. We are also leading the National Quality and Safeguards Framework including a project to revise the National Standards for Disability Services to ensure they are suitable for the NDIS.

The commonwealth budget committed \$1 billion over four years for the first stage of the NDIS. Victoria is keen to host the launch of the NDIS. We are well placed to do this, based on 16 years experience with individualised funding and extensive experience in comprehensive no-fault insurance schemes.

However, for the NDIS to become a reality, the Victorian government recognises that the first stage must also provide a clear pathway to the implementation of a viable, full scheme. As a matter of priority, the Victorian government will work with the commonwealth and other states and territories to reach agreement of the funding model.

Consistent with the Productivity Commission's findings, the Victorian government considers that the additional funding needed for an NDIS should be provided by the commonwealth government, given what the Productivity Commission described as its 'unique capacity' to raise the revenue that is required.

### **Ballarat base hospital: helipad**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr Koch

**Raised on:** 3 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I am pleased to confirm that the Baillieu government has recently announced \$46.4 million for major works at Ballarat base hospital, including construction of a helipad, a multi-deck car park, around 60 new beds and a new ambulatory care centre.

This delivers on the Baillieu government's election commitment and takes into account the report of the Ballarat helipad implementation working group which was released on 31 October 2011.



Detailed planning and design work is scheduled to commence shortly and I look forward to the progress of these exciting developments in Ballarat.

### **V/Line: customer service**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 3 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

The move to the 1800 800 007 Public Transport Victoria phone number consolidates six industry phone numbers (Metlink, Viclink, Metro, V/Line, Yarra Trams and myki) into a simplified single point of contact for all public transport inquiries.

The phone number is a free call number to service all inquiries. No other state in Australia provides this service.

Regional customers still have the ability to ring and make a V/Line reservation. The number of options available to callers will be monitored and revised over time relative to customer flow and demand.

Service updates are provided for all state-wide services when major disruptions occur. Given a significant portion of regional travel is to Melbourne, metropolitan service information may still be relevant to regional customers travelling on V/Line.

There are marginal cost savings relative to the consolidation of telecommunications to a single number. However, the driving agenda for the change was to improve customer service with a single free point of contact for all public transport inquiries and call centre services.

### **Quarries: Aboriginal cultural heritage protection**

**Raised with:** Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 3 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

Extractive industries in Victoria are regulated by the Minerals Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 and the Extractive Industries Development Act 1995 and I have written to my colleague, the Hon Michael O'Brien, MP, Minister for Energy and Resources, about the matters raised by your constituent that do not relate to the Aboriginal affairs portfolio.

Extractive industry proposals will often require consideration of likely impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage and may require the preparation of an Aboriginal cultural heritage management plan. This process enables appropriate management of significant Aboriginal cultural heritage that may be affected by the proposed extractive industry.

I am advised that, in the case of Chant's Pit at Warrion, an Aboriginal cultural heritage management plan will be required before a planning permit can be issued for the quarry extension. This is because the proposed quarry extension is a high-impact activity in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity. A notice of intent to conduct a cultural heritage management plan has not been received by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

I am also advised that the visual amenity of Warrion Hill will be a main point of consideration in assessing the planning permit application, which is the responsibility of the Colac Otway shire.

My department is carrying out a review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and the Construction Material Processors Association and Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia have provided detailed submissions about the operation of the act in relation to extractive industries. The matters raised by both organisations are considered in the issues and options paper released by my department.

### **Department of Human Services: performance**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mr Leane

**Raised on:** 22 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

Since Mr Leane raised this discrete matter:

A meeting was arranged in early June 2012 between Mr Leane's constituents and the department's manager disability services in the north and west metropolitan region to discuss the concerns raised.

The department is in regular contact with the client's family to ensure the client is appropriately supported.

Mr Leane has already been advised of the actions in place to support the client and her family.

### **Cancer services: Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 23 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

The Baillieu government recognises that cancer is a major issue for the Victorian community, and investment in the prevention, early detection and treatment of cancer is a high priority.

The recent 2012–13 state budget therefore provided:

- ongoing funding of \$14.9 million per annum (\$59.6 million over the next four years) to continue to support translational cancer research through the Victorian Cancer Agency;
- capital funding for:
  - a major upgrade of the Geelong Hospital (which will include expanded capacity to provide cancer and palliative care);
  - to support the establishment of a radiotherapy service in south-west Victoria;
  - chemotherapy chairs at Seymour Hospital; and
- growth funding for radiotherapy and chemotherapy services.

A broad program of investment in cancer infrastructure is also under way across metropolitan and regional Victoria, and work has commenced on the development of a forward-looking cancer plan to guide Victoria's cancer control and reform agenda over the next few years.

In the Southern Metropolitan Region, the Southern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service (SMICS) is funded to facilitate and support improvements in cancer care delivery across the region. SMICS' partner health services —

Alfred Health, Cabrini Health, Peninsula Health and Southern Health — work together with clinicians and consumers to improve outcomes for people affected by cancer in southern Melbourne and beyond.

SMICS works closely with the Monash Comprehensive Cancer Consortium (MCCC) to bring together its partners' research and clinical strengths, to expand the potential for translation of clinical research findings into the patient care environment. SMICS has also developed close partnerships with Gippsland, and provides wider support to cancer services in the Gippsland region.

### **Libraries: Dandenong**

**Raised with:** Minister for Local Government

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 24 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I thank the member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region for raising this matter. I understand that Greater Dandenong City Council have submitted an application for funding for the new Dandenong library development as part of round 2 of the Living Libraries Infrastructure program 2011–12. Applications for that program are currently being assessed by an independent assessment panel. I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the independent assessment panel soon.

The Victorian government has committed \$17.2 million over four years to the Living Libraries Infrastructure program to modernise existing buildings and build new libraries across the state. In November 2011, I announced 10 projects were successful in securing funding totalling \$3.421 million under round 1 of the 2011–12 program.

### **Braybrook: community renewal program**

**Raised with:** Minister for Local Government

**Raised by:** Mr Elsbury

**Raised on:** 6 June 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I thank the member for Western Metropolitan for raising this matter. I understand that Maribyrnong City Council has submitted an application for funding for the new Braybrook library as part of Round 2 of the Living Libraries Infrastructure program 2011–12. Applications for that program are currently being assessed by an independent panel. I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the independent assessment panel soon.

The Victorian government has committed \$17.2 million over four years to the Living Libraries Infrastructure program to modernise existing buildings and build new libraries across the state. In November 2011, I announced 10 projects were successful in securing funding totalling \$3.421 million under round 1 of the 2011–12 program.

### **Libraries: Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Local Government

**Raised by:** Mr Ondarchie

**Raised on:** 6 June 2012

**REPLY:**

I thank the member for Northern Metropolitan for raising this matter. I understand that Whittlesea City Council, Yarra City Council and Melbourne City Council have each submitted an application for funding as part of round 2 of the Living Libraries Infrastructure program 2011–12. Applications for that program are currently being assessed by an independent panel. I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the independent assessment panel soon.

The Victorian government has committed \$17.2 million over four years to the Living Libraries Infrastructure program to modernise existing buildings and build new libraries across the state. In November 2011, I announced 10 projects were successful in securing funding totalling \$3.421 million under round 1 of the 2011–12 program.

**Mulgrave neighbourhood house: Living Libraries grant**

**Raised with:** Minister for Local Government

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 6 June 2012

**REPLY:**

I thank the member for South Eastern Metropolitan for raising this matter. I understand that Monash City Council has submitted an application for funding to develop a library in the Mulgrave neighbourhood house as part of round 2 of the Living Libraries Infrastructure program 2011–12. Applications for that program are currently being assessed by an independent panel. I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the independent assessment panel soon.

The Victorian government has committed \$17.2 million over four years to the Living Libraries Infrastructure program to modernise existing buildings and build new libraries across the state. In November 2011, I announced 10 projects were successful in securing funding totalling \$3.421 million under round 1 of the 2011–12 program.

**Libraries: Oakleigh**

**Raised with:** Minister for Local Government

**Raised by:** Ms Crozier

**Raised on:** 7 June 2012

**REPLY:**

I thank the member for Southern Metropolitan for raising this matter. I understand that Monash City Council have submitted an application for funding to refurbish the Oakleigh library as part of round 2 of the Living Libraries Infrastructure program 2011–12. Applications for that program are currently being assessed by an independent panel. I look forward to receiving the recommendations of the independent assessment panel soon.

The Victorian government has committed \$17.2 million over four years to the Living Libraries Infrastructure program to modernise existing buildings and build new libraries across the state. In November 2011, I announced 10 projects were successful in securing funding totalling \$3.421 million under round 1 of the 2011–12 program.

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

*Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.*

**Wednesday, 20 June 2012**

**Tourism: Werribee**

**Raised with:** Minister for Tourism and Major Events

**Raised by:** Mr Finn

**Raised on:** 24 November 2011

**REPLY:**

As tourism and major events minister, I was pleased to have visited the Werribee Tourism Precinct on the 8 March 2012 at your invitation.

As you are aware, during my visit I met with local tourism operators and Wyndham City Council. I also visited local tourist attractions such as Werribee Mansion, the State Rose Garden, Shadowfax Winery, the Mansion Hotel and Spa, Werribee Open Range Zoo and the National Equestrian Centre.

Werribee offers a wide range of attractions and provides visitors with a rich experience in close proximity to both Melbourne and Geelong. Werribee Park has also developed a strong platform of events which highlights the significant tourist potential of the area.

**Central Deborah Gold Mine: future**

**Raised with:** Minister for Tourism and Major Events

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 2 May 2012

**REPLY:**

The government recognises that Central Deborah Gold Mine is an iconic Victorian tourism attraction.

I understand that the recent decision by Unity Mining to turn off its groundwater pumps at the Kangaroo Flat mine has raised concerns regarding the impact of rising groundwater on the operations of the Central Deborah tourist mine.

Discussions regarding these matters are ongoing between Unity Mining, the Bendigo Trust (operator of the Central Deborah Mine), the City of Greater Bendigo Council and the state government through the appropriate regulatory authorities.

The Bendigo Trust has been developing a project to secure funding for the provision of pumping equipment in order to resolve the issue of the rising water. Costs between \$500 000 and \$550 000 have been estimated by the trust and council for the project.

I understand that the trust has made an application to the commonwealth government's TQUAL grants program for the project. I am advised that the application is currently being assessed, with an outcome expected July this year.

All parties are working to ensure that the Central Deborah Mine continues to operate as a key tourism attraction.

**Belmont Primary School: expansion**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Ms Tierney

**Raised on:** 22 May 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian coalition government is committed to upgrading government primary and secondary schools across the state.

The government must responsibly balance and prioritise the capital needs of over 1500 government schools across the state.

Since the 2011–12 Victorian budget this government has committed \$56 million towards land acquisition for schools in population growth areas.

The *Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Plan for Education* identifies a number of priority capital works projects to be funded and commenced in the first term of government. Additional schools identified for capital funding are announced in the Victorian budget.

**Gas: regional and rural Victoria**

**Raised with:** Minister for Regional and Rural Development

**Raised by:** Ms Tierney

**Raised on:** 24 May 2012

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government will invest \$100 million over the next four years through the Energy for the Regions program to extend natural gas across regional Victoria and encourage greater investment in the regions.

The program will be funded through the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund and will support the delivery of natural gas to regional communities, including Terang and Avoca. Funding for the program was confirmed in the 2011 state budget.

Regional Development Victoria (RDV) is delivering the program on behalf of the state and has implemented a staged approach. The first stage of implementation, that is the direct negotiation phase, is now complete with agreement reached on two regional gas projects in Mildura and Huntly. Terang and Avoca are not towns to be connected under this first stage of program delivery.

On 12 May 2012, I announced the next stage for delivering the program, which involves a broadened strategy to engage natural gas suppliers in both the conventional pipeline and alternative delivery markets.

The next stage, which will commence in the second half of 2012, includes a plan to offer incumbent gas distributors a fixed subsidy 'bounty' amount to supply priority towns. In addition, bids will be invited from the market for a compressed (CNG) or liquefied (LNG) natural gas delivery system and local town reticulation networks.

As priority towns, Terang and Avoca will have the opportunity to be considered for connection to natural gas under the next phase of the program. On the 12 June 2012, I participated in a briefing for local government on the next stages of the implementation plan for the Energy for the Regions project. Corangamite and Pyrenees shire councils were both represented at this briefing.

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

*Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.*

**Thursday, 21 June 2012**

**City of Kingston: waste management**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 29 March 2012

**REPLY:**

My office arranged a meeting between Mrs Peulich and the Environment Protection Authority on 4 May 2012 at which a Clayton community engagement concept and a list of proposed stakeholders were discussed.

I understand Mrs Peulich was invited to the first community information forum to be held on 13 June 2012. It is important the members of the local community are given the opportunity to express their concerns to help inform EPA about the impacts odours are having on residents.

I expect EPA to effectively engage with affected members of the local community and continue to use their regulatory powers where necessary to help reduce the odour experienced by nearby residents.

**Tourism: Chinese visitors**

**Raised with:** Minister for Tourism and Major Events

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 24 May 2012

**REPLY:**

The Victorian coalition government recognises that Puffing Billy railway is one of Victoria's iconic tourist attractions particularly considering that it carries almost 270 000 passengers each year.

The government's commitment to Puffing Billy has been recognised in the funding announcement of \$4.4 million over the next four years which will assist with priority railway infrastructure upgrades and rail safety enhancements at the railway.

An important part of Puffing Billy's business is the Chinese market which comprises 7 per cent of total visitors.

In recognition of the importance of China to the long term tourism growth of Victoria, Victoria's China tourism strategy has been developed to ensure Victoria is in the best possible position to leverage from the significant growth and opportunities in this market.

As part of the strategy, the Victorian coalition government has committed \$8 million to support a dedicated China tourism marketing campaign to help grow this important market.

The strategy outlines important information about the unique consumer demands of Chinese visitors which will help the Victorian tourism industry tailor tourism product and shape the visitor experience to the needs of our Chinese visitors — an essential component to success in this market.

As Victoria's fastest growing tourism market with more than quarter of a million Chinese tourists expected to visit this year, Victoria's China tourism strategy aims to lift the growth in the China market from 7 per cent to 11 per cent per year.

Victoria's China tourism strategy focuses on five key priorities to strengthen Victoria's relationship with China — developing airline connections, investment, market positioning, improving the Chinese visitor experience and building on Victoria's strong education, migration and business links with China.

The Victorian coalition government will continue to work with the tourism industry to leverage Chinese tourism opportunities in Victoria.

### **Williamstown: Seaworks maritime museum**

**Raised with: Minister for Tourism and Major Events**

**Raised by: Mr Elsbury**

**Raised on: 7 June 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

I thank the member for Western Metropolitan for bringing to my attention the Seaworks Maritime Museum which celebrates the vibrant maritime precinct of Williamstown, as well as the potential of the site to grow as a significant tourist attraction.

The port of Williamstown's maritime heritage also links with the local shipbuilding and maritime industries which have been part of the area's unique character since early settlement in Victoria.

I also note that the museum exhibits some of Melbourne's and the Royal Australian Navy's significant maritime history, including the Seaworks collection which commemorates the work of the Port of Melbourne Authority.

Mr Elsbury officially opened the collection on my behalf in August last year and I was greatly interested to hear about the National Trust vessels and other memorabilia of the collection, which complements the maritime history and experience of the area.

I will be delighted to come out and join Mr Elsbury to see first hand the museum and other tourist projects he has raised, as well as discuss opportunities to build the precinct's tourism profile.

As Parks Victoria currently works with the Seaworks Foundation on the planning for future development for the precinct, I will also refer this matter to my colleague the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, the Hon. Ryan Smith, MLA.