

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**23, 24 and 25 October 2012**

**(Extract from book 17)**

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

**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.

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



# CONTENTS

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## WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

### TUESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2012

<i>Western Region Health Centre: dental service</i>	
<i>funding</i> .....	4843
<i>Wallace Street, Morwell: drainage</i> .....	4843
<i>East-west link: benefits</i> .....	4844
<i>Manufacturing: government support</i> .....	4844
<i>Rural City of Wangaratta: community services</i> .....	4845
<i>Department of Primary Industries: Cobram</i>	
<i>office</i> .....	4846
<i>Skin cancer: awareness</i> .....	4847

### WEDNESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2012

<i>Chisholm Institute of TAFE: funding</i> .....	4849
--	------

### THURSDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2012

<i>Water: charges</i> .....	4851
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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, 23 October 2012**

**Western Region Health Centre: dental service funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 2 May 2012

**REPLY:**

The Western Region Dental Services Taskforce was convened to identify and evaluate options for the location of service provision by Western Region Health Centre's Dental Services.

The Taskforce presented its report to me in March 2012, identifying four potential redevelopment options and recommending further planning be done to explore these options in more detail.

Following the release of the Taskforce report in June 2012, the Government has approved funding of \$200 000 to enable the Department of Health to advance the next stage of planning, in conjunction with WRHC.

Additionally, the Government has committed to provide a further \$100 000 to Western Region Health Centre in one-off funding to explore, develop and implement service development initiatives to increase access to dental services. This latter initiative will include options such as referral to private dentists and improved access to public community dental services.

**Wallace Street, Morwell: drainage**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Mr Viney

**Raised on:** 14 August 2012

**REPLY:**

The Member for Eastern Victoria has raised concerns about drainage matters on Wallace Street, Morwell. VicRoads has always been the responsible Government agency on this matter, as VicRoads has sole responsibility for the maintenance of the Princes Freeway and the road reserve.

To date, VicRoads has received one official complaint from a local Wallace Street resident and has completed works on two occasions in response to these concerns.

VicRoads and the Member for Morwell, Mr Russell Northe, MLA, met as recently as August to discuss any ongoing issues with drainage. The outcome of this meeting is that VicRoads will review the effectiveness of the works completed to date, as well as organise an independent assessment of the site to determine whether further works are required. The Wallace street resident has been informed of this outcome.

**East–west link: benefits**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads

**Raised by:** Mr Elsbury

**Raised on:** 29 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I thank the Member for Western Metropolitan region for his question.

The Victorian Coalition Government is developing a business case for the entire East West Link between the Eastern Freeway and Western Ring Road, and doing early planning work on the eastern section of the project. This includes geotechnical investigations along the alignment between the Eastern Freeway and CityLink. Planning for the western section identified a preferred route that was released to the public in 2010.

I understand the member was keen to see construction on the section between CityLink and Eastern Freeway commence at the western end of this section. Before we can make decisions about taking the project further, we need to make sure we understand the full project cost and its strategic impact on the road network. In addition, we will have to resolve how it should be delivered, including the priority for staging and where construction should begin.

The East West Link is such a large project which would transform travel across our city as well as secure our long term economic future.

The business case is due to be considered by the State Government in early 2013, and the next steps for the project will be determined after that time. One thing we do know is that no state alone can build a project of this size so the Victorian Coalition Government has applied for Federal Government funding via Infrastructure Australia.

The Member for Western Metropolitan region can see the benefits of this landmark project to his constituents in the west, and he is right to advocate for it to start as soon as possible.

**Manufacturing: government support**

**Raised with:** Minister for Manufacturing, Exports and Trade

**Raised by:** Mr Elsbury

**Raised on:** 30 August 2012

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 30 August 2012 regarding government support for manufacturing in the Western suburbs.

Manufacturing is a major contributor to the Victorian economy, attracting investment and creating jobs. It employs 308 200 people or 10.8 per cent of the State's workforce and contributes \$28 billion, or 9.2 per cent of the State's Gross State Product, to the Victorian economy.

In the Western Metropolitan region manufacturing employs 35 000 people or 11.2 per cent of all manufacturing jobs in Victoria, and in 2010–11 it was home to 2450 manufacturing businesses that contributed \$3.2 billion to the Victorian economy.

The Victorian Government is committed to building a productive and competitive manufacturing sector by cutting the cost of doing business, promoting local manufacturing opportunities and creating more local jobs. That is why the Government is implementing its Manufacturing Strategy 'A more competitive manufacturing industry' (the Strategy).

The Strategy delivers a set of focused, cohesive initiatives particularly aimed at small and medium-sized businesses to help improve productivity and provide better market intelligence for manufacturers.

The 2012 State Budget allocated \$58 million for the delivery of these initiatives, which include:

- \$13.7 million to deliver a Specialist Manufacturing Service—helping manufacturers overcome market failures and barriers and raising productivity and competitiveness;
- \$7.5 million for a Manufacturing Productivity Networks program—providing flexible support to networks seeking to expand their activities;
- \$24.8 million to deliver the Investing in Manufacturing Technology program—supporting businesses to invest in new and transformative technologies that will improve business performance;
- \$9 million for the Building Innovative Small Manufacturers initiative—providing more targeted assistance to small manufacturers through specialist workshops, improved access to information and encouraging innovation; and
- \$3 million for Managing Transition for Retrenched Workers—reducing the adverse impacts of retrenchments.

The delivery of these initiatives is underpinned by the Victorian Government’s new localised approach to business engagement, with strengthened Victorian Government Business Offices (VGBOs) in existing locations across the State, including a newly opened VGBO in Melbourne’s west at Tottenham.

This new business engagement model enables the Government to better understand the issues faced by Victorian firms and to develop responsive policy approaches to address their concerns.

Business Development Managers based at these VGBOs provide support tailored to the needs of individual businesses, including information on State and Commonwealth Government programs.

The Tottenham VGBO, located in Ashley Street, regularly engages with a wide range of Western region-based companies such as Stellar Films, Socobell Automotive, Toyota Boshoku and Australian Lamb Company and has facilitated programs for all these companies to assist them in making investments and improving their productivity.

The Victorian Government will continue to provide support for the Western Metropolitan region, the fastest growing region in Victoria, and acknowledges that its access to major ports and road infrastructure, and its diverse and skilled workforce make it a significant centre for investment.

I thank Mr Elsbury for raising this matter with me.

### **Rural City of Wangaratta: community services**

**Raised with: Premier**

**Raised by: Ms Broad**

**Raised on: 11 September 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

The Victorian Coalition Government is committed to ensuring the delivery of services in a manner which is sustainable over the long-term and takes account of the needs of our growing population within the current tight fiscal environment. The reforms that we are undertaking to the way that State Government services are planned, governed, commissioned and delivered will ensure that Victorians benefit from choice and access to high quality, lower cost services.

I am advised that there has been no funding reduction for youth homelessness services to the North East Support and Action for Youth (NESAY). There have been some adjustments in the funding for the adult homelessness program, Intensive Case Management Initiative (ICMI), which was previously funded as a time-limited program.

For the first time, funding to deliver ICMI in the Hume Region from 2012-13 onwards will be provided on an on-going basis and these services will be provided by the Salvation Army Pathways.

Victoria's contribution to the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program continues to grow. For many years, the Victorian Government has made additional contributions to HACC services over and above the requirements of its agreement with the Commonwealth. Victoria's additional contributions have been adjusted to more closely align with its obligations to match Commonwealth funding. Consultation is currently underway with HACC providers about local services. Funds for service growth will flow to all Victorian local government areas, effective from 1 January 2013.

There have been some adjustments to the Community and Women's Integrated Health Promotion (IHP) Program budget in 2012-13. The Government remains committed to sustainable levels of funding for this important program and understands the need to ensure investment in primary prevention is appropriately targeted. The Department of Health is liaising with agencies funded through the program to assist in managing the budget adjustment, finding administrative efficiencies and ensuring minimal disruptions to the delivery of effective, evidence-based, preventive health programs.

Thank you for raising this matter.

**Department of Primary Industries: Cobram office**

**Raised with:** Minister for Agriculture and Food Security

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 12 September 2012

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment debate in the Legislative Council on 12 September 2012 regarding the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) office in Cobram.

The Coalition Government is reinvesting in food and fibre research and development and in biosecurity to help build the productivity and profitability of our agricultural industries. In the 2012-13 State Budget the Government provided an additional \$61.4 million over four years as part of the Growing Food and Fibre initiative.

This investment will help industry achieve the goal of doubling food and fibre production by 2030.

The Department of Primary Industries is refocusing and targeting its delivery of services to meet the modern needs of Victoria's agricultural industries and to help drive improvements in productivity and profitability.

DPI executives have been consulting with staff operating from Cobram on future arrangements.

Savings from office consolidations are being reinvested to support research and development priorities supporting Victoria's agricultural industries.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Skin cancer: awareness****Raised with: Minister for Health****Raised by: Mrs Coote****Raised on: 13 September 2012****REPLY:**

The Victorian Government has sought comment with respect to the recently released Draft Skin Cancer Prevention Framework 2012–2016 to help shape skin cancer prevention in Victoria over the next five years and beyond.

I can confirm that one of the priorities in the draft Framework is to examine Victoria's future options for the regulation of solariums, with the options ranging from the strengthening of the regulatory approach through to a total ban on solariums.

The consultation period on the Framework closed on the 30 September 2012 and the Government will now be examining the submissions that have been put to it before finalising our position on this important issue.



**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 24 October 2012**

**Chisholm Institute of TAFE: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Higher Education and Skills

**Raised by:** Mr Tarlamis

**Raised on:** 6 September 2012

**REPLY:**

The Minister for Higher Education and Skills: I am informed as follows:

The member can be assured that students and other residents in the outer south eastern region continue to have access to a subsidised training place.

The Victorian Training Guarantee continues to be a key feature of our training system. It is an entitlement to a government-subsidised training place in a nationally recognised qualification that continues to be available for training at successively higher levels. For people aged up to 20 years, government-subsidised places are available regardless of the level of training they are seeking. For people aged 20 and over, subsidised places are available for training at foundation skills level, for apprenticeships and for any qualification higher than the qualification already held.

A person eligible for the Victorian Training Guarantee can choose for themselves what industry area they wish to study in and access a subsidised training course at the provider of their choice, whether that be a TAFE, private provider or adult community education provider.

Funding is being provided at the highest levels ever, with \$1.2 billion per year budgeted for training subsidies alone for the next four years. With other funding such as capital investment, the total commitment to the training system has reached \$2.4 billion for 2012–13.





**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Thursday, 25 October 2012**

**Water: charges**

**Raised with:** Minister for Water

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 28 August 2012

**REPLY:**

The reduction in water and sewerage bills for customers of metropolitan water corporations and Western Water is calculated by comparing 2012–13 prices frozen at 2011–12 levels, with prices that would have applied had the Essential Services Commission (ESC) authorised prices for 2012–13 been used. This means that for water and sewerage customers previously authorised price increases of between 9 per cent and 11 per cent were not applied.

The reduction in bills will vary by customer, depending on how much water they use, whether they are an owner-occupier or tenant or receive a concession. It will also depend on whether they are billed for all services, that is whether bills include water usage charges, water service charges, sewage disposal charges and sewerage service charges, or just some services.

For the first billing cycle of the year (three months for metropolitan water corporations and four months for Western Water) the benefit of the price freeze is also dependent on the number of days that the frozen prices cover from 1 July 2012 until the first meter reading of the billing year. For those whose bills include only a few days of 2012–13 water usage, the reduction may be small as the reduction for the water usage and sewerage disposal component of the bill is calculated only for those days. This will be made up in future bills as the reduction is applied to 365 days of usage.

Information is provided on water corporation bills, on brochures accompanying bills and customers are invited to contact water corporations if they require more information.

The question also seeks information on ‘further overcollections of money’ and how these will be addressed. Commissioning of the Wonthaggi Desalination Plant will be completed during the 2012–13 year. Whether there are further adjustments required to bills for this project will depend on the date for completion of commissioning and contract payments to AquaSure. The ESC has been asked to oversee the return of all monies related to this matter and this will include 2012–13 prices.

