

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**5 and 7 June 2012**

**(Extract from book 10)**

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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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**FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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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, 5 June 2012**

**Snobs Creek discovery centre: future**

**Raised with: Premier**

**Raised by: Ms Broad**

**Raised on: 26 October 2011**

**REPLY:**

The decision to close the Freshwater Discovery Centre was made after careful consideration of a number of factors. Unfortunately, the number of people who visited the centre had fallen significantly over the last decade, causing the centre to operate at a loss which could not be maintained.

To ensure that community education and promotion of inland fisheries continues, DPI is developing a modern education facility to replace the centre, featuring a new mobile education unit. This will deliver freshwater fisheries education to schools and communities across regional Victoria. In addition, the Marine Discovery Centre at Queenscliff will be expanded in scope to include freshwater fisheries education.

The Victoria government recognises that Lake Eildon, the Eildon pondage and the upper Goulburn River provide some of Victoria's most popular freshwater recreational fishing experiences. The government remains committed to developing and promoting recreational fisheries in north-east Victoria. Extensive activities are planned, including: expanding trout stocking of the Goulburn River; intensive stocking of the Eildon pondage; building the Murray Cod fishery in Lake Eildon; and the \$1.9 million expansion of the Snobs Creek fish production facility.

These investments underpin the government's ongoing commitment to our fish stocking program of native and salmonid fish species, to benefit recreational fishers across Victoria.

The Minister for Agriculture and Food Security has announced that Snobs Creek hatchery will be open to the public on one day in September each year to coincide with the opening of the trout season.

**White Ribbon Day**

**Raised with: Minister for Women's Affairs**

**Raised by: Mrs Peulich**

**Raised on: 24 November 2011**

**REPLY:**

Taking action to address violence against women and their children is a top priority for the Baillieu government.

Family violence affects a significant number of women and their children. It cuts across all demographic and socioeconomic groups, as well as geographical areas.

This financial year the Victorian government has made an investment of over \$75 million to enable police, courts, housing and services to respond in a more integrated way to victims of family violence and sexual assault.

In the south-east we are currently supporting family violence services that provide refuge, outreach support, Safe at Home, men's case management program and after-hours support.

This includes the newly developed, purpose-built Southern Women's Integrated Support Service. This service is a medium security, family violence crisis supported accommodation facility. It is the first new facility to provide both flexible individual unit accommodation and an on site service centre to deliver support for women and children residing in both the crisis units and in the surrounding community.

We want to stop violence before it occurs, intervene earlier by targeting individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of violent behaviour or of being subjected to violence, and ensure that all women who experience family violence receive effective and supportive responses, no matter what their circumstances or where they live.

To make this happen, we are taking a broad range of actions. On 22 January 2012, the Victorian government released the *Action Plan Consultation Framework to Address Violence Against Women and Their Children*. We have recently completed a significant public consultation, where we sought feedback on all aspects of the consultation framework.

This process will ensure that the government's future directions are strongly guided by the views of the community, experts in the field and by the voices of survivors.

One of the action areas being considered through this process is support of Respectful Relationships education programs in schools and other educational institutions.

The Victorian government is also funding a number of prevention initiatives to stop violence before it occurs. In 2011, this included supporting a number of White Ribbon activities during the 16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women, including the highly successful Not 1 More community event at Federation Square, and an event that involved members of Parliament swearing the White Ribbon oath here at Parliament House.

### **Midwives: postgraduate training**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Ms Hartland**

**Raised on: 8 December 2011**

#### **REPLY:**

Employment in a formal graduate program is not mandatory to practise as a registered midwife (RM) in Australia and employers can employ a graduate midwife in their first year of practice into any position that is vacant.

Employment of nursing and midwifery graduates is a matter for health service employers and competitive, merit-based processes are applied to meet local workforce needs and vacancies.

The government has not reduced the number of nursing or midwifery graduate places it supports, however individual health services vary the number of places they can offer each year depending on their employment vacancies, demand for services and other local issues.

As maternity services make up just 5 per cent of the Victorian health services activity, gaining employment for bachelor of midwifery graduates is particularly competitive.

The total number of positions for midwifery graduate places offered this year through the computer match managed by the Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria is on par with last year's number. Where a high number of graduates all seek employment at a health service that offers a lower number of opportunities, not all applicants will obtain their first preference for an early graduate position. Unsuccessful applicants in this position would need to seek an alternate position.

In relation to demand for services in the western suburbs of Melbourne, demand has increase in recent years and to address this, the government has invested in:

- capital projects at Sunshine Hospital (extra eight maternity beds and two birthing rooms, 2009 and the Pregnancy Assessment Centre).
- capital works under way at Sunshine Hospital, to deliver 128 new beds across the hospital and expansion of the special care nursery.
- Additional obstetric beds and additional special care nursery cots at the Werribee Mercy Hospital.

### **Police: Geelong region**

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

**Raised by:** Ms Tierney

**Raised on:** 7 February 2012

#### **REPLY:**

The 2012–13 state budget furthers the government’s commitment to the Greater Geelong police service area (PSA) with the announcement of funding for the completion of the new police station and SES combined facility at Waurn Ponds. Victoria Police advises me that the purchase of land, for the new police station and the co-location of the South Barwon VICSES Headquarters, is already under way.

The government is conscious of the need for sufficient resources in regional communities such as Geelong and is committed to making all our communities safer so families can feel safe on our streets, on public transport and in their homes.

The provision of \$602 million to deliver 1700 extra front-line police members by November 2014 plays a key part in this commitment and further funding of \$56 million was also announced in the 2012–13 budget to upgrade police station infrastructure to accommodate the additional police and 940 protective services officers (PSOs).

In addition to the 450 extra front-line police deployed during 2010–11 and already out working in their communities, 400 additional police allocated in 2011–12 will also be on the beat by the end of June 2012.

Division 1 of the Victoria Police western region, which includes Greater Geelong and the Surf Coast PSAs, received an additional eight police officers in 2010–11 and a further six officers allocated for 2011–12 will be on the beat by midyear. Victoria Police recently announced an allocation of 20 general duties police for the Greater Geelong PSA by June 2013.

The allocation of police officers across the state is not fixed and police command regularly reviews the distribution to ensure that the changing needs of each PSA are taken into account, including local requirements arising from the opening of new police stations.

The timing and size of any increases in the number of police officers assigned to the Greater Geelong PSA, and across Victoria, are the responsibility of the Chief Commissioner of Police.

As part of this process Victoria Police gives consideration to an assessment of population size in growing urban and regional areas, as well as other factors including current crime levels, emerging trends, operational demands and community perceptions.

I thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Respite care: Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 28 February 2012

**REPLY:**

Families with children who have a severe disability face many challenges in day to day life. The Victorian government acknowledges the important role that carers play in supporting these families and recognises that respite and carer support is vital to sustain the care relationship.

There continues to be a high demand for these supports despite the government's \$101 million investment in respite services in 2011–12.

Our government is working to expand and improve the range of respite services available for people with a disability, their families and carers. Since coming to office, the Victorian government has invested an additional \$142 million in disability services. This funding includes \$21 million over four years for innovative respite and school holiday respite support. We have made a clear commitment to reform the respite and carer support service system to deliver efficient, simple and timely services. We also recognise that to achieve this vision, Victoria will need to work collaboratively with local and commonwealth governments.

Recently we announced the successful providers that will deliver innovative school holiday respite support. Specifically, we will be expanding services across the Southern Metropolitan Region by funding Joint Councils for Access for All Abilities, Kingston City Council and Scope Vic Ltd.

The announcement of successful respite service providers forms part of a larger investment by the government in respite and carer support. In particular, Southern Metropolitan Region will benefit from the development of an additional facility based respite service in their Region, with a further two being developed in the north and west metropolitan and Gippsland regions.

**Bendigo Health: pathology services**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr Drum

**Raised on:** 29 February 2012

**REPLY:**

Bendigo Health recently announced that, after a competitive tender process, a contract has been awarded for the private delivery of public pathology services from May 2012. The new provider will be Healthscope Pathology.

The future of pathology services at Bendigo Health has been under consideration for some years. In looking at options for how best to deliver the service into the future, an independent expert panel was appointed, with a view to achieving the following objectives:

- retention and quality and range of services offered;
- looking after existing staff and their jobs; and
- operating efficiently and not increasing costs to the community.

Bendigo Health advises that all of these objectives have been met. The new service maintains existing service levels, with capacity to support training and education and a larger pool of pathologists to ensure service continuity.

All staff of Bendigo Health Pathology have been offered ongoing employment for 12 months under the new arrangements.

While cost was never the overriding concern in considering future service options, it is expected that the new arrangement will save \$30 million over 10 years. The new services meet or exceed existing standards and the savings will be reinvested in health services for the Bendigo community. Pathology services will continue to be bulk-billed, so there will be no additional out of pocket costs to the community.

Bendigo Health is to be commended for the careful and considered approach it took to assessing future service delivery options for pathology services and for the benefits that will accrue to the Bendigo community as a result of this new agreement.

### **Government: gender diversity policy**

**Raised with: Minister for Women's Affairs**

**Raised by: Ms Broad**

**Raised on: 14 March 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

The coalition government supports women's equal representation and decision making at all levels in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

It is the Victorian government's target, consistent with the position of the previous government, that 50 per cent of new appointees to government boards should be women.

Guidelines covering the 50 per cent target are published in the Victorian government board appointment and remuneration guidelines, available online from the Department of Premier and Cabinet website.

Figures provided by the State Services Authority in June 2011 show that of all board members serving on A and B government boards and committees, 42.2 per cent are women<sup>1</sup>.

These figures are broadly consistent with previous years and with other jurisdictions.

### **Mental health: women's facilities**

**Raised with: Minister for Mental Health**

**Raised by: Mr Elsbury**

**Raised on: 14 March 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

Women can feel vulnerable in mixed gender inpatient mental health services, where there can be more males than females, an inability to lock rooms or protect belongings, and limited privacy.

Ensuring that services are sensitive to women's needs and their safety is important for the government. Women have the right to receive mental health treatment and care, free from fear of victimisation, violence, sexual assault and re-traumatisation.

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is for A & B government boards comprising commercial boards of governance, significant industry and key advisory bodies and significant boards of management.

The Baillieu government has committed to making the safety, comfort and security of women in mental health a priority. To ensure that women have safer facilities, \$4 million has been made available for modification works to improve safety for women in psychiatric facilities.

This year, 11 inpatient mental health services will share in \$1 million to improve the safety and comfort of female consumers. Projects include: creating women-only bedroom corridor wings; installation of nurse call buzzers in bedrooms and bathrooms; developing female-only lounge rooms, quiet rooms, bathrooms and toilet areas.

I am pleased to inform you that under this initiative Melbourne Health will receive a total of \$153 841 for the following improvements:

- Royal Melbourne Hospital will be provided \$88 772 to establish a women-only bedroom corridor and women-only lounge and designated female and male toilets.
- Orygen will be provided with \$65 069 to create a female-only bedroom corridor and a female-only lounge at the youth inpatient unit in Footscray. The work will also include the development of a male-only lounge.

The government is responding to the demand for mental health services in the western suburbs of Melbourne and has this year invested \$1.8 million for a new four-bed Psychiatric Assessment and Planning Unit at Sunshine Hospital. Planning has commenced for this development.

### **Employment: health infrastructure**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mrs Coote**

**Raised on: 15 March 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

I thank the member for Southern Metropolitan for highlighting the significant number of jobs that will be generated by the major redevelopment currently under way at the Box Hill Hospital. The Box Hill Hospital redevelopment project is on time and on budget having finished its planning phases during 2011. The contractor — Baulderstone Pty Ltd — was given access to the site in November 2011 and already has a total of 57 workers on site. Not only is the excavation going extremely well, the contractor has already installed and commissioned a new oxygen supply to the existing hospital.

The construction workforce will reach 1300 jobs — 250 will be new and 1100 providing ongoing work for people already employed in the sector. Additional employment will also be generated in the region from local content requirement. The Industry Capability Network is assisting the project team and the contractor to identify local suppliers and encourage local participation.

As well as the construction jobs generated by this project, as a consequence of the Baillieu government expansion of the scope of the redevelopment, an additional 100 new beds will be developed at the Box Hill Hospital. The additional beds mean an expansion of health services for the region and thus further health clinical and health support jobs will be created permanently for the Southern Metropolitan area.

The government is now looking to the next phase of health infrastructure development with the planning for a new children's hospital at Monash Medical Centre which is also located in the Southern Metropolitan Region. This new children's hospital will not only increase the number of beds available to treat children in the Southern Metropolitan Region, it will also deliver more jobs during the construction and operational phases, benefiting those in the Southern Metropolitan Region.

**Carbon tax: health sector**

**Raised with:** Minister for Health

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 15 March 2012

**REPLY:**

The health care system, due to the nature of the services it provides, generates large volumes of greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions primarily result from the energy used by hospitals but also include capital works, aviation fuel, medical consumables, waste and catering supplies.

Analysis undertaken by the Department of Health indicates that the introduction of a carbon price under the commonwealth's 'Securing a clean energy future' could impact the Victorian public health care system by around \$13 million in 2013 and up to \$19 million in 2020 (in real 2011 dollars).

The analysis also indicates that healthcare providers which purchase energy direct from the retail market, for example the non-government sector and smaller private providers, could see an increase in retail electricity and gas prices by around 15 to 17 per cent as a result of the carbon price.

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.

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 government will continue to call on the commonwealth to actively consult with Victoria on the implementation of the carbon tax and will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of Victorian hospitals to ensure that Victoria is not disadvantaged compared to other states.

**Weather forecasting: Wimmera Southern Mallee region**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Ms Pulford

**Raised on:** 28 March 2012

**REPLY:**

I understand that the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) received the Wimmera Development Association's (WDA) submission in relation to weather forecasting in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region in October 2011 and that the BoM provided a response to the submission on 9 February 2012.

The Victorian coalition government would welcome commonwealth investment in Victoria and we encourage the BoM to consider investing to improve the accuracy of weather forecasting services for Victorian individuals and businesses, including in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.

I am advised that in response to the issues raised by the WDA's submission, the BoM held a community information forum in for the Wimmera community on 22 March 2012, to explain the range of services and information that the BoM can provide and how they can be accessed. While I understand that the BoM has not committed to any additional investment in the Wimmera Southern Mallee region at this stage, I would encourage the WDA, and the Wimmera community more broadly, to continue to engage with the BoM on this matter.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Farming: safety initiatives**

**Raised with:** Assistant Treasurer

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 29 March 2012

**REPLY:**

A representative from my office and the VWA would be pleased to meet with Mr Culvenor to discuss his ideas for future farm safety campaigns.

Farms are among the most dangerous workplaces in Victoria and the issue of farm safety is one that the Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA) takes very seriously.

The risks faced by farmers and farm workers are many and varied. I am advised that tractors and their attachments cause the majority of deaths and severe injuries, however incidents involving farm machinery, quad bikes and unpredictable animal behaviour can also cause severe injuries.

There are many other hazards faced by farmers and farm workers, and the VWA is committed to highlighting these risks and working with farmers to improve safety.

As Mr O'Brien notes, workplace injuries and fatalities have wide-ranging impacts on families, local communities and businesses. As with any workplace, safety on farms must be a priority, to ensure that farmers and their employees return home safe from work everyday.

While Victoria's workplace safety record is the best it has ever been, workers in regional and rural areas continue to be overrepresented in both serious injuries and fatalities.

In 2011, work-related fatalities on farms accounted for 8 of the 25 workplace deaths in Victoria. This is of particular concern given the small percentage of Victoria's workforce employed in farming.

Thankfully, the vast majority of injuries are less serious, with a high proportion typically being musculoskeletal injuries. Regardless of the severity, all workplace injuries have an impact, and I encourage the farm sector to continue to improve safety outcomes.

The VWA's agriculture program runs a number of farm safety programs to advise and assist the industry to maintain safer workplaces. For example, individual farmers running small farms can access a free, 3-hour OHS consultancy service for assistance in improving safety on their farms.

The VWA is also a funding partner of the FarmSafe Alliance, managed by the Victorian Farmers Federation, which plays a key part in informing and educating rural communities about health and safety issues on farms.

The VWA's Prevention Fund also provides funding to industry groups to conduct projects that address significant risk areas in specific industries. Mr Culvenor may wish to work with his relevant industry group to put forward a proposal for such a project.

The VWA frequently engages with key stakeholders in the farm sector, and welcomes input and feedback from farmers and their representatives.



**Toolangi Forest Education Centre: funding**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 29 March 2012

**REPLY:**

In November 2011, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) commissioned an independent architectural assessment of the Toolangi Forest Discovery Centre to ensure that it continued to meet the required standards for the delivery of high quality education services. The assessment of the site and buildings identified a number of issues that require action, including compliance with building requirements for bushfire prone areas and access requirements for disabled persons.

While there is no immediate risk to members of the public using the facility, the decision was made to close the site from 1 July 2012 to allow a more comprehensive assessment of the site to be undertaken and, subject to the outcomes of this assessment, any necessary work to be undertaken without any risk to the public. During the closure of the site, DSE will also take the opportunity to review the delivery of education services into the future to ensure that these services are being delivered in the most efficient and effective way possible.

I note that no long term decisions have been made regarding the future of the site and can assure you the Victorian coalition government recognises the importance of bushfire education and is committed to supporting the Toolangi region.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Port Phillip Bay: shipping safety**

**Raised with:** Minister for Ports

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 29 March 2012

**REPLY:**

At approximately 1.20 a.m., on Saturday 24 March 2012, the fishing trawler *Lady Cheryl* grounded and capsized in the vicinity of Point Nepean.

Two formal inquiries into the events surrounding the incident are under way by the Office of the Chief Investigator (OCI) and Transport Safety Victoria (TSV).

Between 11.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. the day prior to the *Lady Cheryl* incident (Friday, 23 March), the bulk carrier *Vosco Sky* was allegedly involved in an incident in the approaches to Port Phillip while at anchor. In heavy weather her anchor dragged and it took a number of directions from the harbour master before she left port waters to await improved conditions. The Australia Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) is investigating this incident.

While inquiries by each regulator are carried out under different acts for differing reasons, a common aim of these inquiries is to determine causes of the incidents with a view to improving safety systems. This includes those which affect the safety of the environment. When the findings of each of the inquiries are available, they will be examined by TSV and, where appropriate, may result in TSV acting to improve safety systems.

It should be noted that the Marine Safety Act 2010 will take full effect on 1 July 2012. This will introduce new tools to assist in managing commercial vessel safety in Victoria, including imposing safety duties on vessel owners and operators with the specific aim of minimising the risks of vessel safety operations and, consequently, the likelihood of environmental damage.

**GM Holden: government assistance**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Somyurek

**Raised on:** 29 March 2012

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government is committed to supporting a vibrant and internationally competitive manufacturing industry.

The assistance package agreed between the commonwealth and the Victorian and South Australian governments will ensure that Holden continues to design and manufacture motor vehicles in Australia for at least the next decade.

In line with historic practice, the amount of Victorian government investment support to specific companies is treated as commercial in confidence.

Disclosure of recipients and aggregate budget input is made annually in my department's annual report.

**Tourism: Werribee signage**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Finn

**Raised on:** 18 April 2012

**REPLY:**

The government recognises that the Werribee Park tourism precinct is an important Victorian tourist attraction in terms of attracting visitation and economic contribution to the local area.

Tourism Victoria is currently working with VicRoads and other stakeholders, such as businesses in the Werribee Park tourism precinct to implement a signage plan to improve visitor navigation and promotion of the precinct.

I understand from Tourism Victoria that the signs will provide a higher profile of the tourism precinct from the Princes Freeway in both directions. I had the opportunity to see first hand some of this work earlier this year when I visited the precinct on the invitation from Mr Finn.

Currently over half of the work has been done, and it is anticipated that the rest of the signage will be finalised by 30 June 2012.

**Law Reform Committee: access by donor-conceived people to information about donors**

**Raised with:** Attorney-General

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 18 April 2012

**REPLY:**

The parliamentary Law Reform Committee report *Inquiry into Access by Donor-Conceived People to Information About Donors* (the report) was tabled on 28 March 2012.

The report makes important recommendations regarding access by donor-conceived people to information about their donors. Those recommendations relate to a range of departments and ministerial portfolios.

The government is giving careful consideration to the recommendations of the report.

### **Ouyen P-12 College: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Ms Broad

**Raised on:** 1 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Ouyen P-12 College received \$5 million in the 2012-13 Victorian budget to complete stage 2 of the school's redevelopment.

I am pleased to note stage 1 of the college's redevelopment project has been completed, which included the construction of new classrooms and refurbishment of the administration, technology and canteen facilities.

A careful read of the budget document reveals that of the project's \$5 million total estimated investment (TEI), \$750 000 is expected to be expended in the 2012-13 financial year.

I encourage you to consult budget information paper no. 1 of the 2010-11, 2009-10, and 2008-09 Victorian budgets. The TEI and estimated expenditure are expressed in exactly the same manner.

### **Regional Development Victoria: location**

**Raised with:** Premier

**Raised by:** Mr Lenders

**Raised on:** 1 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

There are no plans to move Regional Development Victoria (RDV) from its current place within the Department of Planning and Community Development.

The decision to move most of RDV to the Department of Planning and Community Development will facilitate a more integrated approach to planning and development across Victoria.

This move occurred in conjunction with the move of the Integrated Transport Planning and Development function from the Department of Transport to the Department of Planning and Community Development. These changes will deliver an integrated approach to planning and community development across urban and regional communities.

In relation to regional industry development, the Department of Business and Innovation (DBI) continues to work with RDV to increase economic opportunity and facilitate growth in regional Victoria. I note that DBI and RDV have worked closely on a number of proposals which have been brought forward for funding through the Regional Growth Fund.

The cost which Mr Lenders has identified as being attributable to moving RDV has been significantly overstated. The Department of Planning and Community Development underwent more than one machinery-of-government

change during 2011, and reorganised some of its operations and office space as a result. The Department of Planning and Community Development incurred costs of \$596 272 in association with the transfer of RDV.

Machinery-of-government changes are not costless, but they are intended to realise a net benefit to government by better aligning business units with the operation of departments. This government considers that a more holistic approach should be taken to regional development encompassing community, social and economic development, and is confident that the move of RDV will help bring this change about.

### **My Future My Choice: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 2 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

The Victorian government makes every effort to ensure younger people with a disability who live in, or are at risk of entering, residential aged care, access the support they need.

To this end, the government has allocated \$9.3 million annually to continue funding the My Future My Choice initiative. This is matched by an equivalent amount of funding from the commonwealth government, resulting in a total of \$18.7 million.

This funding supports 104 young people to live in accommodation that best suites their needs and funds 120 individual support packages to help young people to remain living in their own homes or other community housing.

Young people in, or at risk of admission to, residential aged care are currently prioritised for generic disability supports in addition to the dedicated My Future My Choice resources.

Since coming to office, the Victorian government has invested an additional \$140 million to expand disability services including supported accommodation places and individual support packages. This investment will assist more young people with a disability to access the care and support they need.

The government also allocates over \$10.2 million per annum for the Acquired Brain Injury — Slow to Recover program to assist people who have a severe brain injury.

These measures will ensure that we can continue to support more younger people who currently live in, or are at risk of entering, residential aged care.

The government will also continue to work in partnership with the commonwealth government to improve options and responses for this group of Victorians.

### **Port of Melbourne: firefighting services**

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

**Raised by:** Mr Elsbury

**Raised on:** 2 May 2012

#### **REPLY:**

I am advised that the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) is fully capable of managing marine based emergencies, such as the fire that occurred at Docklands in March 2012. MFB crews were on the scene

within 8 minutes of receiving the alert and nearly 50 firefighters mounted an aggressive land-based attack on the fire supported by Victoria Police. The land-based attack was the most appropriate for the situation and MFB was successful in containing the damage to the vessel in question. The land-based attack was supplemented by a water-based attack by MFB's Marine Response Unit using a 4-metre aluminium hulled vessel.

MFB works closely with other emergency services agencies to manage Melbourne's marine fire risk and has established marine dispatch protocols with the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority, which manages first alert and dispatch of emergency services to the incident scene. MFB is working with Transport Safety Victoria on a boat-owner fire education program to build boat-owner fire and emergency resilience.

'Swift' water survival training for 40 marine firefighters was completed in April 2012. Up to 100 firefighters will commence training on shipboard fire fighting by June 2012. MFB has also put in place agreements with the tugboat operator Svitzer to support marine fire fighting on the water. MFB is currently evaluating new swift water safety and wet weather equipment for its marine firefighters and will continue to update all protective equipment on a regular basis.

MFB's current marine capacity consists of two 4-metre aluminium vessels, two inflatable rescue boats, access to tugboats through private operators with fire fighting capacity and access to one Victoria Police vessel with portable firefighting capability.

MFB has approved and funded a \$9.8 million, three-year project to improve its capability to fight marine-based fires and has made great progress in its preparation in this area. Under this project, MFB is in the process of calling for expressions of interest to purchase a 9-metre and a 12-metre vessel to meet MFB specifications. MFB expects to purchase these vessels in the next 12 months and is seeking to purchase or lease a vessel in the interim.

The additional measures that MFB is undertaking will further enhance its marine firefighting capability and ensure the safety of the community.

I thank you for raising this matter with me.

### **Member for Ferntree Gully: election commitments**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Mr Leane**

**Raised on: 2 May 2012**

#### **REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian coalition government is committed to upgrading government primary and secondary schools across the state, including Ferntree Gully North Primary School, Wattle View Primary School, Fairhills Primary School and Mountain Gate Primary School.

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

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.

I am pleased to announce that planning for each of the four school capital projects has commenced, and that final tender documentation is expected to be completed by December 2012.

**Boronia K-12 College: stage 2 development**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 2 May 2012

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

Stage 1 of the building works for Boronia K-12 College is due to finish in July 2012 and the second stage of the project was announced in the recent state budget.

Planning for stage 2 is well advanced and is expected to be completed in readiness for the project to proceed to tender in August 2012.

It is anticipated that the builder will be able to take possession of the site in October 2012, which could allow the progressive handover of some buildings to the school community to occupy for the commencement of the 2014 school year.

**Regional Rail Link Authority: road closures**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr Finn

**Raised on:** 3 May 2012

**REPLY:**

Regional Rail Link works between Footscray and Deer Park are being delivered by an alliance comprising Thiess, Balfour Beatty, Parsons Brinckerhoff, SKM, Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and the Regional Rail Link Authority.

Following feedback from community consultation sessions in late 2011, the alliance has gathered further data about traffic movements in Albion and has recently completed traffic studies in this area. The traffic data collected will help the alliance understand the potential changes to local traffic movements affected by the permanent closure of King Edward Avenue.

I have asked the Regional Rail Link Authority to meet with you to discuss the project in the coming weeks.

**Bay Trail: extension**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 3 May 2012

**REPLY:**

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

In response to concerns raised by the Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. in 2011, VicRoads agreed to reduce the city-bound traffic lane in this section of Beach Road by 0.7 m at sites of significant vegetation. VicRoads has

worked collaboratively with the Bayside City Council and the Beaumaris Conservation Society Inc. to minimise the impact of the new section of the Bay Trail shared path on the foreshore.

The three-lane section of Beach Road was developed as part of a comprehensive safety treatment for the Beach Road/Charman Road intersection. Along with providing opportunities for right turn access to properties on the inland side, it also supplements the series of pedestrian refuges in this section of Beach Road, by acting as a de facto continuous pedestrian island. Further, video footage shows that the centre lane is used as an opportunity to overtake for motorists caught behind a group of cyclists. VicRoads considers the centre-turning lane to be an integral part of the Beach Road/Charman Road safety treatment and has no plans to reduce the road width of Beach Road in this section.

The Beaumaris Conservation Society's proposal to remove the centre-turning lane on Beach Road would require Beach Road residents and service vehicles in this section to access these properties via a circuitous U-turn involving the adjacent local road network rather than the current convenient right turn manoeuvre when approaching from the east. To achieve a uniform reduction in road width, the proposed central median would also have to replace the existing pedestrian refuges, significantly reducing pedestrian safety and access to the foreshore.

VicRoads considers the current two-traffic-lane cross-section between Wells Road and Marina Road to be restrictive to both cars and cyclists and, as such, VicRoads does not support extending such a two-lane cross-section from Wells Road to Cromer Road.

### **Apollo Bay P-12 College: funding**

**Raised with: Minister for Education**

**Raised by: Ms Tierney**

**Raised on: 3 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.

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, including Apollo Bay P-12 College.

I am pleased to note that \$700 000 in planning money was allocated in the 2011-12 Victorian budget and that full planning documentation is expected to be completed in June 2012.





**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Thursday, 7 June 2012**

**Bushfires: preparedness**

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

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 6 December 2011

**REPLY:**

The Victorian government has committed to increase the amount of planned burning on public land to 390 000 hectares or 5 per cent of public land each year.

The government is committed to building the planned burning program to achieve the 390 000-hectare target. The government has provided an additional \$35.1 million funding to enable Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) to treat 250 000 hectares of public land in 2012–13, and build its capacity to achieve the 390 000-hectare target.

The government has also asked DSE to review its current approach to the planned burning program and make recommendations on the best way of achieving the 390 000-hectare target.

DSE's burning target this year is 225 000 hectares.

Approximately 191 239 hectares has been treated as at 14 May 2012. This is about 85 per cent of the 2011–12 program and exceeds the total hectares treated in 2010–11, and is the largest planned burning program conducted in Victoria in the past 20 years.

In 2011–12 to date, approximately 2.5 per cent of public land has been treated. This has not uniformly applied across the state. Higher percentages, 7.2 per cent of public land zoned asset protection zone (close to settlements) and 6.3 per cent of the strategic wildfire moderation zone, have been treated. These areas provide greatest protection and are highest cost. Only 1.7 per cent of the more remote ecological management zone has been treated.

The current three-year fire operations plan prepared by DSE in consultation with the community identifies approximately 950 000 hectares for planned burning operations. In addition to the 191 239 hectares that has been treated to date, a further 175 000 hectares has had detailed operational planning and site preparation completed, and is ready for burning when weather and other conditions are suitable.

**Respite care: Western Victoria Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Community Services

**Raised by:** Mr O'Brien

**Raised on:** 1 March 2012

**REPLY:**

Families with children who have a severe disability face many challenges in day-to-day life. The Victorian government acknowledges the important role that carers play in supporting these families and recognises that respite and carer support is vital to sustain the care relationship.

There continues to be a high demand for these supports despite the government's \$101 million investment in respite services in 2011–12.

Our government is working to expand and improve the range of respite services available for people with a disability, their families and carers. In the 2011–12 Victorian state budget the government allocated \$21 million over four years for innovative respite support and for school holiday respite support. We have made a clear commitment to reform the respite and carer support service system to deliver efficient, simple and timely services.

Recently we announced the successful providers to deliver respite and carer support. Specifically, we will be expanding services across the Western Victoria Region by funding Stawell Intertwine, Pinarc Disability Support, Encompass Community Services, Mpower Inc, Gateways Support Service, Leisure Networks Association Inc and Karingal.

People with disabilities, their families and carers want flexibility and choice in respite. Funding to these services will help to ensure easier access to a broader range of respite options when and where people want them.

**Floods: government response**

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

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 14 March 2012

**REPLY:**

The State Emergency Service (SES), as per the Emergency Management Manual Victoria, took the lead role in relation to response to the flooding events in early March in both north-east Victoria and Gippsland.

The SES and flood-affected communities were supported by a number of agencies including the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Parks Victoria (PV). The support provided by DSE and PV included provision of staff to undertake incident management roles at the incident control centres in Shepparton and Wangaratta, ground support for aircraft used during the response phase, and property protection.

DSE and PV did an enormous amount of work sandbagging and helping to build a levee around Nathalia to protect about 170 properties. They also pumped out the flooded Numurkah Hospital, and ensured flood-affected communities were kept well informed of the flood situation. The feedback from these communities has been very positive.

During the response phase DSE continued to deliver other key programs and had the unusual situation where whilst well over 100 regional staff were responding to the flood, others were undertaking planned burning in the north-east and elsewhere across the state.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) coordinated the recovery through the regional recovery committees. In the Hume region five task forces were established each with a specific focus on:

- natural environment — lead by DSE;
- people and community — lead by DHS;
- agriculture — lead by the Department of Primary Industries;
- built environment — lead by VicRoads; and
- the economy—lead by Department of Planning and Community Development.

Under the natural environment task force, DSE assistance during the recovery phase included:

- Working with Goulburn-Murray Water to establish a hotline to assist flood-affected areas with the management of residual water.
- Working with Moira shire and other agencies to determine the extent of the impact on the natural environment.
- Providing information to the regional recovery committee and other agencies regarding emerging issues and the progression of the recovery of the natural environment.

The warm weather and lack of rain following the floods meant that the recovery of the natural environment progressed quickly and any issues concerning the recovery have been dealt with in a timely and efficient manner.

DSE expects to conclude the business of the natural environment task force by the end of May 2012.

The operational cost of the DSE and PV effort for both response and recovery has been estimated to be approximately \$1.2M.

### **Barwon Water: groundwater licence reporting**

**Raised with: Minister for Water**

**Raised by: Mr Barber**

**Raised on: 1 May 2012**

**REPLY:**

*Identical salinity reports for 2004–05 and 2005–06*

Condition 2.1 of the licence requires a sample to be taken from three bores by 31 December each year (commencing 31 December 2004). The 2004–05 report includes salinity information for both 2004 and 2005 because the annual report was submitted late (April 2006) at which time results of the salinity sample taken in December 2005 were available and included in the report. Only the results of the salinity sample taken in December 2004 were required for the report.

Results of the salinity sample taken in December 2005 were, correctly, included in the 2005–06 report along with the 2004–05 salinity reading for comparison. The issue of late reporting by Barwon Water (BW) has now been rectified. I have been advised by Southern Rural Water (SRW) that all reports since 2008–09 have been submitted on time.

*Multiple cones of depression on the relative residual draw down maps*

It is correct that you would expect to see only a single cone of depression on the relative residual draw down maps in the annual reports from 2004–05 to 2010–11. This would be the large regional cone of depression directly under the borefield which is consistent with the predicted draw down.

The second cone of depression, which appears on the maps, is based on the observations from a single monitoring bore which is inconsistent with monitoring data collected for neighbouring bores. It brings into question the integrity of the bore itself. The integrity of this bore, which is part of the state observation bore network, cannot be verified without an expensive investigation.

*Flow data for Boundary Creek is different from the data available on the VicWater data website for the same flow gauge*

The Boundary Creek flow data at Yeodene stream flow gauge 233228 in appendix F of the 2010–11 report is the same for the months of September and October. This was Barwon Water's mistake which was not picked up by SRW.

There is also a day's lag between the two data sets. This has occurred because BW data assigns the flows from the database using a different method from that used by Thiess, the state's monitoring contractor, to upload data to the VicWater database. BW will align its methods with Thiess' to avoid this confusion in future. There are also minor differences in the daily flow data. These are attributed to equipment checks and data adjustments made by Thiess following monthly inspection of the site. BW on the other hand uses the raw data taken directly from the onsite monitoring system.

SRW works with BW annually to improve the quality of its reports. The salinity reporting problems in the early reports have already been addressed in subsequent reports. SRW has been made aware of the irregularities highlighted by Mr Barber and will ensure these are not repeated in future reports.

I emphasise that the problems you have highlighted do not alter the conclusion that BW is complying with the conditions on the licence including extraction volumes, trigger levels, monitoring, impact assessment and reporting.