

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

11 March to 24 March 2016

(Extract from book 5)

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HANSARD 150



1866–2016

Following a select committee investigation, Victorian Hansard was conceived when the following amended motion was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 June 1865:

That in the opinion of this house, provision should be made to secure a more accurate report of the debates in Parliament, in the form of *Hansard*.

The sessional volume for the first sitting period of the Fifth Parliament, from 12 February to 10 April 1866, contains the following preface dated 11 April:

As a preface to the first volume of “Parliamentary Debates” (new series), it is not inappropriate to state that prior to the Fifth Parliament of Victoria the newspapers of the day virtually supplied the only records of the debates of the Legislature.

With the commencement of the Fifth Parliament, however, an independent report was furnished by a special staff of reporters, and issued in weekly parts.

This volume contains the complete reports of the proceedings of both Houses during the past session.

In 2016 the Hansard Unit of the Department of Parliamentary Services continues the work begun 150 years ago of providing an accurate and complete report of the proceedings of both houses of the Victorian Parliament.

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Employment	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Industry, and Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. L. D'Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. J. F. Garrett, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills	The Hon. S. R. Herbert, MLC
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Drum, Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, Ms Mikakos, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

Procedure Committee — The President, Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Davis, Mr Jennings, Ms Pennicuik, Ms Pulford, Ms Tierney and Ms Wooldridge.

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Morris, Mr Ondarchie and Ms Tierney.

Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning — Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, #Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, Mr Somyurek and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

Port of Melbourne Select Committee — Mr Barber, Mr Drum, Mr Mulino, Mr Ondarchie, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing and Ms Tierney.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O'Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Elasmarr and Mr Melhem. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Council*): Ms Patten and Mr Somyurek. (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon, Mr Northe and Ms Spence.

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson, Mr Tilley and Ms Ward.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Finn. (*Assembly*): Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards, Ms Kealy, Ms McLeish and Ms Sheed.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Hibbins, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Richardson, Ms Thomson and Mr Wells.

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): Ms Bath and Mr Dalla-Riva. (*Assembly*): Ms Blandthorn, Mr J. Bull, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto.

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Ms G. TIERNEY

Acting Presidents: Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmar, Mr Finn, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Ramsay

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Deputy Leader of the Government:
The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:
The Hon. D. K. DRUM

Leader of the Greens:
Mr G. BARBER

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Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	V1LJ
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² Appointed 15 April 2015

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;
DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;
SFP — Shooters and Fishers Party; V1LJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers and received by Hansard in the period shown.

11 March to 24 March 2016**Western Victoria Region**

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 9 February 2016

ANSWER:

- The Victorian Government has committed to making Victoria the Education State. Central to this is ensuring that families have access to high-quality schools, especially in areas with growing populations.
- The Department of Education and Training plans for new schools through the regular monitoring of residential growth, demographic change and enrolment trends across Victoria. This ensures that current and future demand for schools is properly planned.
- The Department met with Moorabool Council in late 2015 to talk about school provision needs across the municipality. The Department is assisting with a community infrastructure analysis for the urban growth strategy that council is developing.
- The Department will continue to work with Moorabool Shire Council and other relevant stakeholders, to monitor and plan for government education provision in the area to ensure all Victorian students have access to high quality education.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 10 February 2016

ANSWER:

The review of the Residential Zones is being undertaken by an independent advisory committee (Managing Residential Development). Consistent with the Terms of Reference the membership of the Advisory Committee have qualifications and skills in statutory and strategic planning, planning law, transport planning and land development practices.

The Committee has considered protocols for best practice consultation and the appropriate role of the Minister, councils, industry bodies and the communities for the consideration by which the new zones allowing for residential development were implemented.

The Committee will review the current application of residential zones in the context of managing Melbourne and Victoria's residential growth in a sustainable manner and improve housing affordability.

The population for regional Victoria is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 1.2% between now and 2031. There is a lot of variety within Regional Victoria, with the municipalities of Greater Geelong, Greater Bendigo and Ballarat growing at similar rates to Melbourne and this will be considered by the Committee.

The Committee will advise on the level of evidence and justification needed when preparing relevant planning scheme amendments, and recommend improvements to the residential zones. It is not the role of the Committee to consider requests to rezone specific sites.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 11 February 2016

ANSWER:

I am pleased to advise that on 25 February 2016, I met with the Mayor of Maroondah City Council, Cr Natalie Thomas, senior staff of Maroondah City Council and yourself.

We discussed various planning matters in Maroondah including the ongoing development of Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre, the newly built Realm and Town Square, the Maroondah housing strategy, the planning permit application at 42 - 58 Nelson Street, and local concerns about recent development within the Ruskin Avenue precinct.

I look forward to hearing further from Council on its work, especially regarding the planning process at the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre and the amendment to follow Council's new housing strategy.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Mulino
Directed to: Minister for Youth Affairs
Asked on: 23 February 2016

ANSWER:

The Youth Policy Framework is an exciting innovation of the Andrews Labor Government focused on strengthening young people's engagement in the design and implementation of government policies that affect them. Most importantly, it will result in policies across Government that connect our regional youth with the benefits of our Education State and our employment programs.

As part of the development of the Youth Policy Framework, we have consulted with approximately 2000 young people right across Victoria.

Young people have been involved through an on-line survey, consultations in the youth and community sector and through a youth reference group.

Preliminary findings from the consultations have been made available on Youth Central, the government's website for young people, www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au. This includes the youth and community sector reports, which provide outcomes of consultations with young people from a range of regional and rural locations.

The views expressed by young people are informing our future approach to youth engagement as well as other government policies and programs that are important to them.

The final findings from the survey will be available by mid-2016.

I thank you for your continued advocacy in the interests of young people in your electorate.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Drum
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 24 February 2016

ANSWER:

I have requested that V/Line focuses its attention on returning services to normal. Recently, I announced that more than 90 per cent of V/Line trains will return within weeks. Most services will be restored on the Geelong and Bendigo corridors, getting around 1000 passengers on these busy lines off coaches and back onto trains.

This decision to defer the timetable was to ensure all efforts are dedicated to resolving the wheel-wear issue to support returning V/Line train services to normal as quickly as possible.

The Andrews Labor Government has committed \$2 million towards the Bendigo Metro Rail project. The project will deliver a commuter train service for Bendigo, with an increased number of services running from Epsom, Eaglehawk and Kangaroo Flat to Bendigo.

Bendigo Metro will be introduced later this year with the V/Line timetable adjustment that was scheduled for the start of the year.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 25 February 2016

ANSWER:

The sale and display of cannabis water pipes is illegal in Victoria under the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981. Prohibiting the sale and visibility of an apparatus that is used to consume an illicit drug sends a clear message to the community and to retailers that cannabis is an illegal drug and its use can be harmful. The ban on the sale of cannabis water pipes is consistent with restrictions on other illicit drug paraphernalia, such as cocaine kits and ice pipes.

There are no plans to amend the legislation as it relates to the sale of cannabis water pipes. However, as you know, the Victorian Parliament's Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee is currently conducting an Inquiry into the effectiveness of laws and procedures relating to illicit and synthetic drugs and prescription medication. The Inquiry is due to report on 3 March 2017 and I look forward to its findings with interest.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Racing
Asked on: 25 February 2016

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is a strong supporter of the Victorian racing industry, an industry that generates more than \$2.8 billion in economic activity and supports more than 26 500 full time jobs in this state.

The racing industry is also part of the social fabric of Victoria. The government recognises the important role racing clubs play in supporting local communities, providing a conduit for community interaction and affording families an opportunity to get together and socialise in a fun and safe environment.

This government is proud to support projects and initiatives aimed at increasing on-course attendance at Victorian thoroughbred, harness and greyhound race meetings through its Raceday Attraction Program, part of the Victorian Racing Industry Fund which returns unclaimed dividends and on-course wagering taxes to the racing industry.

The government recently provided more than \$57 000 through this program for the Chinese New Year event at Moonee Valley Racecourse. The event was a great success, showcasing Chinese culture and helping bring in the Chinese New Year against the backdrop of the racing action on the track.

There are many other examples of race days that provide opportunities for families to get together, socialise and engage in family friendly activities suitable for children of all ages.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 25 February 2016

ANSWER:

The Andrews Government is committed to a well-resourced police force, with a strong commitment to community engagement and policing.

The government works closely with the Chief Commissioner to ensure Victoria Police is appropriately resourced to tackle the law and order issues facing the Victorian community.

In May 2010, the Labor Government committed funding for an additional 1966 police to the frontline which includes an increase of 138 police in the Southern Metro Region Division 4, which includes the Mornington Police Service Areas (PSA).

Since coming to office in November 2014, the Andrews Government has funded almost 700 additional police personnel reflecting the government's commitment to work with the Chief Commissioner to ensure we provide the resources to police that will keep our community safe. Our continued investment in policing has seen a record \$2.5 billion budget for Victoria Police in 2015/16 to continue their important work.

The government is investing \$148.6 million over four years to free up police to undertake frontline duties protecting our community where they are needed. This will occur by recruiting, training and deploying custody officers to initially supervise prisoners at around 22 police stations across Victoria. The first of the new Custody Officers are already managing prisoners in police cells at Dandenong, Heidelberg, Sunshine, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong police stations.

Under Victorian law, I cannot direct the Chief Commissioner about the allocation or deployment of police officers in accordance with section 10 of the Victoria Police Act 2013. This is an operational matter for the Chief Commissioner of Police.

I am advised by Victoria Police that the Hastings Police Station; in the Mornington PSA, remains a 24 hour police station and there are no plans to close it at night.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Ambulance Services
Asked on: 25 February 2016

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government has delivered more for ambulance services in the Nagambie community in 15 months than the Coalition delivered in four years in government.

Ambulance Victoria has been piloting the placement of a two officer Advanced Life Support paramedic unit in Nagambie over the seasonal period. This team has operated four days per week (Friday to Monday). The pilot ran from 27 November 2015 until 6 February 2016, and will recommence in time for the Easter break.

The provision of a seasonal paramedic crew provided valuable support to the hardworking Nagambie Community Emergency Response Team members.

Ambulance Victoria will evaluate the pilot program and consider its effectiveness in the broader context of state-wide priorities.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Pennicuik
Directed to: Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
Asked on: 25 February 2016

ANSWER:

The Melbourne Racing Club engaged a consultant to assess fencing along the Queens Avenue boundary. The consultant's report found that the fence plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and security of those involved in the racing industry, visitors and surrounding residents. For this reason, the fencing will be retained.

Use and development of the remainder of the Caulfield Racecourse will be addressed through the preparation of a Strategic Land Management Plan (SLMP). The SLMP will assist the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust to identify land to be utilised as public open space and as well as land required for racing purposes in the future. The SLMP process is well advanced with public consultation taking place during 2015. The community will be invited to provide feedback on the draft SLMP, which will be uploaded on the Trust website: www.CRRTrustees.com.au.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 8 March 2016

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government is committed to developing a new Country Fire Authority (CFA) training facility in the Ballan area following the closure of the Fiskville Regional Training Centre.

The CFA has identified two potential and viable locations for the new facility, and is working closely with the Moorabool Shire Council, property consultants and the Valuer-General to progress this matter. On receipt of the Valuer-General's valuation reports and consultation with the Council, the CFA expects to make offers to the property owners. The CFA is working towards an end of financial year deadline for acquiring a suitable site.

The primary measure of training is not the number of training hours available, but the skills and knowledge conveyed to CFA members. Training outcomes are assessed by CPA's highly qualified instructors and senior operational members to ensure that the emergency response needs of the CFA, its members, and the community are met. In developing the new training facility and the supporting training schedule, CFA has assured me that no compromises will be made in relation to the quality and availability of training for its volunteers.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Eideh
Directed to: Treasurer
Asked on: 9 March 2016

ANSWER:

Western Melbourne is a key beneficiary of the 2015-16 Victorian Budget which committed up to \$22 billion for infrastructure. The removal of level crossings, major road construction and expanding and building new hospitals are among the key infrastructure projects that will benefit the Western Melbourne region.

The removal of level crossings in Melbourne's west will reduce congestion, help decrease the road toll and allow more trains to run. Construction has started on the removal of the Main Road level crossing in St Albans with the project to be completed by mid-2017. Early works are also underway to remove the level crossing at Furlong Road in St Albans, with major construction to start shortly.

Consultation and detailed planning has commenced to remove crossings on Melton Highway, Sydenham, and on Kororoit Creek Road, Williamstown. Early planning has also commenced to remove crossings at Aviation Road, Cherry Street and Werribee Street in Werribee as well as Ferguson Street, Williamstown.

Further, in the rail space, geotechnical investigations are being undertaken to progress the Melbourne Metro project, which will connect the Sunbury line to the Cranbourne/Pakenham line through an underground tunnel. The Government recently released the business case for the project to the public and to the Commonwealth for funding consideration. Major construction works are expected to commence on the Melbourne Metro Rail project by 2018.

The Government is also upgrading and building new roads in Western Melbourne. The Government has progressed Transurban's Western Distributor proposal to stage 4 of the Market Led Proposal guidelines and has submitted the business case to the Commonwealth Government and Infrastructure Australia for assessment and funding consideration. The project involves widening the West Gate Freeway from 8 to 12 lanes between the M80 and Williamstown Road as well as building a second river crossing for Melbourne.

On 5 October 2015, work commenced on the CityLink portion of CityLink Tulla Widening Project. Major construction is expected to begin on the Melbourne Airport to Bulla Road section by mid-2016. The project involves widening the freeway to reduce congestion by increasing capacity on the corridor by up to 30 per cent.

The State and Federal governments have each committed \$150 million to the upgrade of the M80 Ring Road, with the section between Sunshine Avenue and the Calder Freeway currently at the tender phase. The upgrade is expected to improve the safety of the road through more lanes and less congestion.

The Government has been putting families first and the 2015-16 Budget invested \$560 million in new hospitals and equipment for Victoria. To cater for the rapidly growing population in the Western Metropolitan Region, the Government funded the expansion of acute health services at the Werribee Mercy Hospital in Werribee with an investment of \$85 million and the new Joan Kirner Western Women's and Children's Hospital in St Albans with an investment of \$200 million. The Joan Kirner Hospital project is currently in the tender phase and the Werribee Mercy project is seeking expressions of interest for work packages.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 9 March 2016

ANSWER:

The Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) has advised that it does not have a policy which prohibits 'blackout' of fires.

It is generally accepted across the fire agencies that once a fire is brought under control, the majority of the 'blackout' is carried out by the control agency. This allows the support agency to return to its home location to ensure sufficient fire coverage. In the case of the Epping fires, the control agency was the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

The CFA has advised that it conducted the 'blackout' and the fire was completely extinguished.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.