

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

**15 April to 5 May 2016**

**(Extract from book 7)**

**Internet: [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard)**

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# HANSARD<sup>150</sup>



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.



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The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

## **The ministry**

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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
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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
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Special Minister of State . . . . .	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
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Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water . . . . .	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
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Attorney-General and Minister for Racing . . . . .	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
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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 Leane, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

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

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**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:**

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**Leader of the Opposition:**

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**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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Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina <sup>2</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>1</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
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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
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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			

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 25 February 2015

<sup>2</sup> 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.*

**15 April to 5 May 2016****Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing  
**Asked on:** 23 February 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government believes that all Victorians have the right to safe, secure and affordable housing and does not tolerate anti-social behaviour on or around public housing properties.

There is a comprehensive, robust and long standing process in place for complaints regarding public housing in Victoria. The Andrews Labor Government takes all enquiries and complaints from the public very seriously.

Neighbours or members of the public who witness unsatisfactory behaviour from a public housing tenant or their visitors can report it to the local Department of Health & Human Services office. Where breaches of a tenancy agreement are substantiated, appropriate remedial action is taken through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

As the Member would appreciate, privacy issues can sometimes restrict the information that can be given to complainants about actions taken as a result of a complaint. This may give the incorrect perception that little or no action has occurred.

In cases where complainants are not satisfied with the action taken by the department or dissatisfied with a departmental service, there is a formal complaints review process they can use.

The process involves three steps and is focussed on making every attempt to resolve the complaint. The first step to have the complaint resolved is to discuss the complaint with a staff member at the local office. Where this does not resolve the matter satisfactorily, the complaint is escalated to a senior manager at the local office. Where the complaint is not able to be resolved at the local level, the matter is referred to the dedicated complaints unit who take further steps to resolve the matter.

Residents' concerns are taken very seriously by the Andrews Labor Government. Complainants are provided with feedback and an update on their concerns which takes into account the privacy of all involved. The department can also provide assistance and support throughout the process of making a complaint such as arranging an interpreter to help with language services.

Residents also have the option of taking a complaint to other organisations such as the Victorian Ombudsman or the Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection.

The Andrews Labor Government continuously looks to improve the way it provides services. I am pleased to advise that in the second half of 2015 there was a 59% decline in housing complaints in the West Division.

If your constituents have specific suggestions on how to improve on the longstanding complaints processes of the department and the Andrews Labor Government's success in implementing the policies in your region, I would welcome their direct response to their local departmental office.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Pennicuik  
**Directed to:** Minister for Creative Industries  
**Asked on:** 24 February 2016

**ANSWER:**

Creative Victoria fund many of the artists and organisations who showcase throughout the festival. Examples include stages curated by organisations such as The Push and Multicultural Arts Victoria. Artists such as Briggs, Fraser Gorman and Jess Ribeiro have received project funding from Creative Victoria, thus enabling their appearance in the Festival.

Creative Victoria is actively involved in the Live n Local program, supporting not only the program but organisations that offer guidance and advice such as Music Victoria and Sounds Australia. This year, Creative Victoria staff spoke on a panel about accessing funding and opportunities for artists and industry.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Purcell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Emergency Services  
**Asked on:** 25 February 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government greatly appreciates the work of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association (AVCGA) volunteers including those of Warrnambool Coast Guard, Victoria, who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

I am advised that representatives of Victoria Police and Emergency Management Victoria have met with the Commander of the Warrnambool Coast Guard and representatives of AVCGA, and agreed to retain the current Warrnambool vessel.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Shing  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 25 February 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Government is committed to improving public transport for regional communities and is currently preparing the Regional Network Development Plan to determine the priorities for regional public transport services, infrastructure and investment. The plan will assess how regional public transport services should evolve to meet the needs of passengers in the short, medium and long term. The plan will be finalised in the lead up to the State Budget.

Consultation in Gippsland highlighted the need for better train frequency and reliability, bus network improvements and better connections between regional centres and smaller towns.

I would like to thank the Member for Eastern Victoria for her ongoing advocacy on behalf of her constituents as we work to deliver better services for our regional communities.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Multicultural Affairs  
**Asked on:** 8 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The 2015-16 State Budget saw the highest ever funding allocation for Victoria's multicultural portfolio.

So far in 2015-16, the Victorian Government has awarded over \$1.1 million in grants to community groups and organisations in the Western Metropolitan Region. This included:

- \$140 000 for the 2015 Wyndham Diwali Mela Festival of Lights, which I was honoured to attend;
- \$50 000 for a feasibility study and \$500 000 towards the development of a new Indian cultural precinct or community infrastructure in the City of Wyndham;
- \$245 000 for New Hope Foundation, in partnership with VICSEG New Futures, to assist newly-arrived refugees in the Western Metropolitan region to access services and better engage with their local communities; and
- \$69 000 awarded to Brimbank City Council to deliver community cohesion initiatives.

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting culturally diverse communities by providing effective, accessible targeted grants programs that meet a range of cultural, social, economic and educational needs. To achieve this Government has secured ongoing funding and consolidated and streamlined previous grant programs. Funding certainty and a simpler administration process will ensure funding will go to communities where it is needed most.

Four new multicultural grants programs have recently opened to support social cohesion, inclusion and participation for culturally diverse Victorians. Funding is available for:

- Multicultural Festivals and Events — to ensure Victoria's cultural festivals and events continue to flourish while encouraging smaller or newer community groups to develop their own celebrations;
- Community Infrastructure and Cultural Precincts— to help maintain or build new existing community infrastructure and enhance cultural precincts for our culturally and religiously diverse communities;
- Capacity Building and Participation — to provide support to small ethno-specific organisations, seniors clubs and community language schools, and encourage activities that build an understanding of gender equity and family violence prevention within multicultural communities; and
- Community Harmony — for partnerships and initiatives that address the root causes of racial, ethnic and religious intolerance.

These new grants programs will prioritise newly-arrived communities, women, young people, and LGBTI Victorians, offering multicultural communities the opportunity to design projects and initiatives that directly meet their needs. Many of the diverse communities in the Western Metropolitan Region will be supported through these programs. I encourage your constituents to visit [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants) to find out more information and consider applying for the grants.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Fitzherbert  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 9 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

Additional car parking would reduce the number and size of classrooms, as well as space for students to play and be active. With this in mind, the Department of Education and Training will continue to investigate potential options for teacher and staff car parking.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Drum  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 9 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government has undertaken extensive consultation to inform the development of the Regional Network Development Plan (RNDP).

Over 15 000 pieces of feedback have been received from regional Victorians, with attendance at the Shepparton workshop amongst the highest.

I would like to acknowledge the All Aboard community group and the Local Member for Shepparton for their support and advocacy on behalf of the Shepparton community.

The RNDP will identify short, medium and long term priorities to improve public transport in regional Victoria. This includes improving train services on key corridors including to Shepparton.

**Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Elasmr  
**Directed to:** Minister for Industry  
**Asked on:** 10 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

I refer to the matter raised by Mr Nazih Elasmr MP, Member for Northern Metropolitan, on 10 March 2016 regarding what the Victorian Government has been doing to develop industry in the northern suburbs and I thank Mr Elasmr for his question.

The Victorian Government recognises the challenges faced by communities such as the northern suburbs as a result of the wind down of passenger car manufacturing in Victoria by the three major automotive manufacturers.

Last year the government released the Towards Future Industries: Victoria's Automotive Transition Plan. This \$46.5 million plan will help businesses, worker and communities affected by the closure of major car manufacturing to meet the challenges ahead and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

To support communities, the government established the new Local Industry Fund for Transition (LIFT) to create jobs in communities most impacted by the cessation of passenger car manufacturing and \$10.6 million has been allocated to Melbourne's north. This builds on the Melbourne's North Innovation and Investment Fund, which provided around \$24 million to support projects in the region.

To support automotive workers, new Skills and Job Centres have been established to provide a one-stop-shop to access a range of government support, including individualised career advice and subsidised training.

To encourage businesses to create more jobs, the government established the \$100 million Back To Work Scheme which provides employers with incentives of up to \$7000 to employ ex-automotive workers.

Furthermore, the government will provide \$5 million to deliver the Automotive Supply Chain Transition Program. This program provides current automotive suppliers with tailored support to diversify into new markets.

Victoria has a number of competitive advantages and they provide a strong foundation for a diverse and resilient economy. But we need to harness these strengths if we are to grow our priority sectors — the sectors that will shape the century. That is why we established the \$200 million Future Industries Fund, to fully realise growth potential in the industries of the future and the jobs that come with them.

These priority sectors are:

- Medical technology and pharmaceuticals
- New energy technology
- Food and fibre
- Transport, defence and construction technology
- International education and
- Professional services.

On 17 March this year the Victorian Government launched its Sector Strategies for each of the above sectors following extensive consultation with industry stakeholders throughout 2015.

Supporting the Future Industries Fund are three grant programs to drive investment growth in the priority sectors. These are the:

- \$5 million Manufacturing Program
- \$20 million Sector Growth Program
- \$20 million New Energy Jobs Fund.

As you can see, the Andrews Government has been actively engaging with industry to establish a suite of assistance programs and will continue to do so to ensure that the impact of the wind down of passenger car manufacturing is minimised and to create jobs for Victorians.

Thank you.

### **Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Fitzherbert  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 10 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

It is expected that the South African Soldiers Memorial will need to be temporarily relocated from the triangular park on the corner of Albert and St Kilda Roads to facilitate the construction of an entrance to the new underground station at Domain, to be delivered as part of Melbourne Metro Rail Project.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority recognises the importance of this monument, and is working closely with the Boer War Association, the Shrine of Remembrance and City of Port Phillip, as the local government custodians of the monument, to determine an appropriate location for the memorial.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority has not erected any signage regarding the South African Soldiers Memorial, as a decision is yet to be made.

### Western Metropolitan Region

**Question asked by:** Ms Hartland  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 10 March 2016

#### ANSWER:

The bridge at Bell Street is one of three key improvements being made to the area to improve traffic flow and safety. The bridge will connect Bell Street and Pascoe Vale Road, separating traffic heading for the freeway from traffic travelling to Pascoe Vale Road.

The new bridge will free up the existing bridge for freeway-bound traffic, helping to reduce congestion and keep the freeway moving.

Importantly, the new bridge will make the intersection much safer, removing the need for drivers to make a left-hand merge — over their blind spot— from Bell Street onto the Pascoe Vale Road exit ramp. It will decrease the dangerous weaving that currently takes place, greatly reducing the number of accidents currently occurring at this location.

This solution also provides a new wider pedestrian and bike path. The bridge offers a better connection to the Moonee Ponds Creek shared path and the existing network without the need for a dangerous road crossing. The shared path across the new bridge will improve safety and connections for many students who use the bridge as a route to Strathmore Secondary College.

I understand that the bridge is positioned close to the college boundary. VicRoads will continue to work closely with the school to keep it informed as the project continues, looking at ways to reduce the impact of the project works on the school wherever possible. VicRoads has engaged with the college on a number of occasions, meeting with the school principal and other senior staff several times over the past 18 months to inform them about the project and listen to their ideas and concerns. VicRoads has also spoken with school representatives at recent public information sessions to provide an overview of the project.

VicRoads has addressed a number of concerns for the school as follows:

- The new bridge will tackle the dangerous traffic movements at the Bell Street off-ramp by ensuring the maximum safe merge length is available and removing the existing left-hand merge. This will greatly reduce the number of accidents currently occurring at this location;
- VicRoads' air quality modelling has confirmed that air pollution will not exceed the state's minimum standards for either 2014 or 2035 conditions. The air quality model confirms that the new bridge will have no adverse impact on air quality above or within the school area;
- Access to emergency evacuation points will be maintained throughout construction; and
- The safety of students is a priority at all times. Safety barriers and signage will be displayed around the site to ensure that students are kept safe when entering and exiting the school grounds.

In addition to addressing these specific concerns, VicRoads has also included the school in the overall noise impact assessment. As a result of the noise modelling and assessment, the Bell Street bridge has a noise wall incorporated as part of the design. Traffic noise as a result of the new bridge will be limited to a maximum of 63 dB (A) based on traffic forecasts out to 2035. VicRoads' traffic noise modelling results show that modelled traffic noise level at this area in 2035 is expected to generally remain the same as 2014.



**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Health  
**Asked on:** 10 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to reducing the burden of car parking fees for vulnerable patients who frequently visit hospitals.

Health Services managers and their boards are responsible for managing their care parking fees, however on 16 November 2015, Health Services were directed to review car parking policies following an election commitment to reduce the burden of car parking fees for vulnerable patients who frequently attend health services.

As part of the review, health services were requested to work with their patients and staff, local authorities and public transport providers to make sure that users can access health services as safely, conveniently and economically as possible.

This initiative will help reduce the financial impact of car parking fees on vulnerable patients.

I am advised that Goulburn Valley Health has subsequently reviewed its car parking policy and improved signage of disabled parking and concessional fee arrangements.

Car parking costs under the Goulburn Valley Health review remain lower than council parking rates at \$1.40 per hour within the Central Business District precinct of Shepparton.

I am further advised that Goulburn Valley Health has a cafeteria that is open to the public for lunch during weekdays. Goulburn Valley Health is responsible for making decisions on food service options for patients and visitors. I am advised that the café located in Goulburn Valley Health's main entry area, has prices that are comparable with food outlets across Shepparton and follow the Goulburn Valley Health policy on nutrition.

If a family member is unable to leave the hospital, a meal can be arranged through nursing staff and will be delivered from the kitchen with a patient's meal.

After \$1 billion in cuts by the former Liberal Government and four years of underinvestment in capital, hospitals right across Victoria are under immense pressure.

The previous Liberal Government let down the Goulburn Valley community by wasting four years in office and failing to invest in Goulburn Valley Health.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to enhancing Goulburn Valley Health and its capacity to fulfil its role as regional health services for the Hume region. This Government will do all it can to support the local community to ensure they have access to the high quality services they need and deserve.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Davis  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 10 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The designs for the nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong are the result of a comprehensive six-month tender process undertaken by the Level Crossing Removal Authority last year, and shaped by feedback provided by the local community, traders and key stakeholders. Community consultation began in August 2015, with the most recent round of consultation starting on 8 February through until 18 March 2016. Over 2200 community members participated in the 10 community consultation sessions across Carnegie, Murrumbeena,

Hughesdale, Clayton and Noble Park. The Level Crossing Removal Authority spoke to thousands of people at the 60 'pop up' information stands in local areas as well as two full day community information booths hosted at Carnegie Library and at Clayton Community Centre.

The project team also personally visited over 170 residents who live directly on the rail corridor in one on one meetings. Residents were able to discuss the design in detail as it related to their property, and to view a 3D interactive model. This enabled them to provide informed feedback on the impact of the proposed designs on their property. Residents were able to request to be sent photographs of the model relevant to their own property. As a result of this comprehensive consultation process, over 1400 formal feedback submissions and over 3600 pieces of feedback on the proposed designs has been received.

The outcomes from the community consultation recently completed have been used to enhance the final design.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 10 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

The Government's Project 10 000 guarantees \$1 billion for arterial road funding for the repair and upgrade of roads in outer suburban areas.

The Government has established Infrastructure Victoria, an independent statutory authority, responsible for providing independent and transparent advice on infrastructure projects and priorities. Roads in Melbourne's western suburbs will be prioritised and considered in this context.

Currently, there are a number of projects in the west and these include:

- \$3.75 million contribution for improvement works on Palmers Road and Dunnings Road, with the Wyndham City Council contributing a further \$3.1 million toward these improvements;
- \$1.9 million to widen the Princes Freeway off-ramp onto Forsyth Road in Hoppers Crossing;
- \$72 million in transport and planning infrastructure improvements in the East Werribee Employment Precinct (EWEP); and
- Commitment of \$1.9 million to increase both the number and length of traffic lanes at the Leakes Road/Derrimut Road intersection.

VicRoads will continue to monitor road safety across the entire road network and work closely with the Transport Accident Commission in prioritising road safety improvements under its \$1 Billion Safe System Road Infrastructure Program (SSRIP), which aims to reduce death and serious injuries on Victorian roads by 30 per cent.

VicRoads is currently investigating the recent fatal crash on Hopkins Road, Melton, and any road safety improvements that may arise from the investigations will be prioritised for funding consideration.

### **Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Health  
**Asked on:** 22 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

After \$1 billion in cuts by the former Liberal Government and four years of underinvestment in capital, hospitals right across Victoria are under immense pressure.

The previous Liberal Government let down the Goulburn Valley community by wasting four years in office and failing to invest in Goulburn Valley Health.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to enhancing Goulburn Valley Health and its capacity to fulfil its role as regional health services for the Hume region.

The work resulting from the Government's \$1 million commitment to progress planning and development work for Goulburn Valley Health is well underway with recommendations from the recently released Service Plan incorporated into the subsequent masterplan.

A key focus of this planning has been the improvement of timely access to emergency care and enhanced patient experience through strengthening service capacity.

The Andrews Labor Government is providing additional funding to Goulburn Valley Health to support it to improve emergency access. As a result of last year's budget, Goulburn Valley Health has received \$161 million, an increase of over \$10 million compared to the previous year and funding through the \$200 million Hospital Beds Rescue Fund which has enabled the opening of 8 extra beds to expand acute inpatient capacity.

In addition, the Department of Health and Human Services is supporting the health services to implement strategies to improve patient flow including a new short stay observation unit and scheduling a nurse practitioner in the emergency department during peak periods.

I am pleased to advise the Member for Northern Victoria that the Goulburn Valley Health Community Advisory Group has held a number of meetings, including an open community forum. I look forward to continuing to report on the activities being undertaken by this group.

### **Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Emergency Services  
**Asked on:** 22 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

The Fire Services Review of the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFB) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) was undertaken by this government to ensure our outstanding firefighters have the support they need to protect our communities from challenging emergencies into the future.

The review report made 20 recommendations which identified significant challenges and areas of improvement including workplace culture and morale, diversity, allocation of resources and how the fire services work together.

The government has accepted all of the recommendations with the exception of recommendations 13 and 14, which relate to merging the role of the Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Executive Officer into a single position, and the establishment of a single governing board for the CFA and MFB.

The review also found that the Victorian community remains well served by its dedicated firefighters both paid and volunteers across the CFA and MFB.

The timeframes for implementing the recommendations are available in the government's response at:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/emergencies/fire+services+review>.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Leane  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 22 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

Metro trains and the Level Crossing Removal Authority, actively employs radio as a key media channel to communicate their disruption messages during level crossing removal works. Commercial radio is selected as the preferred method rather than community radio, as it delivers the highest reach in audience. Community radio however; is recognised as a valuable channel especially for direct contact with the community. It is and can continue to be used for proactive editorial purposes, such as interviews and local talkback opportunities.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 22 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government, in partnership with Transurban, is committed to improving traffic conditions and safety on the Bolte Bridge and West Gate Freeway. These improvements will be delivered via the CityLink-Tulla Widening project, which will provide additional traffic lanes and a new freeway management system to help manage traffic well into the future.

Construction of the project commenced on 16 March 2016 and is expected to cause delays for motorists during the works period. The works are only expected to impact on traffic heading towards Melbourne and several alternative routes have been identified to reduce delays. These include Geelong Road, Footscray Road, Williamstown Road, Todd Road and Dynon Road. VicRoads will continually monitor these, and other key routes to optimise their operation during construction of the project.

VicRoads and Transurban are communicating all major works well in advance. Details of traffic impacts are posted online and on the @citylinkmelb and @vicroads Twitter accounts. In addition, on-road signage will advise motorists of recommended alternative routes and real-time traffic information, where available, will also assist motorists with their travel choices.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Dunn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 22 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The bicycle lane was installed as part of the road improvement work required for the redevelopment of the Eastland Shopping Centre.

In early February 2016, VicRoads reviewed and subsequently directed the developer to remove this short stretch of bike lane.

The bike lane signs have been removed and as an interim measure the on-road bicycle symbols have been scarified. Further work in the area will include permanent removal of the symbols.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Mulino  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 22 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

I am pleased to confirm that works have commenced on the final section of duplication on Cardinia Road from Shearwater Drive to the Pakenham Bypass. This road is an important north-south route for the local community and these works will support growing traffic needs and improve safety and access in the Cardinia growth area.

The final stage of the Cardinia Road upgrade includes duplicating Cardinia Road to two lanes in each direction from Shearwater Drive to the Pakenham Bypass, including duplication across the Pakenham railway line, completing the new shared use path along the west side of Cardinia Road, new pedestrian crossings across the Pakenham railway line, and a roundabout upgrade at the Pakenham Bypass.

VicRoads advises me that the road works have been awarded to Ace Infrastructure Pty Ltd, with the rail crossing works awarded to Active Railway Systems Pty Ltd. Both contractors have begun construction and works are expected to be completed by late 2016.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Crozier  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 23 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

VicRoads concluded the collection of traffic data from Beaconsfield Parade on 28 March 2016. The data was collected in two separate six-week periods, the first of which was conducted during October and November 2015.

VicRoads is currently analysing the data collected and expects this analysis to be completed by the end of May 2016. Data collected from the traffic survey and other relevant data will be presented to stakeholders such as councils, local residents and the transport industry.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Industry  
**Asked on:** 23 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

I refer to the matter raised by Mr Cesar Melhem MP, Member for Western Metropolitan, on 23 March 2016 regarding what the Victorian Government has been doing to develop industry in the western suburbs and I thank Mr Melhem for his question.

The Victorian Government recognises the challenges faced by communities such as the northern suburbs as a result of the wind down of passenger car manufacturing in Victoria by the three major automotive manufacturers.

Last year the government released the Towards Future Industries: Victoria's Automotive Transition Plan. This \$46.5 million plan will help businesses, worker and communities affected by the closure of major car manufacturing to meet the challenges ahead and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

To support communities, the government established the new Local Industry Fund for Transition (LIFT) to create jobs in communities most impacted by the cessation of passenger car manufacturing and \$5 million has been allocated to Melbourne's west.

To support automotive workers, new Skills and Job Centres have been established to provide a one-stop-shop to access a range of government support, including individualised career advice and subsidised training.

To encourage businesses to create more jobs, the government established the \$100 million Back To Work Scheme which provides employers with incentives of up to \$7000 to employ ex-automotive workers.

Furthermore, the government will provide \$5 million to deliver the Automotive Supply Chain Transition Program. This program provides current automotive suppliers with tailored support to diversify into new markets.

Victoria has a number of competitive advantages and they provide a strong foundation for a diverse and resilient economy. But we need to harness these strengths if we are to grow our priority sectors — the sectors that will shape the century. That is why we established the \$200 million Future Industries Fund, to fully realise growth potential in the industries of the future and the jobs that come with them.

These priority sectors are:

- Medical technology and pharmaceuticals
- New energy technology
- Food and fibre
- Transport, defence and construction technology
- International education and
- Professional services.

On 17 March this year the Victorian Government launched its Sector Strategies for each of the above sectors following extensive consultation with industry stakeholders throughout 2015.

Supporting the Future Industries Fund are three grant programs to drive investment growth in the priority sectors. These are the:

- \$5 million Manufacturing Program
- \$20 million Sector Growth Program
- \$20 million New Energy Jobs Fund.

As you can see, the Andrews Government has been actively engaging with industry to establish a suite of assistance programs and will continue to do so to ensure that the impact of the wind down of passenger car manufacturing is minimised and to create jobs for Victorians.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Training and Skills  
**Asked on:** 23 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

Thank you for your question as we work to reactivate the prominent site.

As you are aware, the Glenormiston Expression of Interest (E01) was open for 100 days and closed on March 16, 2016.

I asked that the WI process be designed to attract a broad variety of potential organisations or consortiums, both international and domestic, to acquire the site, via purchase or lease. I made clear that while the successful

proponent could represent any industry, the successful submission must include a model of education as part of the core business on the site. This decision was made in response to the long and proud tradition of providing education and training to locals at Glenormiston and the community's desire to see this continued.

I am pleased to share that the E01 has attracted considerable interest and a broad variety of proponents have made a submission via the VicTenders website. I am hopeful that amongst the submissions we can secure Glenormiston a bright future.

I note your request for specific detail including names and exact numbers of submissions. As you will understand, it is not appropriate to share this kind of detail during an ongoing process.

I have appointed an Evaluation Panel, led by an Independent Chair, to rigorously evaluate the submissions as part of a two-stage evaluation process which will assess the submissions against four key criteria—the proposed delivery of education, the proposed connection between education service and use of balance of site, a commitment to sustainable education use for at least 10 years and value for money.

I also am pleased to share that the local community will be represented on the Evaluation Panel to ensure community priorities are factored into the final decision. I have asked that the Department invite a prominent local community member to join the Evaluation Panel. This appointment is currently being finalised.

A Probity Advisor has overseen every aspect of this evaluation process, including the development of evaluation criteria and the makeup of the Evaluation Panel.

At this stage I expect to be able to announce the successful proponent in early June 2016. If there are any significant delays or changes to plan, I will be in contact with you.

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Shing  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 23 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

In order to ensure the integrity of reinstated services, V/Line will maintain a sufficient contingency of VLocity trains (above that is required for scheduled services).

To ensure passengers receive adequate information on V/Line services including planned and unplanned service disruptions, V/Line employs a number of different customer communication channels including email, SMS, Twitter, staff announcements, V/Line's mobile app, the V/Line website, automated delay announcements and the PTV Call Centre. Customer Communications Officers also answer questions on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter seven days a week.

The Regional Network Development Plan (RNDP) is in its advanced stages of planning and includes improved coach and train services for regional Victoria. The objective of these Network Development Plans is to create an integrated public transport network for the entire state, ensuring connections between rail and coach services are retained or enhanced where possible and frequencies and span of operating hours are improved based on the needs of local communities.

The residents throughout Gippsland have provided clear feedback about the importance of additional transport for the region, including increased bus services and better modal integration to enable seamless access to train stations by public transport. The feedback has been taken into account when developing the RNDP.

I would like to thank the Member for Eastern Victoria for her ongoing advocacy on behalf of her community and for her support of the RNDP process.

### Western Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Regional Development  
**Asked on:** 23 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Ballarat Station Precinct Master Plan (the Master Plan) was launched in May 2014 following two rounds of community consultation, and provides a comprehensive and long-term vision for the Ballarat Station Precinct (the Precinct). The Master Plan identifies short, medium and long term opportunities aimed at strengthening Ballarat's CBD and reputation as a key regional destination for business and tourism activities. The Master Plan identifies opportunities to activate the Precinct into a multi-use vibrant economic and community hub that revitalises and capitalises on the Precinct's heritage assets, enhances connections and creates public spaces.

The Master Plan builds on the Ballarat Activity Centre Strategy (2012), the Ballarat CBD Strategy 'Making Ballarat Central' (2010), and the Ballarat Railway Station Master Plan (2002) and identifies a 100+ room, minimum 4 star rated hotel co-located with exhibition and/or commercial spaces leveraging the remediated/refurbished and adaptive re-use of the Goods Shed, as the most viable urban renewal and development option for the Precinct.

The Andrews Labor Government took to the 2014 election a commitment of \$25 million towards the delivery of the following outcomes at the Ballarat Station Precinct:

- development of an integrated Hotel and Exhibition/Convention Centre;
- remediation and adaptive re-use of the Goods Shed;
- public realm and open space; and
- transport improvements including commuter car parking, access roads and pedestrian linkages.

I would echo my Parliamentary colleague, Ms Sharon Knight MP, Member for Wendouree, in calling for those interested in this project to read the Station Masterplan.

The people of Ballarat deserve to have a government that stands up, shows leadership and develops this underutilised community space. I'd like to remind Mr Morris about his previous comments on this issue from an article published in The Courier, dated 3 July 2014,

Ballarat Mayor Josh Morris said it was important to make the precinct as "alive as they possibly can. This whole plan is really important in ensuring the railway precinct is being as well utilised as it could be," he said. Cr Morris said his favourite part of the plan was the 3000 square metre goods shed redevelopment, added that having a four-and-half-star hotel was crucial to the development of the area. We will continue to have conversations both with the government and the opposition about how critically important we see this masterplan being," he said

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering on our election commitment to develop the Ballarat Station Precinct and Mr Morris should remember the comments he made when Mayor of Ballarat in support of this project.

### South Eastern Metropolitan Region

**Question asked by:** Mr Somyurek  
**Directed to:** Minister for Industry  
**Asked on:** 23 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

I refer to the matter raised by Mr Adem Somyurek MP, Member for South Eastern Metropolitan, on 23 March 2016 and I thank Mr Somyurek for his question.



The Victorian Government recognises the challenges faced by communities such as the south-eastern suburbs as a result of the wind down of passenger car manufacturing in Victoria by the three major automotive manufacturers.

Last year the government released the Towards Future Industries: Victoria's Automotive Transition Plan. This \$46.5 million plan will help businesses, worker and communities affected by the closure of major car manufacturing to meet the challenges ahead and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

To support communities, the government established the new Local Industry Fund for Transition (LIFT) to create jobs in communities most impacted by the cessation of passenger car manufacturing and \$10 million has been allocated to Melbourne's south-east.

To support automotive workers, new Skills and Job Centres have been established to provide a one-stop-shop to access a range of government support, including individualised career advice and subsidised training.

To encourage businesses to create more jobs, the government established the \$100 million Back To Work Scheme which provides employers with incentives of up to \$7000 to employ ex-automotive workers.

Furthermore, the government will provide \$5 million to deliver the Automotive Supply Chain Transition Program. This program provides current automotive suppliers with tailored support to diversify into new markets.

Victoria has a number of competitive advantages and they provide a strong foundation for a diverse and resilient economy. But we need to harness these strengths if we are to grow our priority sectors — the sectors that will shape the century. That is why we established the \$200 million Future Industries Fund, to fully realise growth potential in the industries of the future and the jobs that come with them.

These priority sectors are:

- Medical technology and pharmaceuticals
- New energy technology
- Food and fibre
- Transport, defence and construction technology
- International education and
- Professional services.

On 17 March this year the Victorian Government launched its Sector Strategies for each of the above sectors following extensive consultation with industry stakeholders throughout 2015.

Supporting the Future Industries Fund are three grant programs to drive investment growth in the priority sectors. These are the:

- \$5 million Manufacturing Program
- \$20 million Sector Growth Program
- \$20 million New Energy Jobs Fund.

As you can see, the Andrews Government has been actively engaging with industry to establish a suite of assistance programs and will continue to do so to ensure that the impact of the wind down of passenger car manufacturing is minimised and to create jobs for Victorians.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Purcell  
**Directed to:** Treasurer  
**Asked on:** 23 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The current power subsidy arrangement struck with Alcoa Portland is due to expire in October 2016. The Victorian Government is working constructively with Alcoa on the issues raised by the expiration of this contract. The Government is aware of the significant economic importance of the Portland smelter to the South West region.

The Victorian Government has put in place a number of programs and strategies to boost employment and promote investment which the South West is well placed to benefit from. For example, the \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund and the \$508 million Premier's Jobs and Investment Fund lay the foundation for growth across our entire economy.

The 2015-16 Victorian Budget also included \$200 million for the Future Industries Fund to grow Victoria's competitive advantage industries and invest in emerging sectors. Two of the six high-growth sectors include "New energy technology" and "Food and fibre".

The Victorian Government is committed to maximising the opportunities from being adaptive and resilient to climate change, and transitioning to a low emissions economy. New energy technologies are a small but growing part of Victoria's economy, and they offer potential for substantial employment growth across the state because of our competitive advantages in the sector. The Western Region with its high potential for wind energy resources is particularly well positioned to significantly benefit from this transformation and to capitalise on new and developing technologies including renewable energy.

Victoria is Australia's biggest food and fibre exporter, with exports reaching an all-time high of \$12 billion in 2014-15. The Victorian Government's food and fibre strategy will help capture future opportunities, and address the challenges faced by our primary producers and food and fibre manufacturers. It will help businesses build skills and support them to identify and capture more market opportunities. The Victorian Government will also continue to work with industry and the Commonwealth Government to address barriers to trade.

In March 2016, the Victorian Government launched the Sector Growth Program which provides grants of up to \$1 million to undertake Victorian based projects aligned with the Future Industries Sector Strategies. This will create new jobs and drive growth, productivity and competitiveness of Victorian businesses.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you about these issues and would be grateful for any ideas you may have on this matter.

**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 24 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

Designs for removing eight level crossings between Frankston and Cheltenham are still in the planning stage. Written feedback from the nine recent community information sessions is still being collated. Together with a range of engineering and other studies that are currently underway, this will help inform designs for the removal of these crossings.

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) is conducting a genuine and considered community consultation process throughout 2016. LXRA and I are not aware of any union-led attendance or intimidation at these community sessions.

The Member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region was present at community sessions at Cheltenham and Carrum and has no doubt seen the information from the LXRA about the Authority's timelines and processes.

The community sessions were freely open to everyone, whatever their political persuasion or stance on the best way to remove these crossings.

The Member for Sandringham attended sessions in Cheltenham and Mentone; the Member for Mordialloc attended several sessions, as did the Members for Carrum and Frankston. Several councillors from the cities of Kingston and Frankston also attended, as did the Liberal Candidate for the federal seat of Dunkley.

The Member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region would also be aware that anti-elevated rail community groups were present at each of the nine meetings, handing out flyers and presenting a petition for signature.

### **Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Elasmar  
**Directed to:** Minister for Multicultural Affairs  
**Asked on:** 24 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

Almost one third of Victorians who are aged 65 and over have a culturally diverse heritage. The Victorian Government recognises the significant contribution of our older generations in shaping our State, and is committed to ensuring that the unique needs of multicultural seniors are met.

More than 280 community organisations and not-for-profit clubs in the Northern Metropolitan Region received four-year funding totalling \$2.3 million under the 2016-19 Multicultural Senior Citizens Organisational Support Program. The grants will support operational costs and a variety of activities for many culturally diverse seniors across the Northern Metropolitan Region. Multi-year funding will provide greater certainty and reduce administrative burden for community groups.

Senior citizens organisations seeking future funding for organisational support can apply for a grant under the Capacity Building and Participation Program 2016-17, which is currently open for applications. More information is available at [www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/grants).

### **Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Shing  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 24 March 2016

#### **ANSWER:**

The Education State is about taking our education system from good to great by fixing our schools, early learning facilities and skills centres, and building the right infrastructure to support our kids to thrive. As you know, the Andrews Labor Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure, and this has been demonstrated through the allocation of \$730 million to school facilities in the 2015-16 State Budget.

We are aware that many, schools across Victoria, including those in Gippsland, may have capital or maintenance needs that exceed their annual budget. Our ongoing challenge is responsibly balancing and prioritising the needs of over 1500 government schools, all in varying condition. The infrastructure needs of schools in Gippsland will continue to be given serious and fair consideration throughout the State Budget process and when determining future priorities for the Government's capital works program.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Regional Development  
**Asked on:** 24 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Andrews Labor Government took to the 2014 election a commitment of \$25 million towards the delivery of the following outcomes at the Ballarat Station Precinct:

- development of an integrated Hotel and Exhibition/Convention Centre;
- remediation and adaptive re-use of the Goods Shed;
- public realm and open space; and
- transport improvements including commuter car parking, access roads and pedestrian linkages.

The project has made significant progress in 2015 with the following milestones achieved:

- Establishment of project governance arrangements and establishment of the project delivery team;
- Completion of extensive site due diligence investigations, market sounding and project feasibility analysis;
- Completion of the first stage of the commercial procurement process— Expressions of Interest;
- Completion of the first community information session; and
- Establishment of the Ballarat Station Precinct Advisory Committee, by the Minister for Planning, to consider options for the Planning Scheme Amendment of the Ballarat Planning Scheme, in response to the request from the City of Ballarat.

The Government will undertake the following next steps:

- Completion of the second stage of the commercial procurement process, Request for Proposals (RFP) — June 2016 expected
- Negotiations and execution of a Development Agreement with the preferred consortia — October 2016 expected
- Detailed design, second community consultation and planning approval process — October 2016 — March 2017 expected
- Commencement of construction — mid-2017 expected

The development model used by the successful private consortia, the timeliness of the planning approval and the contractual arrangements between the developer and the builder will determine the date of the project's Practical Completion and the official opening of the facility.

As Mr Morris will be well aware from his time as a Mayor of the City of Ballarat, this is a complex site, with a working train station, dilapidated buildings, and involving multiple tiers of government and government agencies. Given the complexity of the project and its importance to the local community, I would have expected a little more enthusiasm and support from Mr Morris to see someone actually progressing work at this underutilised site.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Leane  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 24 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

Playgroups are an important part of the Andrews Labor Government's vision to make Victoria the Education State. They improve children's learning and development setting them up for kindergarten and school, assist parents in their important role as a child's first teacher and help families form strong community networks.

In Victoria, there are two types of playgroups — community playgroups (run by parent volunteers) and supported playgroups (supported by a facilitator).

The Andrews Labor Government provides approximately \$4 million per annum to service providers to deliver Supported Playgroups across 35 local government areas in Victoria. Supported Playgroups provide a more intensive level of support for families experiencing disadvantage and for whose children are at increased risk of poor developmental outcomes. The Government increased funding to all supported playgroups from June 2015.

I also recently announced \$200 000 to help our supported playgroups be more inclusive for families from diverse cultures. This funding will engage bicultural workers to support families and help bridge linguistic and cultural divides.

In relation to community playgroups, I recently announced funding of \$50 000 for Great Start Community Playgroup Grants to be administered through Playgroup Victoria in 2016. Great Start Community Playgroup Grants are designed to help new community playgroups get started in areas where there are none or few community playgroups operating, particularly in rural and regional areas. This includes setting up brand new community playgroups as well as increasing the number of playgroup sessions offered by existing playgroups. Grants of up to \$1000 are available to help parents get the resources they need such as books, toys and play equipment as well as mentoring support to establish a new community playgroup.

Any group seeking to access these grants can contact Playgroup Victoria who are administering this grant program.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 24 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

Schools are responsible for the selection of teaching and learning resources, other than those prescribed as part of the VCE, which are selected by the VCAA. The text *The Black Dog Gang* is not included on the VCE lists, and has been selected by the school.

The Department's guidelines are designed to inform decision-making processes for teachers, principals and school councils for selection of teaching and learning resources. The guidelines also include processes for resolving issues concerning objections. I understand that in this instance the school principal has been working with the parent and teachers, with the assistance of staff in the Department's regional office, to resolve any concerns.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Melhem  
**Directed to:** Minister for Veterans  
**Asked on:** 24 March 2016

**ANSWER:**

I am pleased to advise that the Anzac Centenary House Plaque Trial Program has now commenced and will run across four trail locations including Williamstown, Hawthorn, Geelong and Ballarat. Approximately 100 select households in each of the trial areas will have a chance to participate. The Victorian Government has used the AIF Project database to identify 400 houses that were once the home to a WWI Veteran. Following the conclusion of the trail, the Government and Victorian Anzac Centenary Committee will assess the interest and take up rate before deciding whether to roll it out more broadly.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Purcell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Emergency Services  
**Asked on:** 13 April 2016

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government is committed to strengthening Victoria's emergency services response by investing in major upgrades to Country Fire Authority (CFA) assets. The 2015-16 Victorian Budget for emergency services provided \$78 million and includes the recruitment of more firefighters, skills development, upgrading of resources and increasing support to our firefighters.

Emergency Management Victoria is developing an Investment and Asset Strategy in order to establish a sector-wide framework for improved asset utilisation, interoperability and value for money. A key focus of the strategy is the identification of co-location opportunities for emergency service organisations and a process by which such opportunities can be assessed. This will be informed by a number of key inputs currently in progress, including definition of the effective emergency management capability across Victoria required to meet fixture needs.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Premier  
**Asked on:** 14 April 2016

**ANSWER:**

It is worth reminding the Member that the former government's own East/West Business Case documents, that they refused to release publically, showed that congestion would have actually increased on the Tullamarine and Eastern Freeways.

I am pleased to advise the Member that the Western Distributor will be Melbourne's long overdue second river crossing that will cut 20 minutes travel time from the West.

We are also widening the Tullamarine Freeway and upgrading the M80 between EJ Whitten Bridge and the Calder Freeway. These are two important projects for Melbourne's west that will ease congestion and create jobs.