

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS**

**12 June to 22 June 2018**

**(Extract from book 9)**

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## **The Governor**

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

## **The ministry**

(from 16 October 2017)

Premier . . . . .	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services . . . . .	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer and Minister for Resources . . . . .	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
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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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Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence . . . . .	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State . . . . .	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and Minister for Local Government . . . . .	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs . . . . .	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water . . . . .	The Hon. L. M. Neville, 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 Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs . . . . .	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections . . . . .	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning . . . . .	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary . . . . .	Ms M. Thomas, MP

### Legislative Council committees

**Privileges Committee** — Mr Dalidakis, Mr Mulino, Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle, Ms Symes 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** — Mr Bourman, #Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

**Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning** — Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, #Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, #Dr Ratnam, #Ms Symes, Ms Truong and Mr Young.

**Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues** — #Ms Crozier, #Mr Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Dr Ratnam, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing, Mr Somyurek, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

# participating members

### Legislative Council select committees

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

**Fire Services Bill Select Committee** — Ms Lovell, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Rich Phillips, Ms Shing and Mr Young.

### Joint committees

**Accountability and Oversight Committee** — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Noonan and Ms Thomson.

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

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

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

**Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee** — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan.

**Family and Community Development Committee** — (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and Mr Finn. (*Assembly*): Ms Britnell, Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards and Ms McLeish.

**House Committee** — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, 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*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and Mr Gepp. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee** — (*Council*): Ms Patten, 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* — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

*Council* — Acting Clerk of the Parliaments and 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:**

Mr K. EIDEH

**Acting Presidents:**

Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmr, Mr Melhem, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Purcell, Mr Ramsay

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The Hon. G. JENNINGS

**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:**

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

**Leader of the Greens:**

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John <sup>1</sup>	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	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>8</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel <sup>3</sup>	Western Metropolitan	AC	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	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew <sup>9</sup>	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona <sup>10</sup>	Northern Metropolitan	RV
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin <sup>4</sup>	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini <sup>11</sup>	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark <sup>5</sup>	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred <sup>7</sup>	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph <sup>6</sup>	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Truong, Ms Huong <sup>12</sup>	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 28 September 2017

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 15 April 2015

<sup>3</sup> DLP until 26 June 2017

<sup>4</sup> Resigned 27 May 2016

<sup>5</sup> Appointed 7 June 2017

<sup>6</sup> Resigned 6 April 2017

<sup>7</sup> Resigned 9 February 2018

<sup>8</sup> Resigned 25 February 2015

<sup>9</sup> Appointed 12 October 2016

<sup>10</sup> ASP until 16 January 2018

<sup>11</sup> Appointed 18 October 2017

<sup>12</sup> Appointed 21 February 2018

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

AC — Australian Conservatives; ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;  
DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;  
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals; RV — Reason Victoria  
SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; VILJ — 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.*

**12 June to 22 June 2018****Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Attorney-General  
**Asked on:** 6 March 2018

**ANSWER:**

Police have a range of options available to deal with traffic crashes, including when a motorist strikes a cyclist. Which approach is taken will depend on the particular circumstances of the incident.

Based on the informed view of investigating police, the response can range from the issuance of an infringement notice through to an appearance at court, either via the serving of a summons, or in some serious cases via arrest and charge, resulting in bail or police seeking to remand the accused.

For more serious offences which are proven at court, there are a range of available sanctions including large fines, licence sanctions, and in some cases imprisonment. For example, culpable driving causing death carry a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment and/or a fine of 2400 penalty units. Further, the maximum penalty for dangerous driving causing death is ten years imprisonment and five years for dangerous driving causing serious injury, and the penalty for dangerous driving is a maximum of two years imprisonment and/or a fine, with a mandatory minimum period of disqualification for driving of six months (and 12 months for speeds in excess of 45km/hr over the speed limit).

Victorian courts are given broad powers to consider what penalties are appropriate taking into account the culpability of the offender and the circumstances of the offending. The Government does not consider that further reforms are required at this time.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Gepp  
**Directed to:** Minister for Health  
**Asked on:** 8 March 2018

**ANSWER:**

The Liberal Federal Government's proposed health agreement for public hospital funding from 2020-21 is expected to short-change Victorian's by \$2.1 billion over five years, by restricting funding growth at 6.5 per cent and continuing to provide 45 cents in every dollar invested to meet growth in demand for hospital services.

The original National Health Reform Agreement signed by the Gillard Labor Government, provided that Victoria would receive uncapped funding under a shared arrangement with the Commonwealth, where both jurisdictions were equally accountable for covering funding growth. This 50 per cent Commonwealth contribution to growth should be reinstated.

The Victorian Government is investing \$168.5 million in the Goulburn Valley Health Shepparton campus to deliver 64 inpatient beds, 10 intensive care unit beds, 7 operating theatres, 36 emergency department treatment spaces, 9 short stay unit beds, 12 maternity beds and 10 special care nursery cots in addition to major infrastructure renewal and upgrade.

This is in addition to investment from the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund, including:

- \$10.0 million for the Goulburn Valley Health Rushworth campus redevelopment;
- \$3.7 million for the Nexus Primary Health Broadford centre;
- \$1.6 million for the Seymour Health urgent care centre redevelopment; and
- \$0.8 million for the Kyabram and District Health Services urgent care centre and acute services hub remodelling.

Victoria cannot continue to absorb additional costs where the Commonwealth continues to under fund key areas of service delivery. Conditions under the National Health Reform Agreement must be restored after they were abandoned by the Commonwealth in the 2014-15 Federal Budget.

The Victorian Labor Government is committed to getting the best deal for Victorians, and has not signed the Federal Liberal Government's funding Heads of Agreement. We will continue to negotiate for the best funding outcome for all Victorians.

### Western Victoria Region

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Health  
**Asked on:** 8 March 2018

#### ANSWER:

As you would be aware, the Ballarat Base Hospital is the Grampians region's specialist referral and trauma centre. It is a purpose-built teaching hospital caring for a population of over 250 000 people. As a designated regional hospital, it delivers medical services such as elective surgery, emergency care, aged care, obstetrics, mental health, rehabilitation as well as a wide range of clinical supports. It is the provider of a regional integrated cancer centre for the Grampians region.

In recognition of the important role played by Ballarat Base in servicing the local community and indeed the surrounding region, the Andrews Labor Government has in the 2018-19 budget funded a \$461.6 million redevelopment of the hospital. This will include fit out of a critical care and surgical "hot floor", a new emergency department, a new women's and children's hub and at least 100 new inpatient beds.

Unlike the previous Government, who consistently under invested in Ballarat Base Hospital, the Andrews Labor Government is delivering for Ballarat.

### Western Metropolitan Region

**Question asked by:** Dr Carling-Jenkins  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 8 May 2018

#### ANSWER:

I acknowledge residents' concerns about noise from trains in the vicinity of Ardeer Community Park.

I am advised by Transport for Victoria (TfV) that the Victorian Passenger Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy (2013) sets out circumstances in which the Victorian Government will investigate mitigating noise from new and upgraded railway lines; however, the policy does not provide for protecting public open spaces, such as Ardeer Community Park from noise, or for existing rail lines, such as the line at Ardeer.

TfV also advised that when the Regional Rail Link was designed, noise mapping was conducted throughout the entire corridor to determine where noise walls were required. Noise walls were installed at affected locations in line with the policy.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Dunn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change  
**Asked on:** 8 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

Since November 2017, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria has been investigating ongoing pollution reports about Dandenong Creek, most relating to foamy water in and around the creek. EPA has conducted 33 inspections in Bayswater, Ferntree Gully and the surrounding area where drainage leads from these sites to Dandenong Creek. From these inspections, EPA has issued remedial notices to three premises that required installing controls to prevent contamination of stormwater.

EPA continues to actively engage with First Friends of Dandenong Creek to share information and address pollution concerns. Most recently, this has involved EPA working directly with First Friends of Dandenong Creek to investigate a pollution event that occurred on 19 May 2018.

EPA and First Friends of Dandenong Creek are also exploring options for First Friends of Dandenong Creek to participate in EPA's citizen science program. The citizen science program provides an opportunity for volunteers to be involved in scientific projects in their local community and aims to create a two-way working relationship between EPA and groups such as First Friends of Dandenong Creek to better understand the cause and source of pollution in their local area.

EPA continues to work collaboratively with Melbourne Water, South East Water and Knox City Council to address ongoing pollution concerns at Dandenong Creek and the wider catchment. Most recently, this includes conducting joint operations and inspecting sites in response to a pollution event on 19 May 2018 to identify and address possible sources of pollution.

On 7 June 2018, EPA will also meet with Melbourne Water and the Centre for Aquatic Pollution Identification and Management (CAPIM), a research organisation funded by University of Melbourne, to discuss pollution at Dandenong Creek. First Friends of Dandenong Creek have also confirmed a representative will attend this meeting to explore options to collaborate on action to address pollution at the creek.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested over \$180m to reform EPA to protect the environment and human health from waste and pollution. This represents the government's commitment to a once-in-a-generation transformation of the EPA to equip it for the future. The government has also introduced legislative changes to modernise EPA's governance and overhaul the Environment Protection Act 1970. The first Bill was passed by Parliament and received Royal Assent on 24 October 2017. The second Bill will complete the reform of the Environment Protection Act 1970. These changes will strengthen EPA's independence and scientific expertise, and deliver certainty, and consistent and efficient regulation for industry. In particular, there will be a landmark shift of approach to preventing harm to the health of Victorians and our environment.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing  
**Asked on:** 8 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government acknowledges the commitment and contributions made by ConnectGV in supporting people with a disability and their families in the Goulburn Valley area.

The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) has provided capital funds of more than \$1.5 million to ConnectGV to upgrade existing, or build new, facilities to support service delivery to the Goulburn Valley community, over recent years.

In fact, the property at 11 Bowenhall Street being used by actually has 80 per cent perpetual interest by the DHHS. Nevertheless this arrangement can be relied upon by Connect GV as they consider how to redevelop their site at Bowenhall street.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme will continue to promote the development of contemporary service models where people with disability will have greater choice and control and be able to access services and support in the community.

The department will continue to support ConnectGV to manage their Bowenhall Street day program to promote community access and inclusion of program participants in the local community.

### **Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Ramsay  
**Directed to:** Minister for Training and Skills  
**Asked on:** 9 May 2018

#### **ANSWER:**

The record of the Coalition, both in Government and Opposition, makes it clear that only the Andrews Labor Government is truly committed to returning training to the Glenormiston site.

The former Member for Polwarth was sitting around the Cabinet table when the former Coalition Government slashed funding to TAFE, sacked teachers and the Glenormiston site was closed. He was there agreeing with his colleagues while they slashed and burned the training system. Shame on him.

The current Member for Polwarth remained silent while you have sought to undermine the important efforts by the Government to support the Glenormiston community. Shame on him.

In an article published in The Weekly Times on 23 April 2015 entitled 'Empty for a year, Glenormiston may have to be sold' you are quoted as saying that a sale of Glenormiston "must be on the table" and "could be the best result if the right buyer comes along" without any comments from you about returning training to the site. Shame on you.

You have also stated in your question that 'the government indicated through the Minister that there would be enrolments of at least 150 students' which is simply not true. It was in fact the Business Development Manager of Acknowledge Education, Fred Brennan, who stated this in an article on ABC News Online on 12 July 2016.

It is time for you to admit the truth.

If the former Coalition Government was re-elected in 2014, the Glenormiston site would have been sold without any plans for training on the site, denying local students the opportunity to get the skills they need to find a job. If the Coalition is elected in 2018 it can only be assumed that the exact same plans are sitting in a drawer waiting to be activated.

This Government is delivering on our promise to return high quality education to Glenormiston. South West TAFE began delivering a Certificate III in Agriculture at the campus in October 2017 and a Certificate III in Racing (Track Rider) in March 2018. There is a variety of other training underway and more will be advertised throughout the year.

TAFE Institutes are not required to report commercially sensitive training activity by campus.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Lovell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Education  
**Asked on:** 9 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

Investment in education and school infrastructure is a priority for the Andrews Labor Government. This has been demonstrated through our last four State Budgets that delivered the largest ever investment in Victorian school infrastructure, allocating more than \$3.8 billion to build, upgrade and maintain schools across the state. This funding means that 70 new school projects are now completed or underway.

Across the State Electorate of Shepparton Labor has now invested more than \$37.7 million into local school infrastructure. This compares to an unacceptable \$1.7 million for some minor maintenance across the electorate under the former Liberal and National government.

I find it encouraging that you are now taking an 'interest' in local schools given you neglected them and ignored their needs when you had the chance.

As you may be aware, in the 2017-18 State Budget, Orrvale Primary School was allocated \$1.768 million for an upgrade and modernisation project to build a new learning hub, which incorporates music and arts facilities, and to renovate its administration building and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) specialist centre.

I can assure you that the needs of all schools are considered when determining future priorities for infrastructure expenditure.

I trust this information is of assistance.

**Western Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Small Business  
**Asked on:** 9 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

Small businesses are the foundation of the Victorian economy and make an invaluable contribution to their local communities. As construction powers ahead on the Andrews Labor Government's West Gate Tunnel, we are ensuring that businesses are supported and that there are minimal disruptions where possible.

To provide a safe work environment for nearby businesses and workers, a total of 29 parking spaces need to be removed on Youell Street. All parking will be reinstated when construction is complete in 2022. The project team met with local businesses prior to the removal of parking and provided an audit of nearby parking spaces. This identified more than 450 parking spaces located within a ten-minute walk of Youell Street. More than 200 of these spaces are unrestricted with the remainder having various time restrictions.

Nearby residents and businesses receive notifications in advance of any nearby construction works, including through letters, doorknocks and telephone calls. All activities are planned so that access is maintained to local homes and businesses at all times.

All support mechanisms of Small Business Victoria are available to assist businesses in the area. In addition, a business involvement plan is under development and local businesses will supply goods and services where possible.

Further, I remind the Member that it is the long-standing practice of governments, from both sides of the house, to not provide direct financial assistance to businesses temporarily affected by infrastructure projects.

**Eastern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Bath  
**Directed to:** Treasurer  
**Asked on:** 10 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

The government is committed to reaching common ground on issues facing the timber industry, jobs and economic activity, and on issues related to the protection of our unique flora and fauna.

To assist this process, in late 2016 the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change commissioned the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) to deliver two reports: Conservation Values of State Forests Assessment Report, and Fibre and Wood Supply Assessment Report. These reports are available on the VEAC website at <http://www.veac.vic.gov.au>.

On 27 March 2018 the Victorian Government secured the Commonwealth Government's agreement to a two-year process to modernise Victoria's Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs). This process will give us the time we need to address VEAC's reports, conduct scientific assessments of forest values and to engage with Victorians on the best and highest value use of forests for the future. This will ensure that the next generation of RFAs are a robust framework that provide for the long-term sustainable management of Victoria's forests, balancing environmental, economic and social forest values based on current science.

The Victorian Government continues to support coal projects consistent with our Statement on Future Uses of Brown Coal, as evidenced by our partnership in the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain (HESC) pilot project. The 2018–19 Budget included support for the HESC project: a world-first, international project to produce hydrogen which will create 400 jobs in the Latrobe Valley and potentially thousands more in the future.

The HESC Pilot Project will see liquefied hydrogen produced from Latrobe Valley brown coal transported to Japan for use in fuel cell electric vehicles and power generation. The project is worth half a billion dollars across Victoria and Japan, and is being developed by a consortium of Japanese energy and infrastructure companies led by Kawasaki Heavy Industries — with the full support of the Victorian, Commonwealth and Japanese Governments.

The pilot project will be required to offset all the minimal greenhouse gasses produced and successful carbon capture and storage is a necessary condition for progression from pilot to full commercial scale.

The pilot project, hosted by AGL at their Loy Yang facility, will provide an economic boost to the Latrobe Valley and surrounds, and will test various elements of the supply chain before potentially progressing to a much larger-scale commercial operation.

This Government supports industrial and economic development in the Gippsland Region, as most recently demonstrated by our planning controls review which is opening up of land previously subject to restrictive coal protection overlays where there is little or no usable coal resources. This review will help ensure land is fit for purpose and supports the growth of existing industries and development of new industries in Gippsland's economy.

**Northern Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Gepp  
**Directed to:** Treasurer  
**Asked on:** 10 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

Since 2014, the Government has announced almost \$13.6 billion in funding for regional Victoria to build stronger economies and communities through its focus on employment and infrastructure.

The Government as you've noted reduced payroll tax by a further 33%, such that it is now half of the metropolitan rate otherwise applicable. Regional Victoria now has the lowest payroll tax rate

in the country. We're also reducing the tax burden in regional Victoria by raising the payroll tax-free threshold to \$650 000 from July 1 2018. This is helping small businesses expand, new businesses start and, most crucially, creating more local jobs for regional Victorians.

Since December 2014, the Government has announced \$775 million of funding towards modernising classrooms and school facilities while promoting inclusion for students in Regional Victoria. Within the Mildura region this has included up to \$17.7 million to upgrade Cardross Primary, Mildura West Primary, Red Cliffs Primary and Secondary Schools, Henderson College, and Irymple Secondary College.

Further to this, the Government has announced a range of initiatives that have supported and benefitted Mildura and the Northern Victoria Region, which include:

- Improving and upgrading transport to and from the region such as the \$19 million upgrade to improve safety, travel times, and freight productivity on the Calder Highway between Bendigo and Mildura, and a \$5 million contribution to the Mildura Airport Runway Upgrade and Extension;
- \$4.3 million for the Mildura Base hospital for new purpose-built 10-bed facility that supports people with a mental illness. Mildura Base Hospital will also receive more than \$4.2 million through the second round of funding from the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund to build a dedicated paediatric ward;
- Through the \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund, the Government is supporting Meatco's \$2 million refurbishment and recommissioning of the Mildura Abattoir facility which, will create 80 new jobs and generate \$32 million worth of meat exports;
- The Government acknowledges the importance of supporting Victoria's innovators, especially those that work in Agricultural technology. \$1 million has been provided to the SproutX accelerator program, which subsequently opened headquarters in Mildura; and
- Through the Community Safety Statement, Mildura has freed up more frontline police through the employment of police custody officers, 12 new Police family violence specialists, and a range of other safety projects that will improve the safety and wellbeing of Mildura residents. This includes improved lighting and security in Mildura's CBD and riverfront.

The Andrews Labor Government established nine Regional Partnerships that bring together public, private and community sectors to work on the priorities that matter most to local people. In that context, the 2018-19 Budget announced almost \$760 million for local priorities identified by our Regional Partnerships including:

- \$0.8 million to establish the Cross Border Commissioner;
- \$1.7 million to establish the Mallee Regional Innovation Centre to be based in Mildura;
- \$0.3 million for the Silo Art Trail;
- \$0.6 million to expand the Food Next Door farm program for newly arrived migrants; and
- \$0.5 million to continue developing the Murray River Adventure Trail.

**South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Springle  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 10 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

The Queen Elizabeth Centre (QEC) is one of three specialist, state-wide Early Parenting Centres seeing approximately 3000 families across Victoria. Depending on need and complexity of issues, families will participate in a day-stay group program, in-home support, or residential stays.

The Victorian Health and Human Service Building Authority (VHHSBA) is developing a service plan for the three centres. The VHHSBA will undertake robust service planning. It will examine demand for services, including developing options to address current and future service demands.

The centres are allocated over \$10.7 million per year to provide specialist services to families with significant parenting, parent-child attachment, or sleep and settling issues. These families typically have child protection involvement.

Maternal and Child Health Services, and the Maternal and Child Health Line are universal services available to all families. They provide information on feeding and sleeping, and assess and support healthy childhood development. Maternal Child Health nurses can also screen a parent for issues such as depression.

Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services are available for parents who need additional support with sleep, settling premature babies or multiple births for example. In 2017-18 the Victorian Government invested an additional \$81.1 million to provide extra support to parents using Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Services.

**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Dunn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 22 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

Transdev's franchise agreement includes key performance measures with set targets for reliability and punctuality. Should these targets not be achieved, there are commercial and financial implications for the operator on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.

Public Transport Victoria continues to work with Transdev on its operational performance.

**Western Victoria Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Purcell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 23 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

In recent years, VicRoads has worked closely with Parks Victoria and Regional Development Victoria who are putting forward a business case for improvements to the Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve. These improvements include consideration of a number of options to upgrade access to the reserve.

The Tower Hill Wildlife Reserve is managed by Parks Victoria. Any proposal to relocate the entrance from the Princes Highway to Lake View Road is a matter for Parks Victoria.



**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Wooldridge  
**Directed to:** Minister for Roads and Road Safety  
**Asked on:** 23 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

Traffic modelling by the North East Link Authority shows that of the traffic heading south on the North East Link, there is estimated to be 14 000 vehicles heading west at the Eastern Freeway and 43 000 vehicles heading east.

The westbound traffic is not new traffic, but redistributed traffic from arterial roads onto the North East Link and the Eastern Freeway as the freeway network provides a better connection with the North East Link in place.

The North East Link does not generate any new trips into the Melbourne Central Business District.

**Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Ms Patten  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 24 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

Over the last decade, there has been a concerted effort by the State Government to upgrade the tram network and improve accessibility to the increasing number of low floor trams.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to completing the order of 80 new E-Class trams and to providing a public transport network that is inclusive.

Public Transport Victoria (PTV) continues to explore opportunities to develop accessible tram stops at every opportunity. The Public Transport Access Committee is also working actively with PTV and Transport for Victoria on this initiative.

**Southern Metropolitan Region**

**Question asked by:** Mr Davis  
**Directed to:** Minister for Public Transport  
**Asked on:** 25 May 2018

**ANSWER:**

The new Hughesdale Station was always planned to open at a later date than the new Carnegie and Murrumbeena stations.

The construction methodology for the section of elevated structure between Caulfield and Hughesdale meant that the new elevated rail decks were installed at Hughesdale significantly later than at Carnegie and Murrumbeena. This is because Hughesdale is situated towards the end of the new structure.

Construction of Hughesdale Station could only commence once the new rail structure was installed over Poath Road, which happened at the end of March 2018. Despite works starting later, Hughesdale Station is quickly taking shape with the new platform in place and the canopy being installed.