

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

24 August to 7 September 2018

(Extract from book 13)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

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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

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Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

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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 ¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁸	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	Western Metropolitan	Ind	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, Mr Luke Bartholomew ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	FPRP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ⁴	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
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred ⁶	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁷	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 ¹²	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ DLP until 26 June 2017;
AC until 3 August 2018

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁷ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

¹⁰ ASP until 16 January 2018;
RV until 14 August 2018

¹¹ Appointed 18 October 2017

¹² Appointed 21 February 2018

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AC — Australian Conservatives; ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party; DLP — Democratic Labour Party;
FPRP — Fiona Patten's Reason Party; Greens — Australian Greens; Ind — Independent; 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.

27 August to 7 September 2018**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 25 July 2018

ANSWER:

PTV reviews the performance of Transdev bus services on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Should Transdev fail to deliver the minimum level of services, it may result in financial penalties, or PTV requiring a remedial plan to address service delivery performance.

Pursuant to Clause 35 of the Bus Safety Act 2009, if a bus is at full capacity, additional passenger pickups will be suspended until the bus has capacity to pick up passengers.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested more than \$200 million in improving bus routes across Victoria.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 25 July 2018

ANSWER:

Through the Victorian road safety partnership, the State Government delivers an extensive program of road safety education, including reinforcing road rules. We approach road safety from many different angles that takes into consideration the fact that people make mistakes, including adopting safer road designs.

Wire rope barriers are just one of the road features used to improve road safety and are being installed on sections of the state's 20 highest-risk rural roads. Safety barriers have been proven to reduce head-on and run-off road crashes — the most common types of crashes on regional roads— by up to 85 per cent. In Gippsland specifically, I am advised there has been a 40 per cent reduction in serious injury and lives lost through road trauma since 1987, due to such road safety programs. The current Gippsland Road Safety Plan is aiming for a further 20 per cent reduction in lives lost and 25 per cent reduction in serious injuries by 2020 through a Safe System philosophy. This involves a holistic view of the road transport system and the interactions among roads and roadsides, travel speeds, vehicles and road users. To reach this goal, VicRoads has sought assistance from local community road safety groups, local government, Victoria Police, DELWP and the heavy vehicle industry.

Victoria's road safety education program begins at preschool with the Starting out Safely program and continues through to Road Smart; a young driver education program delivered in Victorian schools as part of the Young Driver Safety Package. The Transport Accident Commission will soon open the doors of Victoria's highly innovative Road Safety Complex. The complex will feature the latest in visual and digital technology to help students and the wider community understand how to remain safe on the roads.

VicRoads uses its website and social media channels to notify drivers and riders about existing and changing road rules. The website includes summaries and animations, a downloadable version of The Road to Solo Driving and an electronic newsletter. The newsletter provides timely and regular updates on legislative changes that impact Victorians including road rule changes, as well as new road features such as wider centre lines.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 25 July 2018

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Victorians, by investing in our hospitals and health professionals.

In the 2018-19 Victorian Budget, hospitals received an additional \$2.1 billion which built on our commitment from the previous year of an additional \$1.67 billion. This means that this financial year, health funding is \$4.86 billion higher than it was in the last year of the former Liberal Government. This funding will see the biggest elective surgery boost in our history with an additional \$217.6 million allocated to elective surgeries in 2018-19 alone.

If you are able to provide the details relating to your constituent's care, I would be happy to ask the Department of Health and Human Services to make enquiries on her behalf.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 26 July 2018

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our community by investing in our hospitals and health services.

While those opposite who cut \$1 billion from our healthcare system, the 2018-19 Andrews Labor Government State Budget included an additional \$2.1 billion package for hospitals. This additional funding will see the biggest elective surgery boost in our history with \$217.6 million allocated to public hospitals to reduce waiting times.

In 2018-19 Ballarat Health Services received \$297.8 million in funding, \$27.6 million or 10.2 per cent more than last year and 31 per cent more than they received in the last budget delivered by the Liberals in 2014-15.

The Andrews Labor Government has also committed \$461.6 million to redevelop the Ballarat Base Hospital. This will provide additional capacity to meet service demand including replacement of outdated operating theatres, a new emergency department, a critical care "hot floor" and over 100 additional inpatients beds. It will deliver contemporary best practice enabling local people to get the appropriate range of health services they need at a location that is close to their homes.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 26 July 2018

ANSWER:

Works at the Regent Station car park were completed in December 2017 with 121 upgraded car parking spaces. These spaces were part of the approximately 8000 new or upgraded station car parks being built across Victoria by the Andrews Labor Government.

Works at Regent Station were complex, with Melbourne Water concurrently undertaking water main renewal at the same location. VicTrack and Melbourne Water worked together during construction to minimise the impacts to nearby residents and deliver on the committed number of car parking spaces.

In March and April 2018, VicTrack received advice from residents of illegal dumping at the site; this was subsequently removed by VicTrack and Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM).

MTM, as the operator responsible for Regent Station, will continue to monitor for any further illegal dumping. The issue of the pooling water has also been referred to MTM for consideration as part of its ongoing maintenance arrangements.

A site visit on 31 July found almost 40 vehicles still using the gravel area. It will be considered for funding under a future car park program by Transport for Victoria.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 26 July 2018

ANSWER:

The former Chief Executive of Goulburn Valley Health, Mr Trevor Saunders, tendered his resignation from his position effective 21 June 2018. In accepting his resignation, the board recognised Mr Saunders' service and contribution to Goulburn Valley Health.

The board has appointed Mr Matt Sharp, Executive Director of Clinical Operations at Eastern Health, as Interim Chief Executive for 6 months.

The board is now focused on finding a long term candidate that will forge a bright future for the service, delivering and building on the government's \$169.5 million investment in the Goulburn Valley Hospital redevelopment.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 27 July 2018

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question, however I completely reject the premise. As the Member knows, the Andrews Labor Government is delivering a record \$2 billion investment to ensure Victoria Police has the powers and resources it needs to crack down on organised crime and protect the community from gang violence.

As the Member knows, the Government has introduced specific and targeted stand-alone offences for aggravated home invasions and carjackings. Bail laws have also been tightened, with a presumption against bail applying to aggravated burglary, home invasion and carjacking. These laws reflect the seriousness of these crimes and as the community expects, the penalties are significant to reflect the significant impact they have on victims.

Across Victoria, the latest crime statistics show that crime is continuing to come down, with the offence rate decreasing by 9.5 per cent across the State. The data shows we have the lowest rate of burglary and break and enter offences and the lowest rate of arson offences across the state in a decade.

The rate of assaults on police and emergency services workers is lower than in 2014. The rate of aggravated robbery has dropped 7 per cent, and is now lower than it was in 2011, 2012 and 2013. The rate of aggravated burglary has reduced 16.4 per cent, and the overall theft rate as a category has reduced by nearly 15 per cent. Motor vehicle theft is also lower now than it was 10 years ago.

Therefore, as documented by the independent Crime Statistics Agency, the Government's record investment in police and community safety is making a real difference.

The Andrews Labor Government has also stepped up its fight against organised crime, giving Victoria Police the powers and resources, it needs to crack down on organised crime and protect the community from gang violence.

We have legislated new Firearm Prohibition Orders which has given police new powers to target and search individuals from outlaw motorcycle gangs and serious criminal organisations — including those who associate with organised crime figures.

We have funded 20 new specialist officers, adding to the ranks of the Victoria Police Anti-Gang Squad. The Victoria Police Gang Crime Squad focuses on specific aspects of emerging and active criminal gangs, organised and network groups. The squad proactively targets organised crime offenders and high risk offenders who are managing and/or mentoring gang members for organised crime purposes.

The Government passed legislation to ban the use of cash payments in the scrap metal industry, denying organised crime a crucial source of revenue. Police have also been given new powers to enter and search scrap metal dealers without a warrant.

We have strengthened Victoria's asset confiscation scheme and closed loopholes previously used by criminals by making clear that property purchased with a loan repaid using the proceeds of crime is not to be considered 'lawfully acquired'.

We've also introduced legislation to strengthen Victorian unlawful association laws to give Victoria Police additional tools with which to disrupt organised crime syndicates and prevent the commission of crime — and help stop young people from becoming involved in organised crime.

We have further committed to cleaning up the debt collecting industry, by overhauling Victoria's regulation of debt collection to make sure we drive out organised crime from this industry. This will include setting up a dedicated commission to oversee the debt collection industry in Victoria and will increase penalties for persons engaging in unlicensed debt collecting.

Victoria Police continues to work closely with the National Anti-Gangs Squad to respond to incidents relating to organised crime at a national level. Members of the National Anti-Gangs Squad are embedded within the Victoria Police Gang Crime Squad. These members are deployed to Victorian regions to assist with operations involving high level offenders linked to organised criminal groups, with a focus on disruption, prevention and arrest.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 27 July 2018

ANSWER:

I note Mr Morris' continued opposition to improving road safety in Ballarat without providing any solution of his own.

I had the pleasure of announcing the Mair Street Stage 1 works in Ballarat during March this year, at which time I issued a Media Release about the upgrades and parking.

VicRoads, in collaboration with key stakeholders, has undertaken extensive consultation during the development of the upgrades. At all stages of consultation, VicRoads has ensured traders and property owners along Mair Street have opportunity to provide input into the plans.

A Project Monitoring Group comprising VicRoads, the City of Ballarat and trader representatives, has been formed to work together and help with the practicalities of the upgrade to minimise the impact on businesses. This group has been meeting regularly as the project gets closer to construction.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 August 2018

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan for her continued interest in the Andrew Labor Government's investments along the Hurstbridge line as we are building the infrastructure needed for long-term solutions for the northeast.

As the people of Melbourne's north east are well aware, the Andrews Labor Government has just completed the \$395 million Hurstbridge Line Upgrade. The new timetable, made possible by these works gives Eltham Station passengers 35 new and extended services between Eltham and Flinders Street each week, including 20 new and 15 extended services.

The \$530 million second stage of the Hurstbridge Line Upgrade will give local commuters even more train services, and a more reliable and consistent "clock-face" timetable, during peak periods. The benefits for commuters can be provided by duplicating three kilometres of track between Greensborough and Montmorency, and 1.5 kilometres of track between Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen.

Together these projects will provide substantial improvements for all commuters, all the way to Hurstbridge.

The Andrews Labor Government knows how to deliver the second stage of the Hurstbridge line upgrade because we've delivered the first stage already. Only a Labor government can get this project done.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 August 2018

ANSWER:

A feasibility study into extending the Route 86 tram line four kilometres to South Morang was undertaken in 2017. The economic assessment of this study found none of the seven options proposed for extending the line would be viable for some time due to forecast low patronage, caused by low dwelling and population density along the route.

Importantly, the design of the new tram terminus at Bundoora will allow for any possible future extension of Route 86, and VicRoads has also allowed for a future extension within the road reserve as part of the Plenty Road widening project.

Currently, bus services provide a frequent and reliable connection between Bundoora, South Morang and Mernda.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 August 2018

ANSWER:

V/Line is investigating the circumstances of this incident and apologises for any inconvenience that may have been experienced by the constituent. However, as you would be aware, all coach drivers must adhere to strict fatigue management guidelines to ensure the safety of every passenger and staff member. Should these guidelines not be upheld or put in place, it may result in errors of judgement that may lead to injury or death.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$356 million to upgrade the Shepparton line, the biggest upgrade to the Shepparton line in a generation, and it's being delivered by a Labor Government.

This investment includes new stabling, signalling and track upgrades, level crossing upgrades and platform extensions at Shepparton, Mooropna, Murchison East and Nagambie stations. It will deliver VLocity trains to Shepparton and pave the way for nine return passenger services a day.

While this work is underway, 29 extra weekly coaches between Shepparton and Seymour have been introduced to give passengers greater travel choice. In addition, the Andrews Labor Government added nine services between Melbourne and Shepparton in 2017, with more to come next year.

In the coming weeks, V/Line is delivering more than \$10 million in major maintenance works. Over time, these significant investments and maintenance works mean that passengers will experience improved reliability, more frequent and faster modern services.

Contrast this with the announcement of only \$77 million for the Shepparton line by the Liberal/National Opposition, which won't deliver the public transport improvements the Shepparton community is calling for.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 7 August 2018

ANSWER:

Public Transport Victoria and Transport for Victoria recognise the important role that buses play in meeting the travel needs of people living in Melbourne's outer suburbs, and continuously review the entire metropolitan bus network.

The new timetables better reflect actual running times and improve connectivity, reducing late arrivals and missed train connections. I am pleased to see significant improvements for punctuality of the services running to Craigieburn station since its implementation in June, with on time arrivals increasing to 90.5 per cent.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 7 August 2018

ANSWER:

The Victoria Energy Compare website has had more than 1.2 million visitors since it was launched in 2016. Seven out of every ten users of the Victorian Energy Compare website can save money by switching retail offers.

If your constituents do not have access to a device such as a computer, tablet or smart phone with connection to the internet, I recommend they ask a friend or a family member that has access to the internet to help them claim the Power Saving Bonus.

Alternatively, your constituents may wish to seek assistance from a local library or community group. Many libraries offer free or cheap computer and internet access. Neighbourhood houses and community centres are also great resources.

There are other local community groups that can help with access to a computer. If your constituents are a part of a social, cultural, activity, or learning group (like U3A, for instance) these groups can be contacted for assistance.

I also note that the Victorian Government has partnered with the Brotherhood of St Laurence to run an energy brokerage service to help vulnerable consumers. This pilot will reach up to 10 000 vulnerable households and help them find a cheaper, more suitable energy offer. This will include working with consumers who pay high prices and have low switching rates, including those with no internet access, limited English proficiency, who are experiencing energy stress, and older people.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is listening and responding to the needs of the Strathmerton community when it comes to road safety. VicRoads is currently undertaking a speed review for the Murray Valley Highway.

To ensure feedback from all sectors of the community is considered in the review, VicRoads hosted a road safety community information session at the Strathmerton recreation reserve on the evening of 26 July 2018. The event was well attended and attracted those that either live locally, work locally or visiting the township. The views of both pedestrians and motorists were obtained.

A total of 130 survey responses were collected on the night, with further responses are being collected from an online survey. The survey closed on 24 August 2018.

VicRoads will now review community feedback, feedback and other data in collaboration with Victoria Police and the Moira Shire Council, and an informed decision will be made on the safest speed for the Murray Valley Highway through Strathmerton. The outcome will be shared with the community soon.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan for her interest in the Andrews Labor Government's Hurstbridge Rail Line Upgrade project.

As part of the Lower Plenty Road Level Crossing Removal Project, the Level Crossing Removal Authority is providing over \$2 million of cycling infrastructure at Rosanna. This includes a new shared use path along Turnham Ave, signalised pedestrian and cycling crossings at Lower Plenty Road and a new three-metre wide continuous shared-user path on the eastern side of Ellesmere Parade, between Lower Plenty Road and Davies Street, which will be completed in the coming months.

Signalling infrastructure is required within the rail corridor in order to meet operational needs and run the additional services we've introduced for Melbourne's north-east. Due to the constrained corridor width at this location, this infrastructure could only be constructed on the western side of the rail corridor.

Between Burgundy Street and Turnham Avenue, existing constraints including topography and the necessary rail operational infrastructure, make it challenging to provide a shared-user path within the rail corridor that complies with the relevant design standards.

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to continuing to investigate options for a strategic cycling corridor between Rosanna and Heidelberg.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Western Victoria for his question, and advise that he should instead direct this question to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, who has portfolio responsibility for dedicated bike lanes on roads.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

I am pleased to confirm that \$4 million has been committed through the 2018-19 Victorian State Budget to provide a shared user path along the Burwood Highway in this location. This will provide a safer connection for pedestrians and cyclists between the EastLink and Dandenong Creek trails and will also provide a more direct link to the existing shared use path along the Burwood Highway, towards the Knox City Shopping Centre.

I am advised that VicRoads has commenced planning work for the project and expects that various planning approvals will be required before construction can commence. I understand these approvals may include cultural heritage, environmental, and approvals associated with works near Dandenong Creek.

VicRoads expects construction to commence in late 2019.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

I am advised by Transport for Victoria that local buses will primarily enter and exit the Station Precinct at Nolan Street via Scott Parade. However, the entire length of the internal (access) road within the Precinct and the intersection with Lydiard Street will be designed to accommodate the occasional movement of local buses if there are disruptions with access via Nolan Street. Furthermore, in response to the Member's question about V/Line buses, I can confirm that there are no plans to move the V/Line bus bays from the south side of the Station at this time.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

On behalf of the Minister for Public Transport:

Transport for Victoria advise that local buses will primarily enter and exit the Station Precinct at Nolan Street via Scott Parade.

However, I am advised that the entire length of the internal (access) road within the Precinct and the intersection with Lydiard Street will be designed to accommodate the occasional movement of local buses if there are disruptions with access via Nolan Street.

There are no plans to move the V/Line bus bays from south side of the Station.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

In May 2016, I decided to refuse Amendment C190 to the Hume Planning Scheme, which sought to apply the Public Acquisition Overlay to land required for the proposed Bulla Bypass and Melbourne Airport Link and to include an incorporated document to facilitate the projects.

In making my decision I sought to ensure that all feasible road alignment options were explored to minimise impacts on agricultural land along Oaklands Road. I therefore asked the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to consider further options for the proposed alignment.

I understand that VicRoads, on behalf of the Minister, is actively working on this matter and I will assess any future request on its merits.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 8 August 2018

ANSWER:

I have approved plans for works north of Carnegie Station, along Woorayl Street, to facilitate the Caulfield to Dandenong Rail Upgrade Project, including indicative landscaping surrounding the station. The approved final design of Carnegie station provides for open space along Woorayl Street and retains some existing vegetation, including the mature River Red Gum at the western end of Woorayl Street, while incorporating new vegetation. I can confirm that no building development plans are approved within Woorayl Street reserve and any future proposal would be subject to separate planning approval.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 9 August 2018

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Eastern Metropolitan for her continued interest in the Andrew Labor Government's investments along the Hurstbridge line as we are building the infrastructure needed for long-term solutions for the north east.

As the people of Melbourne's north east are well aware, the Andrews Labor Government has just completed the \$395 million Hurstbridge Line Upgrade. The new timetable made possible by these works gives Eltham Station passengers 35 new and extended services between Eltham and Flinders Street each week, including 20 new and 15 extended services.

The \$530 million second stage of the Hurstbridge Line Upgrade will give local commuters even more train services, and a more reliable and consistent “clock-face” timetable, during peak periods. The benefits for commuters can be provided by duplicating three kilometres of track between Greensborough and Montmorency, and 1.5 kilometres of track between Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen.

In addition, this project will benefit locals on the Andrews Labor Government’s new Mernda line — which just opened on 26 August — as they will get five extra train services during the morning peak, with a major upgrade of the Clifton Hill junction where the Mernda and Hurstbridge lines connect.

The vast majority of the project cost will be spent on the Hurstbridge line portion of the works.

The Andrews Labor Government knows how to deliver the second stage of the Hurstbridge line upgrade because we’ve delivered the first stage already. Only a Labor government can get this project done.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 9 August 2018

ANSWER:

The Environment Effects Statement (EES) process that is currently underway, was announced on 25 September 2017 to investigate and assess any potential environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts of the freeway during construction and in operation. The community will be invited to review and provide feedback on the EES documentation later this year.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 9 August 2018

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government has committed \$941 million to the largest regional road maintenance and improvement program this financial year.

I am advised that on Monday 20 August, VicRoads contractors undertook works to achieve a smoother ride onto and off the Tarwin River bridges.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 21 August 2018

ANSWER:

No members have resigned from our Walking and Cycling Technical Discussion Group and the North East Link Authority looks forward to working more with them over the coming months to provide genuine community input into the North East Link project.

The group aims to provide another level of engagement for North East Link. It allows the North East Link Authority to understand ideas from walkers and bike riders in the community, for innovation or refining the design. This is the first major project that has provided this level of consultation.

All suggestions from the group have been assessed by multiple specialists in the project team. Much of the input from the group has been incorporated into the reference design, and they will be taken through the design in the coming weeks. In another first for a major project, the group's input will be provided in a report to bidders while they are developing their tenders, which can help to add innovation to their designs.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Gepp
Directed to: Minister for Tourism and Major Events
Asked on: 22 August 2018

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises the importance of the tourism industry as an economic driver for regional Victoria, with tourism contributing \$7.5 billion to the regional economy.

In the year ending March 2018, the Murray region received approximately 5.6 million total visitors, an increase of 15.1 per cent from 2014, and the total tourism expenditure was \$1.3 billion, an increase of 5.5 per cent from 2014.

A strong and sustainable calendar of regional events allows regions to showcase their tourism strengths and builds Victoria's reputation as an events destination. The 2016-17 State Budget provided \$20 million for a Regional Events Fund (REF) to attract, create and bring people to the biggest and best events all over regional Victoria.

The Echuca-Moama Winter Blues Festival is supported through the REF and provides visitors the opportunity to listen to the nation's best blues bands perform. Held over four days at the historic Port of Echuca's heritage precinct and surrounding venues, the event generates significant economic benefit for the local community. Other events in the region supported through the REF include the Massive Murray Paddle, Southern 80 Water Ski Race and the Riverboats Music Festival.

Other investment in the region includes \$500 000 to develop the Murray River Adventure Trail. This funding was provided in the 2018-19 State Budget to develop a business case to create a multi-sport adventure trail that extends along the length of the Murray River. The trail will incorporate walking, cycling, kayaking, canoeing and other forms of water transport.

Additionally, as part of the 2018-19 State Budget, the Victorian Government has provided \$2 million for a Regional Events and Innovation Fund (REIF), to help Regional Tourism Boards or recognised Victorian tourism organisations grow their local economies and local jobs, by attracting new visitors and new events.

I look forward to announcing projects supported the REIF in coming weeks.