

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

ANSWERS TO CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

15 December to 8 February 2018

(Extract from book 1)

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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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Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
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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 — Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Sullivan, 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 — Mr Bourman, 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, #Ms Hartland, Mr Melhem, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, #Ms Symes and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — #Ms Crozier, #Mr Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, Mr Morris, Mr Mulino, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Dr Ratnam, #Mr Rich-Phillips, 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 Hartland, 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 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 Gepp and Ms Patten. (*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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The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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

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Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

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 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 ⁷	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	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 ⁸	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ⁹	Northern Metropolitan	RV
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 ¹⁰	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	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁶	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	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ DLP until 26 June 2017

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁷ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁸ Appointed 12 October 2016

⁹ ASP until 16 January 2018

¹⁰ Appointed 18 October 2017

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.

18 December to 8 February 2018**Eastern Metropolitan Region**

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 9 May 2017

ANSWER:

The \$150 million Growing Suburbs Fund is a significant investment from the Victorian Government towards meeting the critical infrastructure needs of communities in Melbourne's diverse and fast growing interface local government areas.

The fund recognises the important role local government plays in creating liveable communities and is positioned to respond quickly to the pressures experienced by interface communities by bringing forward local projects that will make a big difference to the day-to-day lives of outer suburban families.

Over the past two years, the Growing Suburbs Fund has enabled the delivery of 76 projects representing a total infrastructure investment of \$235.5 million and created more than 2700 local jobs. Of these, 27 projects have been completed and interface communities can now access the services and facilities that make a big difference in their day-to-day lives.

This government has demonstrated its commitment to supporting interface councils by delivering community infrastructure that matters. A further investment of \$50 million for the Growing Suburbs Fund over the next two years recognises that investment in critical community infrastructure must continue. This funding makes a big difference for councils. Some of these projects are complex and can take time to develop and deliver. Providing funding over the next two years will enable councils to undertake the consultation and planning required to bring these projects to fruition.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Asked on: 20 September 2017

ANSWER:

The VCGLR has complaint management processes in place to respond to both liquor and gambling related issues. These processes accord with the Victorian Ombudsman's guidelines and involve engagement with the complainant, inspection of the venue associated with the complaint and engagement with council, police and co-regulators as required to assist in the resolution of each matter.

I am advised that there are five licensed premises within the George Hotel in Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, and that the VCGLR has received seven complaints regarding these venues in the last three years. The complaints relate to noise, amenity and other matters, and the VCGLR has investigated each of the complaints made and has issued three infringement notices. I am further advised that the VCGLR continues to work with its partner agencies to investigate two of the complaints and to liaise with the complainants.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 18 October 2017

ANSWER:

The operational need for new and upgraded police stations is determined by the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, and stations are assessed regularly.

I can assure you however that the residents of Mount Evelyn continue to receive a 24 hour police response across the entire Yarra Ranges Police Service Area.

The Government will continue to support Victoria Police and ensure that it has the powers and resources it needs to reduce harm in the community and keep Victorians safe.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Shing
Directed to: Minister for Health
Asked on: 18 October 2017

ANSWER:

I thank Ms Shing for raising this important matter.

Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the invaluable support that the Asbestos Council of Victoria and the Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support group (CARDS) provide to people suffering from asbestos-related diseases. These diseases can be very difficult for those suffering and for their families and friends.

I am advised that the Government currently provides funding to the Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support group through WorkSafe Victoria. Further information regarding the funding for this group by WorkSafe may be sought from the Minister for Finance.

The Asbestos Council of Victoria and the Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support group may also wish to access the Victorian Government Grants website, which provides a comprehensive list of funding opportunities provided by the Victorian Government.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 31 October 2017

ANSWER:

The site has been declared surplus to the Department of Education and Training needs and I have nominated this site as one of the six pilot sites for the Victorian Government's Inclusionary Housing Pilot (IHP). The IHP aims to provide a mix of private and social dwellings, including up to 100 new social housing homes across the six sites.

The site has been referred to the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), which will consider the suitability of the proposed rezoning and other planning control changes to allow for the development of residential dwellings on the site for the purposes of the IHP.

The type and design of development for the site, including the number of social or private dwellings, open space requirements and vegetation protection is yet to be determined. An Environmental Significance Overlay is proposed to be retained on the site which protects areas of biological significance and endangered vegetation. A

proposed new Development Plan Overlay also lists several requirements for native vegetation plans. Protection of the natural environment and local open space needs will form an important part of the Advisory Committee's deliberations.

Knox City Council's housing strategy supports the site being used for residential development. It also seeks to protect areas of biological importance as well as ensuring that proposed designs respond to the site context and the neighbourhood character of the area. These issues will be considered, along with other submissions, by the Advisory Committee.

Interested parties, including the local community, are invited to make a submission during the public exhibition process which commenced on 13 November 2017 and will end on 22 December 2017. Public hearings will take place in February 2018.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Gepp
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 1 November 2017

ANSWER:

I am advised by Agriculture Victoria that grain crops in the Mallee have the potential to produce good yields, despite dry conditions late in the growing season.

In September, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences forecast total winter crop production of 6.8 million tonnes for Victoria.

This is below last year's record production of 10.3 million tonnes, but 28 per cent above the 10-year average to 2015-16.

A good harvest will help Victoria increase its share of the total value of grain exports from Australia.

The Victorian Government is supporting the growth of exports from north west Victoria through infrastructure initiatives such as the Murray Basin Rail Project, GrainCorp's Project Regeneration and the Manangatang Terminal Development.

These initiatives will drive economic growth, create jobs and provide a major boost to the transport industry, agricultural sector and regional communities.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 1 November 2017

ANSWER:

Over 50 documents have been made public in relation to the Government project to remove all nine level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong. Although these crossings are among the most congested and dangerous in Victoria, it is acknowledged that the Member for Southern Metropolitan is opposed to the project to remove them.

The documents released clearly indicate that the project will improve safety, relieve congestion, reduce noise, improve air quality, create new open space, complies with all safety requirements and enjoys strong community support.

None of these documents conform with the Member for Southern Metropolitan's desire to prevent and delay this project so he has ignored them all.

All requirements to produce documents will be adhered to as the construction to remove these congested death traps continues.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 3 November 2017

ANSWER:

The William Ricketts Sanctuary is reserved under section 4 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 (the Act) for the purposes of the conservation. The area is of natural interest and significant cultural value because it serves as a wildlife corridor for a variety of native fauna and wildlife.

Those seeking access to Crown land for the purpose of drainage or water supply may apply to me directly under the Water Act 1989. My department has been in contact with the constituent to outline the process and information required.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Finance
Asked on: 3 November 2017

ANSWER:

Please refer to my response in relation to the constituency question you raised on 16 November 2017 regarding the Skyrail project.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Racing
Asked on: 14 November 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to a viable country racing industry and acknowledges the importance of all-weather racing and training in Victoria.

Thoroughbred racing in Victoria is currently serviced by two all-weather synthetic tracks. Geelong opened its synthetic track in 2008 and after the industry identified the requirement for a second synthetic track, Racing.Com Park at Tynong officially opened in 2015. Both all-weather surfaces provide a year-round facility for racing and training in Victoria to help manage the pressure on turf tracks over the wetter winter months.

Decisions relating to racing infrastructure are ultimately the responsibility of Racing Victoria (RV) as the controlling body for Victorian thoroughbred racing. I understand that RV commenced a review to identify the need for, and possible locations for a new all-weather track in Victoria in early 2017 and a decision has not yet been made on a suitable location.

The Government will continue to support RV to ensure all-weather racing and training across Victoria remains a viable practice into the future and provides the industry with greater certainty during the wetter winter months.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 14 November 2017

ANSWER:

The City of Glen Eira is a strong supporter of the Government's project to remove Victoria's nine of Victoria's most dangerous and congested death traps between Caulfield and Dandenong. Glen Eira currently has the least amount of open space of any metropolitan municipality and the council is very support of the new open space that the project creates.

It is acknowledged that the Member for Southern Metropolitan is opposed to the removal of the nine level crossings and the provision of more open space made possible by their removal.

The Government will continue to work cooperatively with all four local councils along the corridor to ensure that the eleven MCGs of open space is properly and efficiently maintained.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 14 November 2017

ANSWER:

Councillors perform a vital role as civic leaders to their local communities, responsible for participating in the decision-making of the council and representing those communities in their decisions. Councillors also have a clear responsibility in their role, to facilitate communication between the council and the community and I expect that all councillors will make themselves reasonably available to their constituents in providing effective representation in this regard.

If any person has evidence that a councillor is no longer correctly enrolled on the State roll enabling that councillor to continue in office, there is a process for lodging an objection to that enrolment with the Victorian Electoral Commission.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 15 November 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that it will be removing trees as part of the Bolton Street upgrade. VicRoads will consider the tree type, health, structure and useful life expectancy. I understand that an arborist will be on-site to supervise and minimise the impact to trees during construction.

VicRoads has previously shared tree removal information during its community engagement sessions. Through design innovations, the total number of trees that VicRoads will remove has been reduced significantly from what was anticipated earlier.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Gepp
Directed to: Minister for Trade and Investment
Asked on: 15 November 2017

ANSWER:

I was proud to deliver, alongside the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy (VABS). The Strategy is first and foremost an economic document that includes a suite of initiatives to support Aboriginal Victorians to grow and strengthen their businesses.

The Andrews Labor Government recognises that the appropriate procurement settings can provide businesses economic opportunity and growth in employment. As highlighted by the Member, a key component of the Tharamba Bugheen is the inclusion of a 1 per cent government procurement target from Aboriginal Victorian owned businesses. This will support an increase number of stronger and more diverse businesses.

The Labor Government continues to work closely with the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Development Board, the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners as we implement the Strategy, to ensure it has the greatest reach and impact across all communities, including Northern Victoria.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 15 November 2017

ANSWER:

The safety of students and school communities is of paramount concern to the Andrews Labor Government. This is why we have allocated \$155 million to address asbestos-containing materials in schools.

The Government conducted a state-wide audit of 1712 government school sites and found high-risk asbestos at 497 of these sites. By March 2016, we had removed it all. This enormous achievement has improved the safety of government primary, secondary and specialist schools across Victoria.

The 2017-18 State Budget delivers \$85 million towards the next phase of the Government's asbestos removal program. We are targeting asbestos that, although not classified as high-risk, may pose a risk in the future. This includes asbestos that may pose a risk in the future that has been identified at all schools in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, including Croydon Primary School and Ringwood Heights Primary School.

Specifically, we will be delivering a new architect-designed modular building to Croydon Primary School to replace Block A, which has a high concentration of asbestos that may pose a risk in the future. The replacement building will consist of new classrooms and administration facilities.

We will also deliver a new architect-designed modular building to Ringwood Heights Primary School. The replacement building will consist of new, larger classrooms, an arts and crafts room, a library and student toilets.

Facilities constructed off site or modular facilities require less time for planning and construction, resulting in reduced disruption to students, staff and teaching programs. They are sustainable and innovatively designed, with a comparable lifespan to bricks and mortar structures.

As part of the government's asbestos removal program, the remaining asbestos that may pose a risk in the future at both of these schools will also be removed.

Let me assure you that the asbestos removal program is being carried out in a methodical, planned and structured way. Following our state-wide audit and our asbestos removal program, school communities can be confident that we know where the asbestos is, and we will make sure it is safe until it can be removed.

Thank you for raising this matter with me and I trust this information is of assistance.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 15 November 2017

ANSWER:

It is sad to see that the Member for Western Metropolitan continues to join with his Liberal colleague David Davis, along with members of the Moonee Valley Council, to stand in opposition to the removal of the dangerous and congested level crossing at Buckley Street, Essendon.

We know that the majority of locals in Melbourne's North West support this project.

In fact, recent local media reports have said what we have known for some time, that the Moonee Valley council's own report says, "legal action against LXRA is not an appropriate course of action. Future advocacy should involve working more closely with the LXRA on mitigating traffic concerns. The cost of constructing rail-under-road would be "many multiple times that of a road-under outcome"."

The Buckley Street crossing is one of Melbourne's worst, with boom gates down for 78 minutes every morning peak.

The design will lower Buckley Street under the rail line, safely separating trains from traffic — reducing congestion and increasing safety for motorists, passengers and the local community.

This design is the product of detailed technical investigations and consultation with planners, transport operators and the local community — including the local council.

Other designs, including several "rail under" options, were thoroughly investigated but ruled out as they would require extensive private property acquisition and excessive rail line occupations.

Preparatory works are now underway at Buckley Street, with the boom gates expected to go by the end of 2018.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 15 November 2017

ANSWER:

I am advised by VicRoads that road works will be undertaken in the early part of 2018 to reinstate the road to a good condition.

VicRoads is aware of this site and is currently conducting detailed geotechnical investigations to influence design and determine the most appropriate long-term remedial treatment for the site.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 16 November 2017

ANSWER:

I am advised by VicRoads that it inspected this location in early December 2017, to investigate your constituent's concerns regarding gravel shoulders on this section of the Princes Highway West in Port Fairy.

VicRoads will focus on making localised improvements in this area, as part of the \$40 million Princes Highway upgrade program, and will continue to monitor the safe operation at this location.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 16 November 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government is aware that adequate parking is key to the development of a sustainable and useable train network. In the 2016-17 State Budget, \$20 million was committed to upgrade commuter car parking facilities on government-owned land. The Regional and Metropolitan Railway Station Car Park Upgrade Program is delivering up to 2100 car parking spaces for public transport passengers across the state. Stations receiving additional parking include Regent, on the South Morang line, and Upfield. More information is available online at <www.victrack.com.au/projects/key-projects/station-car-park-upgrades>.

The 2017-18 State Budget contained a further \$8.7 million for additional station car parking and station upgrades. Additional parking is also being provided at Craigieburn station with funding from the Growth Area Infrastructure Contribution scheme.

South Morang station was opened in 2012 with 450 permanent parking spaces. South Morang currently operates as an end-of-line station and as such it is the closest station for a larger number of residents. In this case, residents from Mernda in addition to those living in South Morang use the station. Subsequently, many rail users drive to end-of-line station, which puts high pressure on station car parking capacity. In 2015 this led to the expansion of the South Morang Station to about 900 spaces; however due to the lack of available land, this expansion was undertaken on land leased from the nearby shopping centre and is only temporary.

In order to provide an effective longer term response to the needs of this rapidly growing area, the Government is extending the South Morang line to Mernda. This extension will include 1900 new and permanent car parking spaces at the three new stations. This will not only reduce demand for parking at South Morang station, but will make public transport a more attractive option for residents living near these new stations by making access to a station more convenient. More information is available online at <www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/rail-projects/merndarail>.

In addition to providing additional car parking, the Government is taking action to provide rail users with attractive alternatives to driving, including cycling, walking and catching a bus. Specifically, a new Plenty Valley bus network was implemented in July 2016 which reaches more residents and provides more frequent, direct and connected services around Mernda, Doreen and South Morang. Bus routes 381 and 382 now combine to provide a ten-minute weekday peak service between Bridge Inn Road/Plenty Road and South Morang station. Routes 387 and 386 also provide a similar frequency from Plenty Road/McArthurs Road to South Morang station and Bundoora. More information about the network is available online at <www.ptv.vic.gov.au/getting-around/network-changes/plenty-valley/>.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 16 November 2017

ANSWER:

As the member would be aware, I recently met with Whittlesea police and local community members and I was briefed on how their response zone has become more focussed on Whittlesea and its immediate surrounds due to the opening of Mernda Police Station. The opening of Mernda Police station means Whittlesea police are now responsible for 10 000 people rather than 60 000.

I would like to reassure the residents of Whittlesea that I can guarantee that the Whittlesea police station will remain operating, and locals will continue to receive 24 hour police response. The two vacancies will be filled as

soon as possible and while these positions are recruited, additional officers have been seconded to ensure appropriate resources are available to the Whittlesea community.

As the member would be aware, Victoria Police has commenced ongoing consultation with local representatives to better understand the policing priorities within the Whittlesea township.

As the additional 3135 additional frontline police, on top of attrition are deployed across the state, growth corridors such as Whittlesea, will remain a priority.

The Government remains committed to ensuring that Victoria Police has the powers and resources it needs to keep the community safe, and once again thank the Member for Yan Yean for her advocacy on behalf of the Whittlesea community.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Finance
Asked on: 16 November 2017

ANSWER:

There has been significant engagement with the relevant authorities and regulators in relation to the skyrail project since its inception.

As part of this engagement, WorkSafe met with representatives of the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LCRA) and the construction consortium to view construction methods of the major infrastructure works alongside live rail and in proximity to public spaces. While WorkSafe does not have authority to approve construction methodologies, it noted various engineering designs and checks with built in safety processes.

WorkSafe also met independently with representatives of the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) which is the Federal body charged with encouraging, promoting, improving and enforcing safe railway operations. Metro Trains Melbourne is accredited by ONRSR as a Registered Train Operator.

ONRSR had reviewed the safety case for the construction of the elevated rail using specialised gantry crane equipment. A joint visit with the two regulators was conducted and ONRSR agreed that the construction of the elevated rail may proceed in accordance with the safety case provided by the consortium.

All builders have an obligation to control any risks to workers and other persons, including those outside the formal boundary of a site. WorkSafe's construction unit continues to run an active inspection program on all LCRA sites. This includes response visits based on calls to WorkSafe's advisory service and proactive visits. WorkSafe inspectors and engineers continue to visit the site to monitor construction works.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 21 November 2017

ANSWER:

Parks Victoria is working with the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the Greater Shepparton City Council to target illegal rubbish dumping in the Shepparton Regional Park. This includes targeted clean-up days, education campaigns and targeted compliance operations.

The Environment Protection Authority's Illegal Dumping Strikeforce targets dumping of waste on public land in Victoria. Public land managers, including Parks Victoria, Local Councils and VicRoads, assist the EPA in the cleanup and enforcement of small and medium-scale dumping issues, such as dumping of furniture and mattresses on curbsides or reserves.

In November 2017, Parks Victoria appointed an additional ranger in the Shepparton area to increase capacity and work with the local community on education programs, including waste management. This role was one of 53 new ranger positions recently funded by the Andrews Labor Government under the “Unlocking the benefits of parks for all Victorians” initiative.

This investment is in comparison to the savage cuts inflicted on Parks Victoria by the former Coalition Government, in which one in ten Parks Victoria workers lost their job.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Asked on: 21 November 2017

ANSWER:

On Friday 15 September 2017, upon receiving advice that staff at the village had walked out over an alleged pay dispute, CAV immediately liaised with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of the Public Advocate, Victoria Police and local council to ensure the ongoing safety and well-being of residents. These agencies have since been providing support for residents of the village.

In a further step to support residents, on 26 September 2017, Stella Avramopoulos (Chair of the Victorian Council of Social Services) was appointed the Residents’ Sponsor, to ensure the ongoing health and welfare of the village residents, while issues concerning the operations of the village are being addressed.

The Government also appointed John Raike of the Department of Justice and Regulation as the State Government Coordinator. Mr Raike acted as a primary contact point for the Residents’ Sponsor, and ensured that the efforts of departments and agencies to address the health and welfare needs of residents were coordinated. The Government Coordinator has also assisted staff at the village who have been impacted by the management of the village, including assistance in finding alternative accommodation.

Due to the efforts led by the Residents’ Sponsor and Government Coordinator, I am pleased to advise that all residents and staff have now been successfully relocated.

CAV is currently investigating the village. Part of the investigation includes difficulties that have been encountered by former residents or their relatives recovering their ingoing contributions. Ingoing contributions are protected by a charge registered on the title to the, retirement village land. Currently, under the RVA, a resident or their estate can apply to the Supreme Court to enforce a charge.

The Director of CAV can intervene in proceedings to enforce a charge, but proceedings need to be commenced by a resident or their estate before the Director can decide whether to intervene.

CAV has requested information from affected former residents of the village or their relatives to assist in its assessment of the village and any role it may have to intervene in court proceedings.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 21 November 2017

ANSWER:

Travel time data is publicly available via the Government Data portal <data.vic.gov.au>. The data has been available to the public since September 2016 and covers most of the Melbourne metropolitan area. The data is updated in real time.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 21 November 2017

ANSWER:

The 2017-18 Victorian Budget provided an additional \$50 million over two years for the Growing Suburbs Fund, bringing the total Victorian Government investment in this program to \$150 million.

The fund recognises the important role local government plays in creating liveable communities and is positioned to respond quickly to the pressures being experienced by interface communities by bringing forward local projects that will make a big difference in the day-to-day lives of outer suburban families.

I can confirm that the Diamond Valley Sports and Fitness Centre project has been successful in obtaining funding of \$2.5 million from the 2017-19 Growing Suburbs Fund. The funding will be utilised to commence a program of work on the revitalisation of this ageing facility, improving access to the centre and delivering better outcomes for all users.

In addition, four other projects in Nillumbik Shire Council have been successful in receiving combined funding of over \$7.7 million — Diamond Creek Netball Club Pavilion (\$2.83 million), a pavilion upgrade at Eltham Central Park (\$800 000), the construction of a pavilion at Marngrook Oval in Diamond Creek (\$416 650) and \$1.2 million to improve pedestrian connections in Diamond Creek.

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I would like to acknowledge the strong partnership between state and local government to ensure the best possible outcomes for communities living in Melbourne's outer suburbs.

I look forward to being able to work closely with local members and councils to deliver these projects for interface communities.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 21 November 2017

ANSWER:

I am advised that VicRoads Bridge Public Safety Barrier Policy (Policy) sits within the Victorian Government's suicide prevention strategy and ensures that considerations of suicide prevention treatments are based on research findings and data analysis.

The Policy is based on Federal Guidelines, which have been prepared as a resource to assist government departments, local councils and other agencies in developing strategies to prevent suicides as suicide hotspots. Any review of the Policy would continue to refer to the guidance in these Federal Guidelines.

VicRoads has commenced discussions regarding the review of the policy, to identify areas where supplementary guidance could be provided.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 28 November 2017

ANSWER:

Residents living in in the outer north of Melbourne, including St Andrews and Arthurs Creek, will benefit enormously from the Andrews Labor Government's major public transport infrastructure projects, including the extension of the South Morang line to Mernda and the Hurstbridge line upgrade project.

As you and the community are aware, the former Liberal Government did not extend the train line from South Morang to Mernda, did not remove a single level crossing in Melbourne's north and did not duplicate any single section of track on the Hurstbridge line.

The local member for Yan Yean, Danielle Green, witnessed first-hand just how damaging the decision of the former Liberal Government to not undertake a single public transport infrastructure project in Melbourne's north has been for the entire region. On behalf of her constituents she successfully convinced the Andrews Government to invest a billion dollars to undertake the Mernda extension and Hurstbridge line upgrades as a matter of priority. The progress the Government is making on these major projects is clearly visible to all local residents, with both projects well ahead of schedule.

The Mernda train line extension involves the provision of around 2000 new car parks and is a comparable distance as Hurstbridge station for those who live in and around Arthurs Creek and Nutfield. The Hurstbridge line upgrade will allow more trains to run more often, improve reliability and punctuality and provide for quicker journey times.

Further public transport upgrades, including additional car parking at Hurstbridge stations, will be considered in future budgets. Residents now have a very clear understanding of the priorities and track record of the Andrews Government compared to the Liberal Opposition.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Mulino
Directed to: Minister for Local Government
Asked on: 28 November 2017

ANSWER:

Cardinia Shire Council was successful in receiving funding totalling \$5 million from the 2017-19 Growing Suburbs Fund.

The Cardinia Cultural Centre redevelopment project will receive a grant of \$3 million towards its \$8.92 million total cost. This redevelopment will address a clear need in a thriving community for an expanded, purpose built arts and cultural facility.

The Hills Hub — Emerald Community Centre will receive \$1.5 million towards a \$8.13 million project that will enhance existing community facilities and support skill development, training and employment creation.

A grant of \$500,00 will be provided towards the \$1.42 million James Bathe Recreation Reserve project that will deliver a facility with flexible spaces for the community and outreach services.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 28 November 2017

ANSWER:

Long term structure planning undertaken by Hume City Council has identified locations for future rail crossing locations in the Sunbury area.

Transport for Victoria will consider this matter with reference to broader road and rail needs for the Sunbury community. No decision has been made on the matter.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 28 November 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of Life Saving Victoria volunteers, who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community. The Victorian Government recognises the vital work that the volunteers of the Point Lonsdale Surf Life Saving Club perform as highly trained and skilled service providers and appreciates the commitment of these volunteers dedicated to serving the community.

The Victorian Government will consider future funding priorities for capital works to the H.C Windmill Back Beach Base building through the regular budget process.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 28 November 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that this section of Fitzroy Street is a local road managed by the Port Phillip City Council. Accordingly, VicRoads has contacted a council representative who indicated that they would be pleased to contact your office to discuss these concerns.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 29 November 2017

ANSWER:

Providing high quality sport and recreation infrastructure is a key aim of the government, and is integral to the health and well-being of all Victorians. That is why the government is investing \$120 million into the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund to facilitate the upgrade and development of community sports facilities during this term of government. The fund includes \$14 million for female friendly facilities to build or upgrade women's change rooms.

Since 2014, the Victorian Government has invested over \$1 million in community infrastructure within Frankston City Council on projects including the development of Female Friendly Facilities at McClelland Reserve Soccer

Pavillion, at Overport Park Frankston and at Ballam Reserve Soccer Pavilion, the Overport Park Sportsground Lighting Project and the Frankston Regional Cricket Net Access Program.

The Victorian Government is also supportive of the redevelopment of the Frankston Basketball Stadium in Seaford and re-committed to the project upon winning government in 2014.

My department played a strong role in advocating on behalf of all involved parties by continuing to seek a middle ground during lease negotiations. A number of factors have played a role in this project not commencing, as parties came to an impasse with a decision not able to be finalised in a timely manner.

The government is committed to Basketball in Frankston and the health and wellbeing outcomes in the Community.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Gepp
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 29 November 2017

ANSWER:

I am pleased to advise that VicRoads has already completed the works on the Murray Valley Highway at Reedy Lake, the 2-kilometre section of the Murray Valley Highway at Wharparilla and the works on the Prairie-Rochester Road. The works on the Echuca-Mooroopna Road at Wyuna East commenced on Monday 11 December and will be completed by the end of January 2018.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 29 November 2017

ANSWER:

I have requested that an officer from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning contact CitiPower regarding these outages. CitiPower has advised that during the past year, there has been an increase in electricity demand along the shopping strip at Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn.

On 22 November 2017, CitiPower adjusted the load on the networks and expects that this will resolve the issue. CitiPower is undertaking further works to upgrade the local network and expects this to be completed before the conclusion of the peak summer period.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 29 November 2017

ANSWER:

As a former Mayor, Mr Morris should know that the expenditure of ratepayer money is a matter for local governments, in this case, the City of Ballarat.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 30 November 2017

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Northern Metropolitan Region for his question about funding for school upgrades in the Northcote electorate, quite possibly a first for him to me on this matter.

Labor Governments are always better for government schools in Victoria, including in Northcote. This is borne out by the numbers.

The Bracks/Brumby Labor Governments contributed over \$5 million towards schools in the Northcote electorate, and the Andrews Labor Government has contributed over \$20 million.

I note that you haven't asked about what the previous Liberal Government contributed towards these schools. For your information, this amount was \$0.

I encourage you to share this response with the constituents of the Northern Metropolitan Region.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 30 November 2017

ANSWER:

Thank you for raising this issue and I am glad to hear that no one was seriously injured in the crash.

Tourism along the south western coast of Victoria contributes greatly to the local economy and approximately fifty per cent of all international overnight visitors to regional Victoria visit the Great Ocean Road district. In 2014, there were over 5.7 million domestic and half a million overseas day trippers to the area.

An analysis of crashes along the Great Ocean Road shows that Victorian drivers are still the most highly represented in crashes but also shows a higher percentage of interstate and overseas drivers involved in crashes when compared to all of Victoria.

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources has received funding from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) for a Visiting Driver Road Safety Program, which will raise visiting driver awareness of key road safety issues. The program will involve a suite of activities over the next twelve months, including:

- a simplified Chinese version of the Safety Tips for Visitors to Victoria brochure;
- a short road safety video (English/Chinese versions) for broadcast via key social media channels/websites;
- supporting promotional materials (such as Keep Left stickers) which can be ordered online by vehicle rental companies and other interested parties; and
- billboard advertising.

Work is progressing on this initiative, including a workshop conducted in conjunction with Victoria Police from the south west region aimed at identifying road safety issues for interstate and overseas tourists. A local agency has been contracted to develop the communications material and car rental agencies have been engaged as part of the program.

This initiative is modelled on the successful New Zealand Visiting Drivers' initiative and is being delivered in partnership with TAC, Victoria Police, VicRoads and the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 30 November 2017

ANSWER:

The \$9.3 million investment into safer cycling and pedestrian infrastructure has resulted from projects developed collaboratively between VicRoads and the City of Ballarat and align with numerous strategies developed by the City of Ballarat including the CBD Strategy and Cycling Action Plan.

To maximise the benefits and ensure the community has an opportunity to shape the project, VicRoads and the City of Ballarat have recently been undertaking extensive engagement. This has included letter drops and door knocks to businesses and residents, information sessions for businesses and wider community, online engagement on the “Engage VicRoads” platform, broadcasting of the project on social media and a “pop-up-shop” on Sturt Street to enable community members to meet project staff face-to-face to discuss any details of the project and leave feedback.

Briefing of many key stakeholders has also been undertaken, including City of Ballarat Councillors, emergency services, business groups, hospitals, schools, the RSL and the City of Ballarat’s Heritage Advisory Committee.

To date, feedback received has been overall very positive, with many suggestions and opportunities for additional improvements received. VicRoads and the City of Ballarat will now progress designs based on feedback received.

I am aware that some in the community are concerned about potential impacts to Sturt Street, some of which is based on the dissemination of incorrect information regarding a “bright orange path”, however I am happy to assure the Ballarat community that enabling people to access and enjoy the magnificent Sturt Street and its median gardens is a key outcome of the project and that enhancing this experience, not diminishing it, is important to the project’s success.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Leane
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 30 November 2017

ANSWER:

Having modern classrooms and school facilities is fundamental to ensuring that every child receives the best possible education. We cannot build the ‘Education State’ without investing in our schools’ bricks and mortar.

The Andrews Labor Government’s commitment to this has been demonstrated through the allocation of more than \$2.5 billion for school infrastructure in the last three State Budgets. A high-quality education system must be matched by high-quality learning environments where students are engaged, stimulated and encouraged to be creative thinkers.

The growth in student numbers at Heathmont Secondary College is testament to the quality of its teaching environment and the educational values it conveys to the local community. Like many regions across metropolitan Melbourne, this community is experiencing demographic renewal, and we must endeavour to ensure that school services and amenity remain appropriate to future need.

As with all schools of a certain vintage, the Government is aware that Heathmont Secondary College may have certain infrastructure requirements. Unfortunately, budget constraints do not allow us to immediately fund every building or modernisation project. Our ongoing challenge is to responsibly balance and prioritise the needs of over 1500 government schools, all in varying condition.

Nonetheless, I can assure you that the requirements of every school, including those of Heathmont Secondary College, will be considered when determining priorities for our capital works program. The Government will use all available data, including condition assessments and pre-existing project plans, when identifying new projects and allocating resources in future State Budgets.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Asked on: 30 November 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises the need for alcohol and other drug rehabilitation services and has invested in an expansion of service options across the state, particularly in regional areas.

The government is currently establishing three new residential rehabilitation services in the Hume, Gippsland and Barwon regions, and redeveloping an existing service in Grampians region. These form part of a wider plan being delivered which will double the number of rehabilitation beds available to Victorians recovering from addiction. This doubling of capacity has met with widespread support from communities and the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol recovery sector. It stands in contrast to line performance of the previous government which saw community Mental Health reform bungled and those in need of treatment lost to an incomprehensible system.

I commend the considerable efforts of the south coast community in advocating for the establishment of a residential rehabilitation service in their locality. Staff from the Department of Health and Human Services have met with representatives from the Western Region Alcohol and other Drug Centre to discuss their proposal. This input will certainly be considered in plans for future service expansion.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 30 November 2017

ANSWER:

The environment effects statement (EES) process for the West Gate Tunnel Project provided opportunities for communities to have a say and influence the project's design and management of its environmental effects.

The Victorian Government committed to the project following consideration of its business case in December 2015. Subsequently, I directed an EES be prepared.

As is usual for an EES, the EES scoping requirements, the EES itself and its supporting technical reports were publicly exhibited. A public hearing by an independent inquiry and advisory committee (IAC) was held and the proponent engaged with the community in accordance with its community consultation plan. These documents as well as submissions on the EES, documents tabled at the hearing, the IAC report and my assessment are all publicly available.

This project attracted a high level of community interest, with 504 submissions received, mostly from individuals and community groups from Melbourne's west. Environmental concerns raised by these communities focussed on access, health, air quality, noise and safety around roads where traffic or truck numbers were predicted to increase due to the project, construction impacts and impacts on open space.

During its preparation of the EES and during the IAC hearing, I saw ample evidence of the proponent responding to public feedback during refinement of the project's design. For example, the proponent revised its design to adopt a long tunnel option to minimise impacts on Stony Creek Reserve and amenity, establish nearly 9 hectares of new

open space in the inner west, create 14 kilometres of new and upgraded paths and provide greater noise protection at many nearby residences. ‘

During the IAC hearing, the Government made a number of announcements that responded to public feedback including additional truck bans for Blackshaws and Hudsons roads, additional noise walls for some reserves along the West Gate Freeway and removal of a truck toll point to reduce truck traffic on Millers Road.

My assessment acknowledged that the project will generate both positive and adverse environmental effects. I recognised that it is not possible to avoid all adverse effects. However, to further manage adverse effects, my assessment recommended further improvements to the project’s design consistent with many of the IAC’s recommendations. Improvements include: lowering the Wurundjeri Way extension to achieve better environmental and planning outcomes; transport studies to identify additional traffic management measures; and specific air quality mitigation responses for roads with increased traffic due to the project.

The project’s planning scheme amendment establishes a sound environmental control regime for the project. This regime includes 117 environmental performance requirements that set standards for project delivery. Consultation with the communities of Melbourne’s west will continue under these requirements, especially for urban design, landscaping and management of construction impacts.

I am satisfied that the EES process for the West Gate Tunnel Project has been open, robust and supported the community to have a say. This process has influenced the project’s design and management of its environmental effects for the better.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

VicRoads advises me that safety on construction sites is of the highest standard.

I understand that WorkSafe visited the Bolton Street construction site and recommended additional measures.

Between 4 and 11 December 2017, VicRoads procured and installed additional safety devices, and recommenced construction immediately on 11 December.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

The North East Link Authority has hosted 15 community drop-in information sessions in Balwyn North, Bulleen, Eltham, Greensborough, Ivanhoe, Lilydale, Ringwood, Rosanna, Warrandyte, Wantirna South and Melbourne CBD since August. They have also spoken and answered questions at public forums organised by four local councils (Nillumbik, Banyule, Boroondara and Manningham). These events have given community members the opportunity for their questions to be answered by project staff directly, including landowner specialists, urban designers and traffic engineers. Further, with the project entering the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process, the Authority is preparing to facilitate Community Liaison Groups featuring representation from all areas of the local community. Following the release of a more detailed design in the first half of next year, additional community drop-in information sessions will be held to communicate the latest developments on the project.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian government is committed to supporting flood affected communities. The Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) were activated immediately following the severe weather and flooding events.

Assistance was provided to affected individuals and families. People in the local government areas of Alpine and Strathbogie can claim up to \$540 per adult and \$270 per child (up to \$1890 per household) to help meet immediate needs, including emergency food, shelter, clothing, and personal items.

The activation of NDRRA also allows councils and state government agencies to apply for funding to help cover counter disaster operations, and to help with the cost of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets.

The 12 local government areas receiving NDRRA assistance are: Alpine, Knox, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moonee Valley, Murrindindi, Nillumbik, Shepparton, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta and Yarra Ranges.

This Labor Government is committed to supporting the regions. Unlike the former Coalition Government when the then Liberal Minister for Mental Health & Community Services was more interested in her preselection battle in Kew and took a month to bother visiting the Latrobe Valley when it was on fire.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

I categorically reject the flogging off and privatisation agenda of the Liberals in Housing, and am committed to undoing the mess of 4 years of neglect and cuts.

That is all we saw in 4 years of Liberal Government in Victoria, and all we see from an opposition who stand for keeping land vacant at the Markham Estate to deny dozens of families the homes they need, and opposing all social housing in Brighton.

This record of total indifference to homelessness, condemned by VCOSS, Launch Housing, the Victorian Public Tenants Association and the Council to Homeless Persons, is matched by the Opposition's Federal Liberal colleagues, who have cut funding to the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, cut funding for homelessness and housing advocacy bodies, cut the final round of the National Rental Affordability Scheme, and now threaten to cut \$375 million from Victoria's housing budget, while failing to meaningfully enter the debate on negative gearing or capital gains tax concessions.

The failure of the Opposition to condemn these cuts and indifference show they put their party first, and homeless Victorians last.

In complete contrast, the Andrews Labor Government is committed to addressing housing need in a comprehensive manner through a variety of approaches.

The government is providing record investment of \$799 million in housing and homelessness support and \$2.1 billion in financial backing to kick start new forms of social housing investment. This funding will help more than 19 000 Victorians to access and sustain housing — and will deliver more than 6000 social housing properties.

As there are over 64 000 public housing dwellings in Victoria, the government cannot renew all sites and estates at once. However, over coming years there will be opportunities for more renewal projects across Victoria.

The renewal of the sites identified within the Public Housing Renewal Program has been enabled by a very substantial investment by the Andrews Labor Government of \$185 million. This is the sort of investment never seen in 4 years of the previous Liberal Government, and it is telling that the opposition opposes this very significant investment.

Stage 1 of this landmark program will transform run-down housing estates and sites, from unfit-for-purpose units into new, modern and environmentally sustainable homes for Victorians in need.

It includes the renewal of eleven sites and estates resulting in a 110 per cent uplift in existing public housing units as a minimum requirement and 10 per cent of the private dwellings will be allocated to first home buyers.

This program will use the land value to significantly increase the quantum of public housing for Victorians in need and create additional, new public housing for Victorians.

I am focused on delivering housing renewal in a timely manner to support those most in need so that more public housing tenants can access the opportunities available across these well located sites.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

I am pleased to confirm the advice my office provided your constituent in May 2017 that by law, bike lights are required to be used in Victoria when a bike is ridden at night, or at times where visibility is low (eg dusk or in foggy conditions).

The use of bike lights during daylight is entirely optional. It is left to the discretion of the individual bike rider to make their own decision about whether they wish to use bike lights during daylight hours.

Mandating the use of bike lights for all cyclists during daylight hours is not under consideration at this time. It is true that such lights can be beneficial, and advice about the benefits of using daylight bike lights is provided on the VicRoads website.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

This Government requested the report from VEOHRC. We look forward to its release and we will respond to it.

But we are not waiting for this report to take action. There have already been a number of significant reviews that have shown serious cultural and diversity issues within Victoria's fire services — and that's why we are delivering on reforms.

It's why the government has already announced extra funding to support culture change and targets to increase female firefighter numbers.

In addition, a key breakthrough in finally resolving the MFB enterprise agreement was that for the first time fire agencies and the United Firefighters Union have agreed to work together to directly tackle culture and diversity issues.

A new steering committee will be established to oversee the development of initiatives to improve culture and diversity in our fire services. This committee will include both of our fire agencies and union representatives.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of my colleague, the Hon Jaala Pulford MP, as Minister for Regional Development. However, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning advises me that Development Victoria is delivering the Ballarat West Employment Zone (BWEZ) on behalf of Regional Development Victoria and the City of Ballarat. The project is generating employment and investment in the Ballarat region by developing well serviced land suitable to accommodate large employment generating industries.

The Crown land south of the Ballarat-Ararat rail line, immediately west of the Western Link Road within BWEZ, has been identified as a potential location for an energy precinct. The City of Ballarat is advancing the commercialisation of a waste to energy facility at the BWEZ site.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 12 December 2017

ANSWER:

I thank the member for his question, however this does not fall under my Portfolio responsibilities and should be redirected to the Treasurer.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government, and is integral to increasing participation opportunities and enhancing the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

That is why the government is making the record \$120 million investment, including \$14 million for the Female Friendly Facilities Program, first of its kind, into the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund to facilitate the upgrade and development of community sports facilities during this term of government.

Such upgrades and developments seek to increase participation for people of all ages and abilities.

I understand the Nillumbik Shire Council submitted a separate application for \$10 million to the Growing Suburbs Fund, As you would be aware the Growing Suburbs Fund does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities. This funding falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Local Government.

Thank you for raising this matter with me and I trust this information has been of assistance to you.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Shing
Directed to: Minister for Sport
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

Providing high quality sport and recreation facilities in Victoria is a key aim of the Victorian Government, and is integral to increasing participation opportunities and enhancing the health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

That's why on Friday 10 March, I joined the Premier to make a landmark announcement for the people of the Latrobe Valley with a major investment in its sporting infrastructure, thanks to an unprecedented \$85 million investment by the Andrews Labor Government.

The community sporting package includes \$46 million for a new Gippsland Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre in Traralgon. This package delivers the very best community sporting infrastructure for Gippsland's many sporting clubs and athletes, with over 500 jobs to be created along the way.

Sport and Recreation Victoria is working closely with the Latrobe Valley Authority and the Latrobe City Council on the delivery of the project. A key principle in the delivery of these projects are that they are being delivered by the people of Latrobe Valley for the people of Latrobe Valley.

The Latrobe City Council as the ultimate owners of the asset have been central to the decision making on the Aquatics Centre's location, design, delivery and operations. In relation to creating local jobs, the Latrobe City Council and Latrobe Valley Authority have been working with the Industry Capability Network to identify all of the opportunities to source local suppliers and contractors for the delivery of the project. Once completed, the centre will provide a number of ongoing jobs for locals, particularly young adults, for jobs such as guards, swim school instructors, gym supervisors etc.

Thank you for raising this matter with me and I trust this information has been of assistance to you.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and Glen Eira City Council are jointly planning for redevelopment of the East Village precinct. Throughout the year the council and VPA have held community consultation sessions to help define the vision and plan for the precinct. The strategic plan presented at these sessions identifies a draft plan with 3000 new dwellings, 6000 residents and 4500 jobs for the precinct. This plan will form the basis of a comprehensive development plan and amendment to the Glen Eira Planning Scheme. Authorisation of an amendment to the Glen Eira Planning Scheme to formally facilitate this vision for the precinct has not been granted or submitted to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

The North East Link Authority has identified some properties which may be required to construct North East Link. The North East Link Authority has attempted to contact these residents and businesses in order to notify them of

potential impacts. The North East Link Authority has provided these residents and businesses with information about the project approval process and estimated timelines but has not commenced acquisition nor has it issued acquisition notices.

More certainty on which properties may be required will occur in early to mid-2018 as work on refining a reference design for the road is completed. As soon as there is more certainty of the properties potentially required, the North East Link Authority will make direct contact with affected residents and businesses.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

During the West Gate Tunnel Project's construction, we will be working hard to make things as safe and as easy as possible for residents and commuters and making sure all are kept well informed.

We want to talk to local residents about construction activities near them, what they can expect during these activities, our progress and opportunities to get involved. To do this, we have already built strong two-way communication channels through over two and a half years of consultation. This includes a community liaison group, newsletters sent to over 67 000 residences, a 24-hour phone line, doorknocking thousands of houses, materials for culturally and linguistically diverse groups, pop-up information stalls at key community hubs, an interactive project website and social media channels.

Ahead of major construction activities, letters will be sent to nearby residents to give them the information they need. Social media and the West Gate Tunnel website will also be used (westgatetunnelproject.vic.gov.au).

Engagement is underway with councils in the project alignment to develop the Construction Communications and Community Engagement Plan which will be published online once complete. This will ensure there is a strong plan in place to make sure the community is informed, has opportunities for feedback and know where to get information.

To ensure local community members stay actively involved in the project, we will also be setting up a visitor centre open to all.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

The \$9.3 million investment into safer cycling and pedestrian infrastructure has resulted from projects developed collaboratively between VicRoads and the City of Ballarat and align with numerous strategies developed by the City of Ballarat including the CBD Strategy and Cycling Action Plan.

To maximise the benefits and ensure the community has an opportunity to shape the project, VicRoads and the City of Ballarat have recently been undertaking extensive engagement. This has included letter drops and door knocks to businesses and residents, information sessions for businesses and wider community, online engagement on the "Engage VicRoads" platform, broadcasting of the project on social media and a "pop-up-shop" on Sturt Street to enable community members to meet project staff face-to-face to discuss any details of the project and leave feedback.

Briefing of many key stakeholders has also been undertaken, including City of Ballarat Councillors, emergency services, business groups, hospitals, schools, the RSL and the City of Ballarat's Heritage Advisory Committee.

To date, feedback received has been overall very positive, with many suggestions and opportunities for additional improvements received. VicRoads and the City of Ballarat will now progress designs based on feedback received.

I am aware that some in the community are concerned about potential impacts to Sturt Street, some of which is based on the dissemination of incorrect information regarding a “bright orange path”, however I am happy to assure the Ballarat community that enabling people to access and enjoy the magnificent Sturt Street and its median gardens is a key outcome of the project and that enhancing this experience, not diminishing it, is important to the project’s success.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government recognises that recreational fishing is a major social and economic contributor to Victorian communities, which is why it supports actions or programs that boost participation in fishing and related recreational activities.

The Victorian Government is investing a record \$46 million into its Target One Million plan to get more people fishing, more often. The aim is to grow participation to one million anglers by 2020. Community events run by angling clubs contribute to achieving this goal. That’s why Target One Million includes grants for angling clubs to help them increase membership, improve club facilities and install defibrillators in club houses.

More broadly, Target One Million is boosting participation by buying out commercial net fishing in Port Phillip Bay, stocking record numbers of fish into lakes and rivers, improving angler access and facilities, and much more.

Angling clubs interested in hosting events designed to introduce children to recreational fishing, such as ‘Come and Try Fishing Days’, are encouraged to apply for funding through a Small Grant from the Recreational Fishing Grants Program.

Costs associated with purchasing public liability insurance for such events can be included in applications, along with other expenses such as bait, tackle, advertising and catering.

The Small Grants program provides funding of up to \$5000 (GST exclusive) for small fishing projects, including events, that benefit recreational fishing in Victoria. It is open year round for online applications via an ‘easy-to-complete’ form at <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/recreational-fishing-grants-program/small-grants-program>.

Alternatively, people can call Mr Richard Rogala, Program Administrator, on 03 8392 6872.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

There are three species of armyworms endemic to Victoria:

- Common armyworm
- Southern armyworm
- Inland armyworm

They are the only caterpillars that growers are likely to encounter in cereal crops, although occasionally native budworm will also attack grain when underlying weed hosts dry out.

Armyworms are widespread, established pests which seasonally impact producers. There are a number of chemicals registered for armyworm control. If chemical spraying is required, it should be carried out in the late afternoon or early evening for maximum effect, as armyworms are nocturnal feeders. The department recommends that farmers contact their local chemical retailers for advice on control options.

Further information is available to farmers on the department's website:
<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/pest-insects-and-mites/armyworms>.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 13 December 2017

ANSWER:

The two gantry cranes are based at Murrumbena Station and do not operate in the vicinity of the Longford gas transmission main.

Approval was obtained from the APA Group (the pipeline owner) for the operation of the straddle carrier near the Longford gas transmission main. This approval was obtained on 12 July 2017. In relation to the operation of the carrier, no approvals were required to be obtained from the regulatory authority, Energy Safe Victoria.

The Caulfield to Dandenong Level Crossing Removal Project has had ongoing discussions with APA Group and Energy Safe Victoria throughout the design and construction of the project.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

Every jurisdiction in Australia is moving towards regulating ridesharing. The Victorian Government is providing over half a billion dollars in financial assistance to the existing industry.

The Victorian Liberal Opposition supported the Government's legislation that regulates ridesharing and removes existing taxi and hire car licences, however they voted against providing any financial assistance to the existing industry. If the amendments supported by the Liberal party had been successful then there would be no financial assistance being provided.

The Liberal Opposition's continued attempts to block the existing industry from receiving financial assistance is consistent with their approach when in Government. Taxi licence values were cut in half by the previous Government and not a single cent of financial assistance was provided.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

More jobs are coming to the Latrobe Valley with a dedicated government hub to provide a base for up to 300 staff, including 150 public sector jobs.

Up to half the 150 Victorian Government positions at the GovHub will be advertised within a year, so local job-seekers can apply. The remaining positions will be consolidated from Melbourne — including Earth Resources Regulation staff, who will establish a new head office in the Latrobe Valley.

The complex will also house Parks Victoria staff working in environment, research and other service functions, as well as staff from the EPA.

The Labor Government has called on the Commonwealth to match Victoria's commitment job-for-job by locating 150 Australian public service jobs in the region.

Building the GovHub complex is expected to create 100 jobs during construction. The procurement process, commensurate with an infrastructure project of this significance, is underway; with the preferred tenderer and site to be announced in early 2018.

Expected completion of construction of the LV GovHub is on track, for 2020.

The new GovHub is part of the Labor Government's \$266 million Latrobe Valley transition package to support economic growth, create jobs and drive the businesses and industries of the future.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Davis
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

Every jurisdiction in Australia is moving towards regulating ridesharing. The Victorian Government is providing over half a billion dollars in financial assistance to the existing industry.

It is acknowledged that the Victorian Liberal Opposition were strong advocates of the legalisation of Uber and ridesharing and voted in support of deregulating the taxi industry.

The Government refused to accept suggested amendments put forward by the Liberal party to strip out all of the financial assistance being provided.

The Liberal Opposition's continued attempts to block the existing industry from receiving financial assistance is consistent with their approach when in Government. Taxi licence values were cut in half by the previous Government and not a single cent of financial assistance was provided.

Fairness Fund applications are independently assessed by the chair of the fund. If applicants to the Fairness Fund seek further information on their assessment they can contact the fund at fairnessfund@ecodev.vic.gov.au or 1800 875 122.

Northern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Premier
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

I remind the member that, in 1996, following the referral of industrial relations powers by the Kennett Coalition Government to the Commonwealth, the Victorian Government had no industrial powers to force an end to this dispute.

The Victorian Government spoke to both the company and unions involved and repeatedly offered to bring them together to help them resolve this dispute. Furthermore, we offered to bring in Industrial Relations Victoria as a mediator.

The Victorian Labor Government is committed to protecting Victoria's international reputation as a major agricultural producer. In the Victorian Budget 2017–18 alone the Labor Government committed \$44.4 million to maintain the state's crucial agricultural biosecurity for the following two years, protecting access to international markets and supporting regional jobs.

The Victorian Auditor-General's finding that funding cuts for core livestock biosecurity was cut by 49 per cent between 2009-10 and 2014-15. The number of animal health and veterinary officers also shrank by 42 per cent. I would remind the member of the heartache that was caused by these cuts which weakened Victoria's capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to a major livestock disease outbreak, such as Foot and Mouth disease.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Hartland
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

The Resource Recovery Facilities Audit Taskforce is inspecting resource recovery facilities across Victoria to protect the community following the July 2017 SKM Recycling plant fire in Coolaroo. The multi-agency taskforce, chaired by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria, comprises senior representatives from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), Country Fire Authority, Emergency Management Victoria and the Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning. To date, the taskforce has conducted 88 inspections of 73 sites and issued 37 statutory notices.

To assist the taskforce to deliver immediate action, on 29 August 2017, I declared an Interim Waste Management Policy (IWMP) under section 18B of the Environment Protection Act 1970, that requires resource recovery facilities to store materials in a manner that minimises risk to human health and the environment. The IWMP will remain in place for 12 months while a permanent solution is developed, and applies to operators of sites that store combustible recyclable and waste material.

To support industry to meet their obligations under the IWMP, the taskforce has published a guideline Management and Storage of Combustible Recyclable and Waste Materials — Guideline. The guideline provides practical advice for waste and resource recovery facilities on how to improve the management of combustible material materials.

The Norstar facility was inspected by the taskforce in early November 2017, and EPA and MFB conducted a follow up inspection on 14 December 2017. Following this inspection, EPA issued Norstar with a statutory notice requiring it to cease accepting waste at the Laverton North facility until issues identified have been rectified.

The taskforce has set out a range of recommendations to reduce the risk of damaging fires and lift standards to better protect local communities and the safety of first responders. The government will consider each recommendation made by the taskforce, with inspections to continue until June 2018.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

By providing a vital alternative to the at-capacity West Gate Bridge, the West Gate Tunnel Project will benefit all motorists on Melbourne's freeway network — and it will mean that a single incident on the West Gate Bridge no longer results in hours of gridlock in both directions. Tolls will apply and are necessary to help balance traffic flows on the road network and make projects like this happen.

Motorists who use the new tunnel will benefit from up to 20 minute travel time savings, while motorists on the West Gate Bridge will benefit by driving alongside 22 000 fewer vehicles including 8000 fewer trucks every day.

We are also rebuilding the West Gate Freeway as part of this project, benefitting everyone who uses it regardless of whether they pay a toll. Cars will not be tolled on the West Gate Freeway section. All motorists will benefit from more lanes, a new surface, the latest freeway technology for smoother and more reliable journeys, and express lanes between the M80 and the West Gate Bridge to reduce weaving and merging that leads traffic congestion.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

The design for the interchange at Bulleen Road will not preclude any public transport option from following an existing route. Buses 905 and 305 will have access to the busway for express journeys along the Eastern Freeway to Victoria Park, and Bus 200 can continue to cross the freeway using Bulleen Road. During construction bus services will be maintained however local adjustment to routes and/or stop locations may be required. These will be assessed in detail as part of the Transport Impact Assessment undertaken for the Environment Effects Statement.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Emergency Services
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

Victoria operates one of the most sophisticated aircraft fleets in the world. Victoria has its largest ever firefighting fleet available this summer, with 49 aircraft available, each strategically positioned across the state.

The fleet is a mix of water bombing aircraft, fixed-wing and helicopters, with the remaining aircraft providing air supervision and intelligence gathering roles.

The majority of water-bombing aircraft will operate through pre-determined dispatch. This means that instead of waiting for fire trucks to arrive on scene and request air support, aircraft will be in the sky responding to fires at the same time trucks leave stations. Pre-determined dispatch provides faster attacks on fires, with the aim of keeping small fires small, and has been extremely successful in previous years. This is in accordance with recommendations from the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission.

The success of the pre-determined dispatch helicopter that was based at Ballarat last summer has resulted in the Ballarat helicopter remaining, and an additional helicopter being based at Bacchus Marsh.

The positioning of the two large air-tankers and two air-cranes is dependent on the state's level of risk, as assessed by the Emergency Management Commissioner. These aircraft are strategically positioned so they are best able to respond to fire across the state of Victoria.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Dr Ratnam
Directed to: Minister for Planning
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

The Hon Martin Pakula MP, Attorney-General is responsible for administering the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998.

VCAT members are accountable through the public nature of hearings, the requirement to give formal reasons for their decisions, and the right of parties to VCAT proceedings to seek leave from the Supreme Court to appeal a decision on the question of law.

VCAT operates independently of government, and as such it would not be appropriate for me to comment on specific cases such as this. I would respectfully suggest that Dr Ratnam directs any further queries about the operation of VCAT to the Attorney-General.

Western Victoria Region

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Police
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

In relation to all significant protests and industrial disputes, it is Victoria Police's role to prevent breaches of the peace and enforce the law. This approach aligns with a modern 'safety first' police methodology and the desire to maintain a positive working relationship with all groups in the community

Most violent confrontations between police members and protesters occur when police attempt to break through a picket line, or when creating safe passage for an employer's alternate workforce or supplies to be taken on site. Victoria Police is keen to avoid this type of situation unless the actions of a striking group are unlawful and a specific request has been made by the employer.

This is often the case when employers obtain an injunction in the form of a court order and request police assistance to enforce the terms of the order. Unless expressly provided, these orders are civil in nature and create no duty for police. Nevertheless, there may be situations where police act in accordance with their duty to enforce the law and keep the peace.

In this case, I am advised by the Office of the Chief Commissioner that the owner of the docks requested police assistance on a few occasions to ensure access to the site. Protestors complied with the police instruction on those occasions. Victoria Police was not asked to enforce court orders in this matter.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Shing
Directed to: Minister for Education
Asked on: 14 December 2017

ANSWER:

The Andrew Labor Government is committed to investing in education and school infrastructure across the state. We have allocated more than \$2.5 billion to school facilities in the last three State Budgets, including more than \$43 million capital funding to upgrade government school infrastructure in the Latrobe Valley.

The Department of Education and Training is not only supportive of the Social Enterprise Strategy, but has taken proactive steps in engaging social enterprises in the delivery of its school infrastructure portfolio.

The Department notes that the balance of value-for-money objectives and social enterprise procurement is most effective with high-value projects that attract larger contractors in the tender process. In the recent Growth Area Schools Package, which has a project value of more than \$100 million, the Victorian School Building Authority has asked tenders to respond with consideration of social procurement suppliers.

In addition, the Victorian School Building Authority actively supports other Government procurement strategies that support local workers, including the Victorian Industry Participation Policy, which provides improved opportunities for small- and medium-size enterprises to compete for government contracts. The policy has been incorporated into the Department's Project Management Framework, requiring education infrastructure projects to engage competitive local suppliers when awarding contracts valued at \$1 million or more in regional Victoria, or \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne.

The Department also complies with the Major Projects Skills Guarantee, which requires projects with a value of \$20 million or greater to utilise Victorian registered apprentices, trainees or engineering cadets for at least 10 per cent of the total estimated labour hours.

Thank you for raising this matter with me, and I trust this information is of assistance.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Small Business
Asked on: 15 December 2017

ANSWER:

This question does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities and should be re-directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Hon Luke Donnellan MP.

Western Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 15 December 2017

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Western Metropolitan for his continued interest in the Andrews Labor Government's program of level crossing removals.

I find it interesting that the Member for Western Metropolitan has fought against the removal of several level crossings across Melbourne's west, yet is now advocating for the removal of additional level crossings above the 50 as part of the Level Crossing Removal Program.

The removal of 50 level crossings was an election commitment that we are delivering. It wasn't just one election promise, it was 50, and we will deliver on each and every one of them.

Victorians want these congested and dangerous level crossings gone as quickly as possible — and that is what we are doing. The Victorian Auditor-General's Office has confirmed we are ahead of schedule. We committed to getting rid of 20 in our first term — 11 are gone and we are on track to have 26 gone in our first term.

While the current priority is to remove these 50 level crossings, I welcome suggestions to remove further crossings, including those in Hoppers Crossing.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 15 December 2017

ANSWER:

The land referred to in the Member's question is owned by the Minister for Planning and I have been advised that the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) undertakes a regular maintenance program to ensure that this land is adequately maintained to the satisfaction of the Fire Prevention Officer of the City of Whittlesea.

On 6 December 2017, the land at the rear of Westleigh Court, Mill Park was slashed.

The contract for regular grass slashing requires the entire area to be cut three times a year to the satisfaction of the Fire Prevention Officer at the City of Whittlesea. A partial boundary cut is also undertaken during Autumn to the satisfaction of Council with extra slashing, including hand slashing, as required.

Local residents should contact the Planning Property Coordinator at DELWP on telephone number 136 186 if additional slashing and cutting is required.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Asked on: 15 December 2017

ANSWER:

With Melbourne's population forecast to increase to 7 million by 2042, and with over 6 million visits to the park already occurring each year, the Albert Park Draft Master Plan will set a 25-year vision for the park. The plan's vision is to ensure the park can continue to provide for the health and wellbeing of Melburnians and visitors as population density increases. The draft master plan aims to ensure that all areas of the park can better cater for the diverse needs of park visitors.

Parks Victoria is currently seeking community and stakeholder feedback on the draft master plan (<http://www.albertparkmasterplan.com.au>). An online survey can be completed up until 19 January 2018 and Parks Victoria is also inviting written submissions on the draft plan. No decisions will be made about any aspects of the plan until the feedback from consultation has been considered.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Public Transport
Asked on: 15 December 2017

ANSWER:

Victorians have a very clear understanding of the benefits of the removal of level crossings. Locals and commuters using McKinnon Road understand that the benefit of this crossing being removed is that safety is improved and congestion is alleviated. The Victorian Auditor-General (VAGO) Report clearly outlined that data was not yet available for McKinnon Road traffic volumes and times.

The Victorian Government committed to getting rid of 50 of Victoria's most congested and dangerous level crossings and the VAGO report noted that we are ahead of schedule.

While I acknowledge that the Liberal Opposition have called for level crossing removals to be delayed, the Government will continue to get rid of these congested death traps as quickly as we can.

Eastern Victoria Region

Question asked by: Ms Bath
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 15 December 2017

ANSWER:

In September 2017, Agriculture Victoria appointed a senior project officer to work with affected industries, including the potato industry, on tomato potato psyllid (TPP) and zebra chip disease.

Two grower workshops were held during the week of 18 December 2017 to discuss grower concerns. Victoria is prohibiting the importation of high risk commodities from Western Australia (WA), including potato tubers, aimed at protecting Victorian plant industries. Industry participation in area freedom surveillance not only proves that Victoria is free of TPP and zebra chip, it also helps support our restrictions on WA.

The national Plant Health Committee, of which Victoria is a member, is working proactively with growers from the eastern states of Australia to agree to harmonised trade protocols that will manage the movement of potatoes in the event of a detection of TPP or zebra chip disease in eastern Australia.