

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

18, 19 and 20 September 2018

(Extract from book 14)

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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)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer and Minister for Resources	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment	The Hon. B. A. Carroll, MP
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Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Dalidakis, Mr Mulino, Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle, Ms Symes and Ms Wooldridge.

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

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — Mr Bourman, #Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and Mr Gepp. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Ms Patten, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward.

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

Council — Acting Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Deputy President:

Mr N. ELASMAR

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The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

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The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

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The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

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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 ⁸	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	Western Metropolitan	Ind	O’Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O’Sullivan, Mr Luke Bartholomew ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	FPRP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred ⁶	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁷	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Truong, Ms Huong ¹²	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

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

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁷ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

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

¹¹ Appointed 18 October 2017

¹² Appointed 21 February 2018

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AC — Australian Conservatives; ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party; DLP — Democratic Labour Party;
FPRP — Fiona Patten’s Reason Party; Greens — Australian Greens; Ind — Independent; LP — Liberal Party;
Nats — The Nationals; RV — Reason Victoria; SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; VILJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.

Tuesday, 18 September 2018

Goulburn Valley Health

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 6 March 2018

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government allocated funding to Goulburn Valley Health in October 2017 to allow it to double the number of 24 hour security staff on duty at its main Shepparton campus.

Unlike the previous Coalition Government, we have acted by not only increasing funding for security guards but, along with my colleagues to toughen the laws to protect all emergency workers.

Our Government will continue to work hard to ensure that not only security guards but all emergency workers are protected in the line of duty.

Traralgon skate park

Raised with: Minister for Sport
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 22 June 2018

REPLY:

I refer to your adjournment debate matter regarding the Traralgon Skate Park.

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. In April I announced a government commitment of \$241 million for community sport, including \$60 million for the continuation of the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund and another \$15 million for the Female Friendly Facilities Fund.

I understand that Councillor Darrel White, Mayor, Latrobe City Council has recently written to both Premier Andrews and also the Latrobe Valley Authority, requesting financial support to undertake a Feasibility Study to develop a Youth Activity Precinct in Traralgon. The Precinct would potentially include a dedicated skate and BMX area, age appropriate play spaces as well as playing courts and would be built with the intention of being accessible to all.

I encourage Latrobe City Council to follow up their correspondence with the Latrobe Valley Authority.

Hopkins Road, Truganina

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 27 July 2018

REPLY:

I am advised that Victoria Police and VicRoads work closely together investigating any fatal crash on our road to determine the circumstances, and VicRoads will further investigate potential road safety measures for future funding consideration.

In 2016, the speed limit on Derrimut Road was changed from 100km/h to 80km/h between Dohertys Road and Greigs Road in response to a range of factors including crash history, increased residential development and traffic volumes.

VicRoads have made a number of safety improvements to Hopkins Road in recent years including new guard rails and line marking which alerts drivers if they veer onto the road shoulder or across the centre median.

Works are underway on the Victorian Government's \$1.8 billion Western Roads Upgrade, which includes widening Derrimut Road between Sayers Road and Dohertys Road.

The Western Roads Upgrade package will slash congestion and improve safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians including major upgrades of surrounding roads including Dunnings Road, Palmers Road, Leakes Road, Dohertys Road, Forsyth Road and Duncans Road.

National Centre for Farmer Health

Raised with: Minister for Agriculture
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 7 August 2018

REPLY:

I am advised by the Department of Health and Human Services, which manages Victorian Government funding for the National Centre for Farmer Health, that the Centre has a variety of programs which address suicide prevention and mental health in farming communities.

These programs include Sustainable Farm Families, Health and Lifestyle Assessments, and the Ripple Effect project. The Centre also distributes farmer resources to support mental health, delivers the Agriculture Health and Medicine course to health, medical and rural professionals, and conducts research to support more targeted suicide prevention programs. The Centre partners with several organisations to deliver these programs.

Extensive independent evaluations have been conducted on the Centre's programs. Further information, including results from these evaluations, is available from the Centre.

I would also note that the Andrews Labor Government recently announced that \$4 million over the coming four years will be provided to the Centre so it can continue to offer dedicated healthcare services to farmers, their families and their communities.

Autism spectrum disorder

Raised with: Premier
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 7 August 2018

REPLY:

The assertions by Mr Finn are incorrect.

The Victorian Labor Government does not tolerate the abuse of people with a disability. High standards of care must be provided to vulnerable people, in line with family and community expectations.

The appointed Administrator to Autism Plus is working closely with the Directors and DHHS to oversee the support of people with complex needs. Services have not ceased and will not.

The Labor Government is committed to giving people with disabilities the opportunities they deserve, while assisting families, carers and organisations. This year's state budget included \$4.5 million to support the transition to the NDIS, which established an Intensive Support Team and Supported Access Team. Both are comprised of skilled and experienced staff, working with National Disability Insurance Agency planners and clients with complex needs to facilitate access to the NDIS.

We've invested over \$20million in a Transition Support Program to support 27 organisations to deliver targeted assistance as people transition to the NDIS. In comparison, in 2014, the former Liberal Government only provided \$450 000 for the transition.

Earlier this year, the Labor Government dedicated \$200 000 from the Jobs Victoria Innovation Fund to help people on the autism spectrum find sustainable work. This is on top of the funding within the State Disability Plan for the Economic Participation for People with Disabilities Plan, that also includes targeted initiatives for people on the autism spectrum.

In addition, last year the Labor Government invested more than \$22 million as an immediate response to the Inquiry into Services for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

And this year's budget also sees \$4.3million going to our partners in disability advocacy organisations right around the state, again with a high proportion supporting people with ASD and their families.

Housing affordability

Raised with: Minister for Local Government

Raised by: Mr Mulino

Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

This question was addressed to me as Minister for Local Government, however it should be noted that the matter falls within my Consumer Affairs portfolio.

The annual Victorian Property Fund (VPF) Housing Funding Rounds are open to community housing providers across the state, providing funding opportunities for housing development projects that increase accommodation options for low income and disadvantaged Victorians.

Under the 2017-18 VPF Housing Funding Round, a total of \$27.5 million was granted to community housing providers to deliver housing development projects in metropolitan and regional locations across the state. The development projects will result in 229 dwellings with 309 bedrooms.

Following completion of the 2017-18 round, Women's Property Initiatives was awarded a grant of \$1.3 million to build six new detached houses in Pakenham, providing much needed additional accommodation for single older women, as well as single mothers and their children escaping family violence. The accommodation will comprise three 2-bedroom houses and three 3-bedroom houses on a vacant block close to shops, public transport, health services and schools. Tenants will also be supported through referrals to local service agencies.

The 2018-19 VPF Housing Funding Round was launched on 10 September 2018, providing further opportunities for community housing providers to apply for funding to build additional social housing in high need areas across the state.

Solar energy

Raised with: Minister for Planning

Raised by: Mr O'Sullivan

Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

I share the Member for Northern Victoria's high regard for the value and importance of our high value agricultural land, and the importance of getting long term value from the significant public investment in irrigation infrastructure.

The Greater Shepparton Solar Farm Planning Panel has provided me advice on four solar farm applications in the Greater Shepparton area. I am reviewing their report and seeking advice from other portfolio areas.

I will give full consideration of all the implications raised in the Panel report and what is best for the Goulburn Valley as a whole in making a decision.

There are a growing number of solar farm proposals under consideration and development across the state, from Mildura to Gippsland. This is terrific news for transitioning to a more renewable energy supply and providing farmers with an additional income source.

However, we need to ensure this change is managed in a way that achieves sustainable land use across energy, water, food production and environmental objectives.

To support balanced decision making I have asked my department to develop new guidelines to support future development of the solar industry in Victoria. These guidelines are being prepared with input from specialists across the energy, agriculture and water portfolios. Advice will also be sought over September 2018 from the energy sector, the Municipal Association of Victoria, rural councils and the Victorian Farmers Federation. The draft guidelines will be available for public comment in the last quarter of 2018.

The Greater Shepparton Solar Farm Planning Panel report is not directly relevant to other parts of the state and will not create a precedent for other proposals. The report will certainly inform work on the new solar farm guidelines, but is only one of many sources of advice on best practice and land use planning guidance for local councils and proponents.

Murray Basin rail project

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mr Davis

Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to delivering the Murray Basin Rail Project, and it's essential that we get it right. As you are aware, stage 2 of the Murray Basin Rail Project is largely complete, with freight trains running between Yelta and Maryborough, and between Maryborough and Ararat on a standard gauge line.

I can confirm the majority of suppliers have been paid in full; V/Line has advised me that it has complied with its contractual payment requirements being that all supplier payments that were due and payable have occurred. McConnell Dowell Martinus Rail Joint Venture (MMJV) are working with the remaining small number of suppliers to validate and substantiate the remaining claims.

It is anticipated that an outcome will be reached between MMJV and its suppliers in the coming weeks.

Western Victoria Region mobile black spots

Raised with: Minister for Trade and Investment

Raised by: Mr Purcell

Raised on: 21 August 2018

REPLY:

I thank the Member for raising the importance of overcoming mobile blackspots across the western Victoria region with me.

The Andrews Labor Government regards access to telecommunications as essential for economic development and public safety, particularly for our regional communities. That is why the Government has committed \$44 million so far to build 194 new mobile towers across regional Victoria since 2015, 71 of these being in the western Victoria Region. Of these towers, 141 are being constructed in partnership with the Commonwealth Government through the first two rounds of their Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP).

Ensuring that community input is enshrined in our telecommunications programs is a priority for the Victorian Labor Government. To ensure ongoing consultation, the Government established the Connecting Regional Communities Program and has extensively consulted with the nine Regional Partnerships to understand the digital needs of each of these regions.

To further these conversations, I would be delighted to join you and your constituents in western Victoria to discuss ways forward to improve mobile connectivity across regional Victoria.

I note your comments on the base station at Tower Hill, however this is not a tower funded by either the Victorian or Commonwealth Government funding programs. As such, this matter should be taken up directly with Telstra in the first instance.

In relation to the other three towers you mentioned; Winslow, Woolsthorpe and Hawkesdale are being co-funded by the Victorian Labor Government in partnership with Optus. This is a separate agreement that the State entered with Optus as the sites did not attract Commonwealth Government MBSP funding.

I understand that Woolsthorpe and Hawkesdale are currently being constructed and due for completion next month, while the Winslow tower is in the design and planning stage with construction due to commence early next year and completion planned for March 2019.

Victoria State Emergency Service Broadmeadows unit

Raised with: Treasurer
Raised by: Mr Ondarchie
Raised on: 21 August 2018

REPLY:

I thank the Member for his representation. I concur with his sentiments around the importance of the work done by the SES and the excellent work done by the Broadmeadows unit.

The delivery of this project does not rest with the Treasurer, but the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. James Merlino MP.

Solar homes program

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Mrs Peulich
Raised on: 22 August 2018

REPLY:

The Victorian Government's Solar Homes Package is available for owner-occupied homes valued at less than \$3 million, where the combined taxable income of the owners is below \$180 000 p.a. This means almost nine out of 10 Victorians who own their own house are eligible.

Eligible residents in your constituency will have the opportunity to apply for either a rebate of 50% (up to a maximum of \$2225) on the installation of solar PV, or a rebate of \$1000 to replace their existing hot water service with a solar hot water service.

The Solar Victoria website www.solar.vic.gov.au provides further information including links to further guidance on solar.

Western Ring Road noise pollution

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 22 August 2018

REPLY:

All previous investigations have found that the noise levels experienced by residents near More Park in Ardeer are below the intervention thresholds outlined in VicRoads' noise policy. VicRoads is reviewing the circumstances for this resident and has offered to conduct further noise monitoring.

VicRoads will also install signs on the M80 Ring Road to discourage the use of engine brakes and has offered to meet this resident to discuss the matter in detail.

Homelessness

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Mr Melhem
Raised on: 22 August 2018

REPLY:

I am informed that:

- The Victorian Government has initiatives to address housing vulnerability along the spectrum of housing needs, from early intervention, immediate housing crisis, through to long term housing. This has provided a record investment of over \$1 billion in housing and homelessness support and \$2.1 billion in financial backing to kick start new forms of social housing investment.
- In December 2016, the Treasurer announced a \$109 million homelessness package over 5 years. As part of this package, the government invested \$15 million in the H3 Wyndham Alliance. Established in 2017, the H3 Wyndham Alliance is a partnership of agencies representing health, housing and homelessness in the Western Melbourne area, bringing together different agencies to work in an integrated way.
- The capital component of the initiative enable the acquisition of 20 new properties, including the purchase of 12 one-bedroom units for long-term rough sleepers and construction of eight self-contained units for young people, including young parents at risk of homelessness.
- The Alliance will lease up to 50 properties to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Wyndham.
- The funded support component of the initiative assists people to obtain and maintain suitable and sustainable housing.
- In the West, the Victoria Government has also rolled-out of \$5 million for private rental assistance to support at risk households to sustain housing in private rental.

In January 2018 as part of the Victorian Rough Sleeping Action Plan to reduce the impact of rough sleeping, approximately \$4.5 million has been allocated to the West Metropolitan area of Melbourne, in places considered to have the highest incidence of rough sleeping. The program will provide a range of services consisting of assertive outreach teams with flexible brokerage and supportive housing teams.

Islamic Council of Victoria

Raised with: Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Raised by: Dr Ratnam
Raised on: 23 August 2018

REPLY:

Thank you for raising your views regarding the Security Infrastructure Fund. The Andrews Labor Government values the contributions Victorian Muslims have made and continue to make to our great state. Our Muslim communities are an indispensable part of the multicultural society we have worked so hard to create here in Victoria. The willingness of the Muslim communities to reach out to others to learn more about, respect and accept different faiths and cultures is profound. Unfortunately, that generosity — that compassion is not always reciprocated. I hear and read stories of people being discriminated against because of their race, religion or the colour of their skin. Many Muslims face discrimination on a day to day basis, particularly Muslim women who are identifiable by their hijab. We live in difficult times and in the last couple of years, we've seen the spread of a new kind of vitriol. For example, in 2016 a Geelong Mosque was destroyed in a suspicious fire, in 2017 a mosque in Fawkner was set on fire by extremists. Under the Andrews Labor Government, there will be zero tolerance for this kind of prejudice. And we will always support faith groups practising their beliefs without fear. The Premier and I met with the former Mufti of Australia Sheikh Abdul Azim Al Afifi to discuss issues facing the Muslim communities Victoria, such as — Islamophobia, racism, drug rehabilitation, aged care facilities, family violence services, youth services, education and employment programs. As a result of these conversations, and hearing from members of Victoria's Islamic community from Victoria's Shia communities, in the 2018/2019 state budget we handed down, we provided \$7M of extra funding for security upgrades at places of worship and culture — \$3M of which will go to our Islamic communities. Victoria cannot just be a safe place for some, it must be a safe place for everyone. The Security Infrastructure Fund complements the government's broader community safety and social cohesion programs and importantly it responds directly to feedback and issues raised by a number of communities. Whether you wear a hijab, a yarmuik, a turban or a cross. Every Victorian deserves to freely practice their faith. As you are aware, the Multicultural Affairs portfolio supports a wide range of activities across Victoria. It is important to recognise that security is one element within a much broader and larger range of initiatives that support multicultural communities to promote harmony, build their capacity and celebrate and share their culture. Since 2015 the Victorian government has allocated more than \$10 million to a range of Muslim community organisations and community led projects for a range of capacity building, community harmony and social cohesion projects as well as a range of festivals and events. This funding includes over \$2M to the Islamic Council of Victoria, some examples of this funding include:

- \$570 000 to the Empower Youth Program funded through the department of Human Health and Services
\$200 000 to fund a youth officer to engage Muslim youth \$315 225 to fund Muslim Connect
- \$175 000 from community harmony grants
- \$3.2M to fund community support groups across Victoria
- \$1.4M to fund community infrastructure projects
- \$900 000 to fund community led Islamophobia projects \$800 000 for community led family violence projects
- \$300 000 to Arkan Teledo for SRI

In addition, a range of 2018/19 grant programs are currently being finalised, including capacity building, multicultural family violence, community harmony and festival and events and I hope to announce the outcomes of these very shortly. It's worth mentioning, there are numerous initiatives funded through other portfolios across the Victorian Government which address some the issues you raised. The Andrews Labor government will continue to work with our communities, empowering them to make positive contributions to our great state.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.

Wednesday, 19 September 2018

Macedon Ranges police resources

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

All Victorian communities receive a 24 hour police response. The Government's historic investment in policing ensures the first available patrol is nearby.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$2 billion to fund the recruitment of 3135 additional police across the state. New police officers are being deployed to areas of greatest need, using the Staffing Allocation Model (SAM).

Many Victorian communities can look forward to seeing an increased police presence in their area with the roll out of additional frontline police across the state. During 2018-19 an additional 10 frontline police officers will be deployed to the Bendigo Division which services the Macedon Ranges Local Government Area.

The Government is also investing in other means for the community to contact police, including a dedicated Police Assistance Line and Online Reporting Portal. This investment will further enhance the ability of Victoria Police to appropriately respond to community safety and public order issues.

The Government's record investment in police and community safety is making a real difference, driving down crime by 8.3 per cent in the Macedon Ranges Local Government Area as documented by the independent Crime Statistics Agency.

Missing persons

Raised with: Attorney-General
Raised by: Ms Patten
Raised on: 23 August 2018

REPLY:

Since 2010, the Guardianship and Administration Act 1986 has allowed the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) to appoint an administrator to manage the financial estate of a missing person.

VCAT is able to appoint an administrator for a missing person if satisfied that:

- the person is a missing person who is over 18 and usually lives in Victoria;
- there is, or is likely to be, a need for decisions to be made in relation to the person's financial matters or property while the person is missing; and
- it is in the best interests of the missing person for an administrator to be appointed to administer the estate.

For the purpose of the appointment, a person is a missing person if:

- it is not known whether the person is alive;
- reasonable efforts have been made to find the person; and
- for at least 90 days, the person has not contacted anyone who lives at their last-known address, or any relative or friend with whom the person is likely to communicate.

An administrator makes financial and legal decisions, including decisions about banking, paying bills and managing debts.

An administrator may be a friend or relative of the missing person, or a solicitor, accountant or organisation. The administrator's decisions have the same legal force as if the missing person made the decision. If there is no one suitable and willing to act as administrator, VCAT may appoint State Trustees Limited or another organisation as administrator.

VCAT can appoint an administrator for a missing person for a period up to two years. The order may be renewed once for a further period not exceeding two years.

Nursery equipment program

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children
Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert
Raised on: 7 September 2018

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Nursery Equipment Program (NEP) has been delivered for six years in every Local Government Area in Victoria. NEP provides a service to disadvantaged Victorian children and families under the Enhanced Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program.

The Enhanced MCH Program is offered to families at risk of poor outcomes as an extension of the Universal MCH Program. It provides a more intensive level of support to children, mothers and families experiencing a period of increased need, who could benefit from targeted action and intervention.

The Andrews Labor Government has delivered a record \$236.3 million investment to the Maternal and Child Health service in the past four years, including to expand the Enhanced Maternal and Child Health program from ending when a child turns 12 months to 3.5 years.

The total budget for the Nursing Equipment Program over 2017-18 was \$1 428 000, supporting 3051 families with a total of 4751 items.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.

Thursday, 20 September 2018

Upwey-Belgrave RSL

Raised with: Minister for Veterans
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 8 February 2017

REPLY:

I thank the Member for his question. I am aware of the matters raised in relation to the Upwey-Belgrave RSL sub-branch. I am advised by the RSL Victorian Branch that the Upwey-Belgrave sub-branch is part of a strong RSL network in its district, and is receiving excellent guidance and support. Another sub-branch in the area has offered to assist by Working with the Board of the Upwey-Belgrave sub-branch. This is representative of the strong camaraderie within the RSL in Victoria and the support shown between sub-branches across the network.

I note Running Rabbits is the first RSL museum to have been accredited as a museum in Victoria and commend them on this effort. I encourage the sub-branch to continue working to ensure the community has access to this excellent collection of Australia war heritage. I will continue to work with the RSL Victorian Branch on continuing to support the veterans community in Victoria.

Let's Feed

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Raised by: Mrs Peulich
Raised on: 20 October 2017

REPLY:

The registration of fundraisers under the Fundraising Act 1998, and the registration of incorporated associations under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 falls within my portfolio responsibility as Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming & Liquor Regulation.

Let's Feed Inc. is a registered incorporated association, however it was not registered as a fundraiser.

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) has a role of ensuring that any organisation registers as a fundraiser if it is required to be registered under the Fundraising Act and raises funds of more than \$10 000 per annum.

CAV has advised me that, following concerns being raised about Let's Feed Inc., it has made inquiries about its fundraising activities and registration status.

This inquiry was not able to identify that funds raised were misappropriated or used for inappropriate purposes.

Let's Feed was issued with a number of conditions on its ongoing registration and this registration has been reduced to one year, to ensure compliance by the organisation can be closely monitored.

Goulburn Valley Health

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 8 March 2018

REPLY:

Cultural and engagement surveys, including the people matters survey, conducted by the health service in 2016 identified the potential for concern within the area of organisational culture at Goulburn Valley Health.

In September 2016 the Department of Health and Human services (the department), with the support of the health service, commissioned an independent review of organisational culture and capability to manage bullying and harassment risk.

The final report drew the following conclusions:

- Current complaints management policies and procedures required review and improvement.
- Management staff across the organisation would benefit from training and development to improve the support and supervision they provide to staff.
- Goulburn Valley Health should be recognised for acting quickly to implement a range of culture improvement initiatives in response to the 2016 people matters survey results.

Since 2016, Goulburn Valley Health has undertaken action to address the areas of concern. The cultural and engagement surveys conducted in 2017 received a significant uplift in staff participation rates with improvement observed across a range of indicators, with further improvement expected to be observed in the 2018 survey.

Medicinal cannabis

Raised with: Attorney-General
Raised by: Ms Springle
Raised on: 28 March 2018

REPLY:

I thank Ms Springle for her interest in Victoria's drug driving laws, and how they intersect with the new medicinal cannabis provisions.

Ms Springle raises two key misconceptions: firstly, that the road side drug testing program picks up unimpaired drivers who consumed cannabis several days previously; and secondly, that the program specifically discriminates against legal medicinal cannabis users.

A drug driving prosecution requires a positive saliva sample collected at the road side to be further analysed in a laboratory, specifically the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM). VIFM is a laboratory with a world class reputation in forensic toxicology, which is able to determine very precisely the type and quantity of cannabis in the sample.

The impairing form of cannabis, delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) typically metabolises into non-impairing forms of cannabis in a matter of hours, to the point that very little THC remains within one day. Residual cannabis from consumption several days previously will not be THC, but rather a non-impairing cannabis metabolite that the VIFM test specifically excludes.

Moreover VIFM works to the requisite Australian Standard which specifies a detection threshold for the reporting of THC of 10 nanograms per millilitre (ng/ml) of saliva (a nanogram is a billionth of a gram). This means that a formal drug detection is not reported unless the THC concentration exceeds this level. While most of the impairment studies are based on blood concentrations of THC, and there is not a strict correlation between THC

levels in blood and saliva, a finding of THC in saliva will indicate very recent consumption. Moreover, risk culpability studies, including ones based on Victorian crash data, do show that even low THC detections can be associated with increased crash risk. To put that into context, the average level of THC found in drug driving oral fluid samples analysed by VIFM is around 80 ng/ml. If a driver's saliva sample tests positive to THC, that means the driver used cannabis recently and is thus highly likely to be impaired.

In relation to the second misconception that medicinal cannabis users are discriminated against, the Victorian Medicinal Cannabis Scheme allows the provision of known quantities of specific metabolites of cannabis under medical supervision. The type and quantities of cannabis may vary depending on the patient's conditions. As with other medicinal drug use, the effect on driving would be taken into account as part of the treatment process. Should a person be impaired by a drug they are taking for medicinal reasons, they should simply not drive. This applies to all impairing drugs including legal prescription drugs and it is therefore important to note the warning on labels and from doctors and chemists. People who take drugs for whatever reason still have an obligation not to put themselves and other road users at risk.

Accordingly, Ms Springle's recommendation that a specific defence to a drug driving prosecution be available for medicinal cannabis users must be rejected. It implies that such people would be free to drive impaired and consequently represent a risk to all road users. The government does not support this contention.

The drug driving program as it currently operates in Victoria, and will operate in the future, is an effective road safety program. It targets drivers who are impaired and who are risking the lives and safety of all Victorian road users.

Country Fire Authority Diggers Rest brigade

Raised with: Minister for Emergency Services
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 25 May 2018

REPLY:

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of the Diggers Rest Country Fire Authority (CFA) Brigade volunteers, who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

The Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) provides grants to emergency service volunteer groups, including those who serve with the CFA, Victoria State Emergency Service, Life Saving Victoria, and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard for operational equipment, vehicles, trucks, tankers, watercraft, trailers and minor facility improvements.

CFA has advised that it is currently working with the Diggers Rest Country Fire Authority CFA Brigade on its VESEP application for a Type 2A tanker, and I encourage the Diggers Rest Country Fire Authority CFA Brigade to continue to work with CFA on its application.

This year, we have increased the maximum Government contribution for VESEP grants from \$100 000 to \$150 000, and also funded a \$10 million grants program specifically for volunteers.

This is because we take seriously the pressures that population growth has on our emergency services, and unlike you our response to that is to provide more support, rather than lie about religious conviction in order to defeat a bill that would have helped address this very problem.

Child sexual abuse

Raised with: Attorney-General
Raised by: Ms Patten
Raised on: 8 June 2018

REPLY:

As Attorney-General, I cannot comment directly on the case that you raise. However, I am able to detail actions the Government has taken to ensure child abuse is reported to authorities.

Protecting children from abuse and harm is paramount — that's why this Government is taking action to expand the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse.

Victoria has three principal obligations to report child abuse. These are created by the offence of 'failure to disclose' in section 327 of the *Crimes Act 1958*, the mandatory reporting scheme legislated for in the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005*, and the reportable conduct scheme legislated for in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

The reportable conduct scheme seeks to improve institutional responses to allegations of child abuse by workers and volunteers. All religious bodies are already within the scope of the scheme.

However, under current laws, priests and people in religious ministry are not covered by mandatory reporting laws.

This Government will end this special treatment and make sure the safety and protection of our children always comes first.

On 10 July 2018, the Victorian Government released its response to the final report of the Commonwealth Royal Commission, which also addresses reporting obligations.

The Victorian Government has accepted in principle the key Commonwealth Royal Commission recommendation that laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities should be expanded to additional professionals, including to people in religious ministries.

A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will amend the *Children, Youth and Families Act* to make it mandatory to report information about child abuse or harm disclosed during confession to child protection authorities in the Department of Health and Human Services.

We will also introduce amendments to ensure that, under the failure to report offence contained in the *Crimes Act 1958*, information disclosed in the context of a religious confession is not exempt.

These new laws will help make sure the shocking and systemic abuse revealed in the Royal Commission can never happen again.

Let's Feed

Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Raised by: Mrs Peulich
Raised on: 21 June 2018

REPLY:

Consumer Affairs Victoria was made aware of concerns about fundraising activities of Australia India Welfare and Cultural Society Inc. (the organisation), fundraising under the name Let's Feed in October last year.

Since then, I am advised that Consumer Affairs Victoria contacted the organisation to make inquiries about its fundraising activities. The organisation fully cooperated with Consumer Affairs Victoria throughout the inquiry process which concluded in May this year.

As a result of its inquiries, Consumer Affairs Victoria identified that the organisation did not comply with a number of legal requirements found in the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and Fundraising Act 1998. These included unregistered fundraising, the failure to keep records sufficient to enable a true and fair view of its fundraising income and expenditure, and the failure to keep records to enable the preparation of financial statements for the purpose of audit.

Importantly, however, I am advised the inquiries did not identify that funds raised were misappropriated or otherwise used for inappropriate purposes.

Consistent with Consumer Affairs Victoria's compliance and enforcement policy, a formal warning was issued to the organisation. This included a warning that the organisation must apply to register as a fundraiser if it wishes to re-commence fundraising, and to be aware of and comply with the relevant legal requirements.

The organisation subsequently applied for registration, and was registered as a fundraiser on 23 May 2018. A number of conditions have been placed on the registration of the organisation and included on the public register. In addition, the initial registration period has been reduced to one year, so that compliance by the organisation can be closely monitored.

By way of further information in relation to your enquiry, I advise that:

- The secretary of the organisation at the time of the fundraising activity was recorded with Consumer Affairs Victoria as Mr Jasvinder Sidhu, who voluntarily stood down as secretary on 2 March 2018.
- Let's Feed Inc. is a separate organisation which is registered as an incorporated association but is not associated with the Australia India Welfare and Cultural Society Inc.
- The organisation is not registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). The ACNC provides registration for charities seeking tax concessions and eligibility to apply for deductible gift recipient (DGR) status from the ATO. There is no requirement for fundraisers registered in Victoria under the Fundraising Act 1998 to be registered as a charity in order to carry out a fundraising appeal.
- While there are, consistent with usual operating processes, comprehensive records, documents and memoranda arising from the inquiries conducted by Consumer Affairs Victoria, a separate report of these inquiries has not been prepared.

Family violence

Raised with: Attorney-General
Raised by: Ms Patten
Raised on: 24 July 2018

REPLY:

The law already requires that a minimum term of imprisonment be imposed where a person intentionally or recklessly injures a police officer or other emergency worker on duty. The existing terms of imprisonment for such conduct ranges from six months to five years.

Under the 'special reasons' provisions in the Sentencing Act 1991, if a court finds that 'special reasons' exist, it is not required to impose a relevant statutory minimum or custodial sentence.

Under the Justice Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill, these 'special reasons' have been made more limited and specific, but they still encompass a range of circumstances, including where the offender has provided assistance to authorities, is affected by impaired mental functioning, or where substantial and compelling reasons exist.

The changes in this Bill are not expected or intended to deter family violence victims or families of people with mental illness contacting the police and emergency services when in need of assistance. While this Bill strengthens

these laws, it does not create any reason for a person in need of assistance not to contact police or other emergency services when in need of help.

Paramedics and mental health staff, by the very nature of their job, routinely engage with people who are in distress, and defuse and manage such situations, often without involving police. Emergency workers, including police, are experienced in these situations, understand the complex environments which can lead to distress and violence, and are skilled in de-escalation.

When an emergency worker is injured, police — if not already in attendance — may be contacted to attend. Following an assessment of the situation, police may choose to proceed with criminal charges in accordance with the Victoria Police Manual. If charges are laid, their appropriateness will be considered by the prosecution, defence and the court in accordance with the usual criminal procedures.

The Emergency Worker Harm Reference Group will monitor the implementation of the legislative reforms. We will continue to work with ambulance representatives, nurses and the community sector to ensure these provisions operate as intended and that people who need assistance are confident in seeking that assistance.

Munro Street, Hawthorn East, public housing

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 24 July 2018

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is committed to enforcing the conditions of tenancy agreements with public housing tenants and does not tolerate anti-social behaviour on or around public housing properties.

The department has contacted residents and urged them to report any criminal matters to Victoria Police. Departmental staff have also provided the tenants with appropriate supports through the Tenancy Plus program, which replaced the SHASP program cut by the former government.

Departmental staff will continue to liaise with the concerned residents to address their concerns. The department will also continue to work with Victoria Police. Where any tenant is charged with illegal activity on their property or breaches of a tenancy agreement are substantiated, the department will take action through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

MetroHub

Raised with: Minister for Industry and Employment
Raised by: Mr Leane
Raised on: 25 July 2018

REPLY:

The Victorian Government recently launched the MetroHub which will be an important resource for people seeking employment on the Tunnel and Stations component of the Metro Tunnel project. The MetroHub has been established by the contractor appointed to deliver the Tunnel and Stations work (the Cross Yarra Partnership, which is a consortium comprising Lendlease Engineering, John Holland, Bouygues Construction and Capella Capital) in partnership with Holmesglen TAFE.

Complementing this initiative, the Victorian Government has committed \$6 million to establish new services to connect young people from Aboriginal and migrant communities as well as women into jobs on Victoria's major projects. Implementation arrangements are being finalised, but these services will reach out into communities where young people need additional support to connect to the thousands of jobs being generated through the record investment in infrastructure.

This new funding will build on the success of the Major Projects Skills Guarantee by enhancing the diversity and skill-base of the workforce on major projects. A component of this funding will support community engagement to raise awareness amongst migrant and multicultural communities of the employment opportunities created by the Government's investment in major projects.

The Government will allocate a further \$1.2 million to support jobseekers from African and Pasifika heritage into work. This program will provide funding for tailored assistance to these jobseekers who are struggling to gain a foothold in the labour market. The program will fund African and Pasifika community organisations to undertake outreach into their communities to provide members of the community with mentoring and advocacy support. These organisations will identify and engage with young people who require job placement assistance and will work with them to ensure they are aware of the range of Jobs Victoria support services available to them.

Jobs Victoria has successfully supported 145 young Victorians with African heritage into employment since 1 July 2016 and these new initiatives will build on Jobs Victoria's success to date. I am confident that the new initiatives being implemented now will support increased economic and social inclusion for all Victorians.

Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault

Raised with: Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 27 July 2018

REPLY:

Thank you for your question. The program you refer to is the Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment Service (SABTS), which provides support to children and young people (up to and including 17 years of age) who display problem sexual behaviour or sexually abusive behaviour towards others (but do not have a conviction related to sexual offending).

The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) funds eleven agencies to deliver SABTS, including Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA). Funding for SABTS in 2018-19 is more than \$7.5 million state-wide, with Gippsland CASA receiving over \$700 000.

The Family Support Practitioner Program you refer to is an innovative service delivery response adopted by Gippsland CASA within their SABTS program, where an assertive outreach worker engages difficult to engage clients, and their families. Due to the intensive nature of this work, the caseload for this worker is five cases. Gippsland CASA fund this in part through internal sources as SABTS funding targets are higher than five cases per worker.

I also advise that the Justice Legislation Amendment (Family Violence Protection and Other Matters) Bill 2018, which contains legislative amendments to extend the therapeutic treatment order (TTO) regime to 15 to 17 year olds, passed a few days ago on 7 August 2018. When these legislative changes come into operation, they will result in increased support for an older cohort to engage in a therapeutic response for sexually abusive behaviours.

The department consistently monitors demand for all its funded programs.

Nagambie ambulance services

Raised with: Minister for Ambulance Services
Raised by: Ms Symes
Raised on: 8 August 2018

REPLY:

I can confirm the employment of a year round permanent paramedic has been extended. Nagambie is supported by a professional paramedic, an on call Ambulance Community Officer team and the Western Hume Paramedic Community Support Coordinator.

Wind farms

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 8 August 2018

REPLY:

Planning permit applications for wind farms in Victoria are subject to an assessment of their potential impacts before I make a determination. This includes assessment of noise, visual impact, aviation safety, impact on local bats and avifauna, removal of native vegetation, and traffic.

There is also extensive public notice of permit applications to ensure that the local community can make submissions and have their say in the process.

The two projects you mentioned, at Inverleigh and Golden Plains, are currently under consideration.

Public notice for the 16-turbine Inverleigh wind farm was completed in late August 2018. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning will now assess the proposal and brief me to determine the matter.

The 228-turbine Golden Plains wind farm is a larger and more complex project. I required that it be subject to an Environment Effects Statement as well as a planning permit application. The matter was considered at a panel/inquiry hearing, which concluded in mid-August. I await the report from this hearing, after which I will determine the matter.

There is a robust process in place for considering wind farm proposals. I will not be putting a hold on wind farm development in Victoria as suggested by Mr Ramsay.

Homelessness

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 8 August 2018

REPLY:

I'm glad to see that two months out from an election that Ms Crozier has woken up to the issue of homelessness. If only she had been aware of it when she was a member of the previous Liberal Government which presided over \$330 million of cuts to the housing budget, placing even greater pressure on housing and homelessness services.

We inherited a broken, under-funded housing system from those opposite and Ms Crozier is correct to identify that this has placed considerable pressure on those at risk of homelessness.

In response, we have invested over \$1 billion in housing and homelessness support over this term of government. That is almost triple the investment over the previous four years. And yes, that money assists both men and women at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

In January 2018, I announced Victoria's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan. This was a commitment of more than \$45 million to intervene early, get rough sleepers housed quickly, and strengthen support services to keep vulnerable people off the streets.

The Action Plan includes funding to build additional modular housing to provide people sleeping rough with stable housing and wrap-around support. This is the same modular housing that is already providing safe and secure housing to people in five locations across Melbourne, including Brighton. This is the housing that the Liberal candidate for Brighton wants to tear down, booting vulnerable Victorians back out onto the street.

If you are genuinely concerned about the plight of men who have experienced homelessness then you should start by calling out your Liberal Party colleague on his despicable campaign against housing for the homeless.

Clergy mandatory reporting

Raised with: Attorney-General
Raised by: Ms Patten
Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

Victoria has taken strong action to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse, and will continue to do so in responding to the Commonwealth Royal Commission.

Protecting children from abuse and harm is paramount — that's why this Government will take action to expand the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse.

Under current laws, teachers, school principals, doctors, nurses and police officers who believe a child is being abused or harmed are required to report this to the authorities. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will amend the *Children, Youth and Families Act* to make it mandatory for priests and people in religious ministry to report information about child abuse or harm disclosed to them, including during confession, to child protection authorities in the Department of Health and Human Services, as it is for other mandatory reporters.

This Government will also introduce amendments to ensure that, under the failure to report offence contained in the *Crimes Act 1958*, information disclosed in the context of a religious confession is not exempt.

I note your comments in relation to the Uniform Evidence Law. South Australia is not a uniform evidence jurisdiction. With respect to any reform of section 127 of the *Evidence Act 2008*, Victoria will continue to work towards national consistency through the Council of Attorneys General Working Group process.

Labor will always make sure the safety and protection of our children comes first.

Lara recycling site

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

Following the fire at Colaroo the Andrews Labor Government quickly established the Resource Recovery Facilities Audit Taskforce to inspect resource recovery facilities across the state.

To date, the VCAT enforcement orders, which were issued to both C&D Recycling and the site's owner, have all been complied with. Importantly, no further waste has been deposited at the premises. The site is now contained behind a 2-metre chain mesh fence, and security is present on site 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week. An appropriately qualified environmental consultant has been appointed to produce a sampling program, Rehabilitation Plan, Development Management Plan and Environmental Management Plan for the site.

Emergency management planning is also well underway.

Emergency Management Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Environment Protection Authority Victoria, Victoria Police, WorkSafe, and the City of Greater Geelong are working closely together on this matter to ensure that C&D Recycling and the site owner are held to account.

Planned burns

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to the protection of Victoria's native plants and animals. Recently, I announced almost \$35 million in grants for targeted, grassroots biodiversity action as part of the biggest funding boost in Victoria's history.

Regarding the planned burn undertaken on 26 July 2018 to protect the Purple Diuris, summer is the ideal time for burning in an area with orchids. However, burning in summer is not always possible due to risks to people and property. Research, including DELWP's own monitoring of grassland sites, has shown that the flowering response of orchid species such as Purple Diuris in the first year after burning can be significantly compromised, but in the second and third years, the response is significantly increased, more so than if burning did not occur at all.

The site at Hillside North Reserve had not been burned for five years. Further delays in burning could have put the Purple Diuris at risk from a failure to reproduce. Normally native grassland sites are burnt as soon as possible after summer, but on this occasion, due to the dryness this autumn, it was decided to delay the burn so that a low fire intensity could be achieved.

It is worth noting that the Purple Diuris Action Statement states that summer burning is "ideal" but "often not undertaken" and further states that although burning out of the summer period can damage growing stems, the second year after fire is generally the most productive for flowering. The importance of regular burning is clearly identified in the Action Statement.

The site at Hillside North Reserve has been burnt by DELWP eight times since 1994, and monitoring of the Purple Diuris has indicated the species is flourishing at the site. The site will continue to be monitored by DELWP and volunteers to record the response to this most recent burn.

Shepparton health services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

The media release of 31 July is correct, and the Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving health services in the Shepparton region. Goulburn Valley Health will receive funding of \$201.51 million in 2018/19 which is \$23.1 million (12.9 per cent) more than in 2017/18. Funding for Goulburn Valley Health has increased by \$54.74 million (37.3 per cent) since 2014/15 when the Liberals were last in government.

I am pleased to draw the Member's attention to the \$171 million redevelopment of Shepparton Hospital which will provide the community and surrounding districts with a modern health facility that will ensure more patients receive treatment with reduced wait times.

The redevelopment includes a new four-storey building with 64 inpatient beds, 10 intensive care unit beds, seven operating theatres and a new kitchen and morgue. A brand new emergency department will double the current capacity, featuring 36 treatment spaces and a nine-bed short stay unit.

This expansion was only made possible because of the investment and support of the Andrews Labor Government — both of which were absent during the four years of the previous Liberal Government. It will mean more people will be able to get the high quality and safe emergency care they need, faster and closer to home.

I thank you for your interest in the actions the Andrews Labor Government is taking to improve health service provision in the Shepparton electorate.

Gippsland homelessness

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 9 August 2018

REPLY:

The locations for the new modular units being delivered under the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan were selected through the extensive analysis of Census data and data from the homelessness, health, mental health and justice services and aligned with areas of greatest need across the State.

It is positive to hear of your support for the Andrews Labor Government's modular units program given all we've heard from the Liberal Party over the last 12 months has been about the Liberal Candidate for Brighton's plans for closing the supportive housing site if elected and booting the residents back onto the street.

His campaign against the homeless in Brighton has been despicable and I encourage you to let him know your thoughts on the transformative power of this supportive housing initiative.

I also note your concerns about unemployment in Gippsland. The Australian Homelessness Monitor, released earlier this year noted the link between increasing risk of homelessness and increasingly punitive income support measures implemented by the Commonwealth Government.

I am on the public record stating that we need a fairer Commonwealth income support system that gives people who are receiving Commonwealth income support, such as the pension or Newstart, the dignity of being able to afford a roof over their head without having to sacrifice other life essentials such as food or medicine. Under the current Commonwealth Government, thousands of people on income support, including people in your electorate, are denied that dignity.

I am, however, pleased to see that the most recent Commonwealth Cabinet iteration seems to have found the housing portfolio at long last. I encourage you to also make your concerns about Commonwealth income support and support for vulnerable persons in your electorate known to the new Federal Ministers, as their predecessors were notably absent from this space.

Swan Hill hospital

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 21 August 2018

REPLY:

The Government acknowledges the concerns raised by community members in support of a redevelopment of the Swan Hill Hospital.

The Victorian Health and Human Services Building Authority has been working with the leadership group of Swan Hill Hospital for some time, firstly to develop the Swan Hill District Health services plan and now more recently to commence master planning for the hospital.

Whilst the master planning process does not lead directly to redevelopment projects, it does inform the government when prioritising the many urgent capital needs across the state, and unlike the previous government, we are managing a large pipeline of health capital projects across the Victoria.

I am pleased to inform the Member that the Andrews Labor Government has made several capital investments at Swan Hill Hospital including a total of \$3.2 million from the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund to establish sub-acute services and purchase new medical equipment, and \$317 915 for initiatives to improve safety for staff, patients and visitors from the Health Service Violence Prevention Fund.

Swan Hill District Health will also share in record health funding, the Andrews Labor Government is investing \$40.3 million in 2018/19 — \$3.29 million more than the previous 12 months — an 8.9 per cent increase.

The funding for Swan Hill District Health has increased by \$7.89 million, or 24.7 per cent, since 2014/15, the last year the former Liberal Nationals were in Government.

Autism Plus

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 21 August 2018

REPLY:

I do not shy away from calling for the highest standards possible from agencies responsible for providing care to vulnerable people.

I appreciate that the uncertainty of this time can be unsettling for the families of Autism Plus clients, however, it was after repeated investigations into the operations of Autism Plus that I recommended to the Governor in Council that an Administrator be appointed — Autism Plus had not taken appropriate steps to make significant improvements in the way they care for people with a disability. People deserve the care they receive to be safe and of the best quality.

The Administrator is maintaining and improving the day-to-day delivery of services to clients whilst working with the Department of Health and Human Services on a way forward that will ensure the ongoing provision of services.

I assure the clients and their families, that continuity of service and care is of paramount importance as we implement a process which ensures that services provided to their loved ones meet strict criteria on quality of service provision and safeguarding.

Supporting the clients and families remains a high priority for this Government.

Gormandale and District Primary School bus service

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 21 August 2018

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

I refer to your matter raised during the legislative assembly on 21 August 2018 regarding a school bus service extension for Gormandale and District Primary School.

The Andrews Labor Government, through Public Transport Victoria and the Department of Education and Training, provides transport assistance to families through an extensive network of free bus services or a conveyance allowance for eligible students throughout rural and regional Victoria.

I am informed that in 2017 and 2018, the Department's Student Transport Unit and Public Transport Victoria have worked closely with the Principal of the Gormandale and Districts Primary School, and the Wellington Shire Council to enable a possible route extension to service Merrimans Creek Road.

It was discovered that the Merrimans Creek Road conditions were deemed suitable for the school bus to navigate safely along the proposed route, however the route was not able to be modified to enable a safe turning location for the bus. The process to vary or modify an existing bus service involves a number of different stages, and requires input from key stakeholders. Any extensions or modifications to bus services must be deemed safe for all road users as is appropriate.

I have requested the Department's Student Transport Unit to continue to work with Public Transport Victoria to monitor the Gormandale and District Primary School bus network to enable a future bus extension if possible.

Goulburn Valley Health

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 22 August 2018

REPLY:

In 2016, the Andrews Labor Government established a \$200 million Regional Health Infrastructure Fund to improve health services and agencies in rural and regional Victoria. The funding is available to expand capacity, improve safety, quality and efficiency and deliver better care to patients no matter where they live. The 2018/19 Victorian State Budget allocated an additional \$50 million to the Fund bringing the total to \$250 million.

In contrast with the previous Liberal Nationals Government, we are managing a large pipeline of health capital projects, and to suggest that the Government holds the health care of Shepparton in low regard is laughable. Rounds 1 and 2 of the Fund is delivering over 173 projects across 90 agencies across regional and rural Victoria.

While not every application to the fund has been successful, I am pleased to remind the Member that \$9 957 000 has been allocated for the redevelopment of the Waranga Campus of Goulburn Valley Health. This redevelopment will co-locate acute, aged care and community health services in a single central site in Rushworth.

In addition to the investments made through the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund, the government has committed \$169.5 million for Stage 1 of a redevelopment of the Goulburn Valley Hospital in Shepparton. Construction of the new and expanded emergency department will commence in late September.

While the previous government failed to invest in our health services, we are delivering record funding to ensure that patients in the Goulburn Murray region can access quality care they deserve.

Prenatal sex selection

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins
Raised on: 23 August 2018

REPLY:

I thank the member for raising the issue of gender equality and her request to consider the development of education and awareness programs for Chinese and Indian migrant communities together with training for health professionals who are involved in prenatal diagnosis.

This question arises from a scientific report published in the International Journal of Epidemiology in July 2018.

The department is currently undertaking investigation into the issues identified by this research and I thank the member for further bringing it to my attention.

It is widely recognised that prenatal sex selection of babies is a significant global health issue, and it is worth reiterating the strong stance of the Andrews Labor Government on discrimination against women and girls.

Victorian legislation specifically bans sex selection under Section 28 of the Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008, unless it is necessary for the child to be of a particular sex so as to avoid the risk of transmission of a genetic abnormality or a genetic disease. A breach of this section incurs a penalty of two years imprisonment or 240 penalty points or both.

The government acknowledges the importance of reducing any practices that reinforce discriminatory and sexist stereotypes towards women by devaluing females. Victoria's gender equality strategy, Safe and Strong, sets out a framework for enduring and sustained action over time, and aims to progressively build the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and deliver gender equality. Financial, respect and responsibility programs are included for multicultural and diverse communities.

We are committed to a whole of government approach to support, strengthen and empower women and girls from culturally diverse populations through education, training and skill development to enable their full access and participation at all levels in the community and workforce.

Local government rates

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 23 August 2018

REPLY:

Local governments have a wide range of rating instruments available to them under the *Local Government Act 1989* to achieve their objectives of fairness and equity within the limits provided by the Fair Go Rates system. Such instruments include differential rating, rate rebates, rate deferrals, hardship provisions and others.

A ministerial review of the Fair Go Rates system is prescribed in s.185G of the *Local Government Act 1989*. The review is to be completed by 31 December 2021. The review will provide the government with an appropriate opportunity to examine the Fair Go Rates system and broader issues related to local government rating systems at that time.

Workplace safety

Raised with: Minister for Industrial Relations
Raised by: Ms Springle
Raised on: 23 August 2018

REPLY:

There is nothing more important than workplace safety. That is why the Andrews Labor Government announced that, if re-elected, it will create a new criminal offence of workplace manslaughter in the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) to supplement existing measures in the OHS Act. Under the proposed new laws, employers will face fines of almost \$16 million and individuals responsible for negligently causing death will face up to 20 years jail.

The OHS Act establishes a comprehensive regime to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and other people at work. WorkSafe has functions under the OHS Act to monitor and enforce compliance with the OHS Act and associated regulations, and to promote public awareness about occupational health and safety.

The OHS Act includes a range enforcement options. Where there is sufficient evidence of a breach of OHS laws, WorkSafe can undertake prosecutions, which can attract substantial fines, and jail for an individual in the case of reckless endangerment, which places a person at a workplace in danger of serious injury. In appropriate cases, WorkSafe can also enter into enforceable undertakings as an alternative to prosecutions, and issue improvement notices and prohibition notices.

Moreover, the Independent Review of OHS Compliance and Enforcement in Victoria was undertaken in 2016 to examine the appropriateness and effectiveness of WorkSafe's OHS policies and activities. 22 recommendations relating to WorkSafe's compliance and enforcement activities were made of which the Government and WorkSafe has supported, supported in principle or supported in part, all recommendations.

A number of these recommendations have now been completed, while the remaining recommendations are on track for implementation in line with the Government's commitment.

Namely, recommendations one, two and three which relate to WorkSafe's OHS Compliance and Enforcement Framework (the Framework), including a recommendation that WorkSafe review its OHS Compliance and Enforcement Policy (the Policy), in consultation with the Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee (OHSAC) have been completed and are expected to be published on the WorkSafe website by the end of September.

10 of the 22 recommendations have been completed with the remaining to be completed by the end of 2018 and early 2019 respectively.

The Andrews Labor Government has also strengthened support for OHS by increasing OHS inspector numbers full time equivalent OHS inspectors (inspectors and group leaders) by 30% since 2014.

The Minister for Finance has responsibility for the OHS Act, and I have asked him to consider the measures proposed by Ms Springle.

Public sector code of conduct

Raised with: Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 23 August 2018

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Southern Metropolitan for her question to me on 23 August 2018 in relation to Respect for Women.

The Victorian Government utterly abhors the comments reportedly made by Mr Nicholson on Facebook in January.

This sort of disrespectful and threatening behaviour towards women is unacceptable and Australian society does not condone any form of violence, including threats.

The Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council have responded swiftly to this incident and have suspended Mr Nicholson.

I have received a letter from the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council, and they have also asked that I read out the following quote from their organisation:

“The Wurundjeri Land Council has taken this matter extremely seriously and on becoming aware of Mr Nicholson’s comments, suspended him from providing cultural and educational services to the Victorian Government. Mr Nicholson has publicly expressed his deep regrets for the comments he made and has retracted the comments. He has also sought anger management counselling in light of this interaction. Bill will remain suspended until he has completed this counselling.”

The Andrews Government respects Aboriginal people’s Traditional Ownership of Country, which dates back over 60 000 years. It is right and proper that we continue to engage Formally Recognised Traditional Owner corporations to perform Welcomes to Country at events held on their Traditional lands.

Ridesharing regulation

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr O’Sullivan
Raised on: 24 August 2018

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government’s reforms to the Commercial Passenger Vehicle industry have improved and expanded services for passengers across Victoria, including Bendigo. Since October 2017 there are an extra 150 new commercial passenger vehicles registered in the greater Bendigo area, providing additional services to those who rely on these services the most.

To operate legally providers vehicles and drivers must be accredited by Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria (CPVV). Service providers accepting bookings must also be registered as Booking Service Providers.

The accreditation of drivers and registration of vehicles are a priority for the Government, to ensure passenger safety and to provide a level playing field for all industry participants.

The Government will continue to raise awareness of the recent industry changes and the legal obligations of drivers and service providers. There is no legitimate reason for people to not comply with the law and where people choose not to do so, appropriate compliance action will be taken.

The concerns raised by the Member for Northern Victoria in relation to the financial assistance received by taxi licence holders needs to be considered alongside the fact that he opposed any financial assistance being provided.

The Liberal and National coalition members voted in Parliament in support of the regulation of ride-sharing and in support of the removal of taxi licences, but voted against provisions that provided taxi licence holders from receiving financial assistance.

Kingswood golf course

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mrs Peulich
Raised on: 24 August 2018

REPLY:

I appreciate Mrs Peulich's concern for Dingley Village and note her request to bring forward the date of a decision on Amendment C151 to the Kingston Planning Scheme, which proposes to rezone the former Kingswood golf course and seeks approval of an associated planning permit for subdivision and development of the land.

I direct Mrs Peulich to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* for the relevant timeframes prescribed for the planning scheme amendment process.

Under the Act, planning scheme amendments require an exhibition time of no less than one month. The planning authority, Kingston City Council, allowed for an extended exhibition period for Amendment C151 to give the community sufficient opportunity to participate in the consultation process. The exhibition period closed on 30 August 2018, and I am advised that over 7500 submissions were received.

The council will consider all of the submissions, and if any submissions cannot be resolved, it may request that I appoint an independent planning panel to review the amendment and hear from submitters. On receipt of the panel's report, the council can decide whether to adopt the amendment or not. If the amendment is adopted, the council can then submit it to me and I will make a decision about whether to approve the amendment based on its merits. The council has recently requested additional time to consider the large volume of submissions.

Good planning depends on good process. Short circuiting the planning scheme amendment process would not allow for the concerns of all affected parties to be considered by the council or allow for the normal planning scheme amendment process to proceed, including consideration by an independent planning panel of the matters raised in public submissions.

Electronic land transfer

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 24 August 2018

REPLY:

Your question raised several issues, each of which I will deal with in turn.

Commercialisation of the Land Titles Office

On 27 August 2018 the Treasurer announced the appointment of Victorian Land Registry Services (VLRS) as the operator of the land titles and registry functions of Land Use Victoria.

Victorian Land Registry Services is backed by the First State Superannuation Scheme, a 100 per cent owned Australian superannuation fund.

Victorian Land Registry Services will be responsible for part of the state's land titles and registry functions for a term of 40 years, after which the functions will be returned to public hands.

The State will retain full control over prices for statutory land registry services throughout the 40-year term, and price increases will be capped at CPI for non-statutory services provided by VLRS. The Registrar of Titles will remain under State control, retaining an oversight role over the private operator.

The appointment of VLRS follows a competitive market engagement process to ensure the transaction delivered value for money for Victorians.

First State Superannuation has significant experience running land registries through their investment in the NSW Land and Property Information concession.

Mandating the use of electronic conveyancing

Implementation of a national electronic conveyancing system is a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) initiative, underpinned by an Intergovernmental Agreement, that has been progressively implemented over more than five years.

Requirements to lodge transactions electronically in Victoria commenced in August 2016 following industry consultation and agreement on a progressive timeline for implementation. The requirement to electronically lodge all combinations of transactions available in PEXA system from 1 October 2018 was agreed with key industry bodies including the Law Institute of Victoria, Australian Institute of Conveyancers (Vic) and Australian Bankers Association in February 2017. Industry have known about this change for more than 18 months.

There are now more than 3300 Victorian subscribers to the PEXA system and in the 12 months to 31 August 2018 there were more than 360 000 Victorian transactions processed, proving the capacity and capability of the PEXA system. The system is working effectively as evidenced by the considerable number of conveyancers, lawyers and financial institutions who are regularly transacting through the PEXA system.

For the week ending 2 September 2018 in Victoria, 69 per cent of all property transactions and 62 per cent of all land transfers were lodged electronically, of which over 50 per cent included financial settlement.

This has been achieved as many conveyancers, lawyers and financial institutions have invested in and changed their business processes in readiness for the 1 October 2018 timeline.

Media around Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and PEXA

There was some media during mid-August 2018 indicating that Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is investigating PEXA Ltd. The Land Use Victoria understanding is the enquiry related to the availability of the national electronic conveyancing data standard which has been developed jointly by the Land Registries and PEXA Ltd. The Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council (ARNECC) is working with PEXA Ltd on future governance arrangements for the standard.

Electronic land transfer

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 4 September 2018

REPLY:

Your question raised matters about mandating the use of electronic conveyancing and Property Exchange Australia (PEXA) system security. I have addressed both matters in my response.

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Property Exchange Australia (PEXA) system security

The PEXA system has robust fraud protections and strict authentication procedures built into its platform. Given the online environment the PEXA system operates in, these measures are continually reviewed and enhanced.

Recent security enhancements include:

- Increased monitoring of PEXA system workspaces;
- PEXA Ltd intervention in the creation of new users within existing accounts;
- Workspace time stamps; and
- Multi-factor verification.

PEXA Ltd have also introduced the PEXA Residential Seller Guarantee (PRSG) that provides protection to sellers in the event of certain kinds of fraud.

PEXA Ltd and Land Use Victoria are working closely with the conveyancing industry and financial institutions to create a world-leading electronic conveyancing capability, both now and in the future.

Assisted reproductive programs

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Patten
Raised on: 5 September 2018

REPLY:

The Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 ('the Act') provides a number of requirements that people must comply with before undergoing IVF treatment. This includes undergoing child protection order checks and police checks. The Act provides a framework that aims to balance access to assisted reproductive treatment with establishing appropriate safeguards for children yet to be born. The requirement for criminal record checks and child protection order checks adopts several recommendations of the Victorian Law Reform Commission's 2007 review of Assisted Reproductive Treatment and Adoption.

The Victorian Government announced a 12-month review of the assisted reproductive treatment framework on 6 April 2018. The independent review is being conducted by Michael Gorton AM.

I note that one of the matters raised in the Review of assisted reproductive treatment consultation paper is whether it is timely to consider whether the offences that give rise to the presumption not to treat remain appropriate. I would encourage all key stakeholders and members of the community with an interest in this matter or in assisted reproductive treatment generally to make a submission to the consultation paper. Submissions can be made until 21 September 2018 at engage.vic.gov.au/art-review or via email at art.review@dhhs.vic.gov.au.

The review will provide an interim report to Government in October 2018, and a final report with recommendations in April 2019.

Sunbury car parking

Raised with: Minister for Local Government
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 5 September 2018

REPLY:

I understand the Member for Western Metropolitan has concerns about decisions of Hume City Council regarding the use of a council owned car park in the vicinity of the Sunbury railway station.

As a separate tier of government, councils have the responsibility for making decisions and setting priorities that seek to achieve the best outcomes for their communities as a whole. In carrying out their duties, councils often have to balance the competing views of different sections of the community as well as any budgetary and resourcing considerations.

I would encourage anyone who has concerns about Hume City Council's actions relating to this or any other matter, to directly contact the council to discuss their concerns.

If a person believes that administrative decisions of the council have been made inappropriately they have the option of seeking the involvement of the Victorian Ombudsman. If there is evidence of a breach of the Local Government Act 1989, the Government Inspectorate is the integrity agency established to investigate fences under the Local Government Act.

Environmental water

Raised with: Minister for Water
Raised by: Ms Dunn
Raised on: 5 September 2018

REPLY:

As you are aware I have asked the Federal Water Minister to encourage the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH) to follow Victoria's approach (via the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH)) and identify opportunities to trade water for the benefit of farmers as early as possible.

As the Victorian Minister for Water, the CEWH is not governed by me. It does not answer to me, nor do I have influence over it.

Moreover, the CEWH makes decisions on its use or trade of environmental water independently.

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is not subject to the direction of the Federal Water Minister in relation to decisions about environmental water. Under Section 106 of the Commonwealth Water Act 2007, the CEWH can trade water where this supports environmental outcomes.

I have not directed the CEWH to trade environmental water. I have asked the Federal Water Minister to encourage the CEWH to identify trade opportunities at the earliest possible opportunity where it has identified that environmental water is available to trade.

I uphold the statutory management of environmental water entitlements. I uphold the critical role of our environmental water holders in determining how and where environmental water should be used to provide healthy and resilient waterways, catchments and floodplains.

I am very aware of the significant ecological value of Victoria's river red gum forests in both state and national parks. That is why I have stood up for the environmental infrastructure works under the Basin Plan which targets environmental water to priority sites such as Gunbower Forest, Nyah-Vinifera Forest and to Lindsay and Wallpolla Islands in the Murray-Sunset National Park.

That is why I have asked the Federal Government to deliver the funding for the 605GL worth of environmental offset projects under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan that will mean efficient delivery of environmental water.

My government has demonstrated its commitment to the protection of riparian ecosystems in its record investment of \$222 million over four years to protect and improve in waterway and catchment health.

Importantly, providing water for the environment also provides benefits to communities. These include tourism, recreation, bee-keeping, education, timber production, cultural connections and social wellbeing — things very important as communities face the pressures of dry conditions and drought.

For the first time in almost 200 years, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians are being given an active and meaningful role in planning and management of the state's water. By building knowledge and understanding about the values, uses and economic potential of water for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians, we can recognise and support these values in how we plan, manage and deliver water. Improving access for Aboriginal people to water for economic development is another new and emerging area being explored and developed. My government has put \$9.7 million behind this program.

Housing affordability

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 5 September 2018

REPLY:

This government is responding to the cost of housing in Victoria through a series of reforms including:

- Increasing the supply of housing through faster planning;
- Supporting people to buy their own home;
- Promoting stability and affordability for renters;
- Increasing and renewing social housing stock; and
- Facilitating the provision of affordable housing.

The initiatives in Homes for Victorians and Plan Melbourne target housing affordability and choice, and the long-term planning for housing and growth across Melbourne and the regions.

Until June this year, Victoria's Planning and Environment Act 1987 made no mention of affordable housing, leading to confusion and legal uncertainty about the role of planning in facilitating it. The omission of affordable housing from the state's planning legislation was a barrier to the development of affordable housing.

The amendments to the Planning and Environment Act establish a flexible, voluntary framework for affordable housing, that supports the inclusion of affordable housing policies or provisions in planning schemes, and provides a clear definition and a tool by which landowners and Councils can enter into affordable housing agreements.

These initiatives include:

- Targets of six per cent of all new housing in the Fishermans Bend and Arden renewal precincts to be affordable for low to moderate income households.
- The government's innovative Inclusionary Housing Pilot, which will deliver a minimum of 100 new social housing dwellings in addition to a percentage of affordable housing across six surplus government land parcels.
- Grants of up to \$200 000 have been awarded to fifteen Victorian councils as part of the Social Housing Investment Planning grants program, supporting those Councils to plan for innovative new social housing projects.

- Establishment of the \$1 billion Victorian Social Housing Growth Fund, to support innovative partnerships between the Victorian Government and consortia including the community housing, private, not for profit and local, government sectors.
- Providing over \$1.1 billion in low interest loans and government guarantees through its Building Financial Capacity of Housing Agencies initiative.
- Renewing eleven public housing estates. Stage one of this program will create at least 1800 new public homes, alongside private housing that will include homes prioritised for first homebuyers. The majority of the new public homes will be one- and two-bedroom properties, responding to need on the Victorian Housing Register for this type of accommodation.

Since the release of Homes for Victorians, the Victorian Government has committed over \$1 billion in additional housing and homelessness support and \$2.1 billion in financial instruments that will boost Victoria's supply of social housing.

Collectively, these initiatives will deliver over 6000 new social housing dwellings, renew 2500 public properties, build the capacity of the community housing sector, use state land and assets more effectively, maintain and upgrade existing public housing and provide homelessness services to more than 19 000 vulnerable Victorians.

Broadmeadows Primary School site

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Ondarchie
Raised on: 6 September 2018

REPLY:

The site at 2–16 Nicholas Street, Broadmeadows is part of the Inclusionary Housing Pilot. It is part of the Victorian Government's Homes for Victorians strategy to improve affordability and help vulnerable Victorians access a safe, stable and secure home. The pilot is an innovative way to utilise surplus government land to deliver at least 100 new social housing dwellings and opportunities for affordable housing across six sites in areas close to services, jobs and transport.

The site was considered suitable for the pilot in mid-2016 and in February 2018 the Government Land Standing Advisory Committee considered the suitability of new planning controls for the site. There were nine submissions made to the advisory committee, including a submission from the Broadmeadows Progress Association, and an extensive examination of the provision of open space on the site was undertaken. The advisory committee report can be found at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/glps.

Officers from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and my Office met with the Broadmeadows Progress Association on 8 May 2018 to discuss its concerns regarding the development of the site.

Amendment C223 to the Hume Planning Scheme introduced new planning controls for the site on 5 July 2018 that respond to community concerns. The site is in the Residential Growth Zone with an Environmental Audit Overlay and a Development Plan Overlay — Schedule 30 (DPO30). DPO30 requires the following:

- a new public open space area, consistent with council standards for neighbourhood parks linking into the Meadowlink Linear Reserve,
- a maximum two storey built form adjacent to or opposite existing single or double storey dwellings,
- environmentally sustainable design features and principles,
- a traffic management report, including an integrated pedestrian and bicycle network,
- an arboricultural assessment of significant vegetation, and
- a concept landscape plan.

The planning controls can be found via the following link: www.planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/hume.

On 7 August 2018, I met with Cr Geoff Porter, Mayor, and Mr Domenic Isola, Chief Executive Officer, from Hume City Council and the Member for Broadmeadows, Mr Frank McGuire. The meeting related to the proposed preservation of 0.75 hectares of open space on land at the site. I have been engaged in continued discussions with Council about the ownership and management of open space on the site since that time. Council has also written to me requesting that I consider appointing it as Committee of Management for any future public open space on the site.

Proposals for the development and sale of the six pilot sites are currently being sought through an Expression of Interest process which commenced on 8 August 2018. The final layout and built form of the development will be identified through a rigorous evaluation process with the announcement of short-listed bidders expected in October 2018.

Further information in relation to the pilot can be found on DELWP's website at: www.planning.vic.gov.au/inclusionary-housing-pilot.

Community health services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Springle
Raised on: 6 September 2018

REPLY:

Community health services are highly valued by the Andrews Labor Government for their role in supporting the health and wellbeing of Victorians. They deliver an essential range of services to diverse and often vulnerable populations.

In 2018-19, the Government is investing \$292 million for community health care, to provide more opportunities for Victorians to receive the primary health care and social support they need.

In June 2018, I announced the establishment of a Community Taskforce, to advise government on opportunities to strengthen the community health sector. The Taskforce is chaired by Mr Phillip Bain, a former CEO of a community health service. I am pleased that the Victorian Healthcare Association is represented on the Taskforce.

The Taskforce (with key support from the Victorian Healthcare Association) has commenced leading a comprehensive consultation process to identify a shared vision for the role and priorities for community health now and into the future.

The Community Health Taskforce will work with the sector, peak bodies, key organisations and communities to set out a plan to build on these strengths, and ensure that community health services continue to provide high quality care and support to Victorians who need them.

Food waste collection

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Ms Truong
Raised on: 6 September 2018

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government has invested over \$100 million in waste and resource recovery over the last four years, more than any other Victorian Government.

Funding from the Sustainability Fund is already being invested in diverting organics from our waste stream.

West Footscray factory fire

Raised with: Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Raised by: Ms Truong
Raised on: 7 September 2018

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is investing more than \$1 million to restore Stony Creek following the factory fire in Footscray West in late August.

The funding includes \$700 000 for removal, disposal and remediation works at Cruickshank Park, Golf Course to Hyde Street, Paramount Road to Geelong Road and Francis Street to Golf Course.

It also includes \$350 000 for water sampling, testing and monitoring by the EPA to determine the impact of the fire on the waterway. These findings will inform the final recovery plan.

This funding is in addition to the \$600 000 already invested by Melbourne Water as part of the initial clean-up work already undertaken at Stony Creek.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Environment Protection Authority (EPA), and Melbourne Water are working with the Maribyrnong City Council to implement a long-term plan to help the waterway recover from the impacts of the fire.

As part of this process, agencies will work with key community stakeholders to establish a community reference group to monitor the progress of recovery works.

The EPA continues to monitor air and water quality in the affected areas and provide advice around the potential human health impacts. It has already spoken to more than 500 residents and letterboxed hundreds of homes in the area; officers will also be out again this week to hear from residents and answer questions.

This factory fire highlights the importance of the Labor Government's Waterways of the West Action Plan — which will ensure waterways like Stony Creek and their parklands in Melbourne's west are better protected — and it's reforms to give more resources and stronger powers to the EPA to reduce the risk of these events occurring again.

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Shing
Raised on: 7 September 2018

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to improving cancer outcomes for all Victorians and recognises the importance of raising awareness about prostate cancer.

The government funds a suite of activities to support prostate cancer awareness, research and improvements to the management of prostate cancer in the Victorian health system.

New guidelines for prostate-specific antigen testing, commonly known as PSA testing, and early management of test-detected prostate cancer were released in 2016 by the National Health and Medical Research Council. The guidelines include promoting the opportunity to discuss with men the benefits and harms of PSA testing before making the decision to test. The Victorian Primary Health Network have roles funded by the Victorian Government to tailor education to raise awareness of general practitioners and to promote adherence to the guidelines.

The government has recently committed \$700 000 over three years to expand to the E J Whitten Foundation 'It's Time to Test' program. The program, directed at community sports clubs, aims to improve men's health knowledge

and health seeking behaviours to prevent or detect early signs of chronic diseases, including cancer. During 2016-18 additional investment of \$600 000 was provided through the Sons of the West program to improve men's health and wellbeing in the Western suburbs of Melbourne.

The government is also supporting best practice clinical management through implementation of the Optimal Care Pathway for Prostate Cancer.

Since being established by the former Labor Government in 2006, the Victorian Cancer Agency has funded \$11.9 million into translational prostate cancer research.

Appropriate support programs to meet men's supportive care needs phase following treatment are being implemented by Integrated Victorian cancer centres.

Shepparton radiotherapy services

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Ms Lovell
Raised on: 19 September 2018

REPLY:

I refer the member to my response to you of 30 January 2018 and two earlier responses on 8 March 2017.

Footscray Hospital

Raised with: Minister for Health
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 19 September 2018

REPLY:

As the Member for Western Metropolitan Region would be aware the Government is committed to delivering a new Footscray Hospital to meet the needs of the growing population of the inner west of Melbourne.