

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

22, 23 and 24 May 2018

(Extract from book 7)

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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
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Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and Minister for Local Government	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

Legislative Council committees

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

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

Legislative Council standing committees

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

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

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

Fire Services Bill Select Committee — Ms 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*): Mr Gepp and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

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Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

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The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John ¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁸	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	Western Metropolitan	AC	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	RV
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmr, 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 ⁷	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁶	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	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

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁷ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

¹⁰ ASP until 16 January 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; Greens — Australian Greens;
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals; RV — Reason Victoria
SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; VILJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 22 May 2018

Morwell Neighbourhood House

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children
Raised by: Ms Shing
Raised on: 10 March 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is backing our neighbourhood houses as we want to ensure more Victorians have access to the vital employment, training and volunteering services that many neighbourhood houses provide in local communities across Victoria.

The Victorian Budget 2018/2019 invests a further \$21.8 million across the neighbourhood house network so that more people can enjoy the benefits of neighbourhood houses and the activities and services they provide.

This is the biggest funding boost to neighbourhood house coordination hours ever, with an extra 76 700 hours to be delivered each year to more houses across the state.

This funding will also provide mobile neighbourhood house networkers with an additional 4800 hours per year to spend more time with individual houses in their region to help them improve access to key services and activities.

Eligible neighbourhood houses currently funded less than 25 hours per week through the neighbourhood house coordination program have been invited to participate in an expression of interest process to increase their coordination hours to 25 hours per week. Further, currently un-funded neighbourhood houses and local governments will soon be invited to apply for funding of up to 25 coordination hours per week through the neighbourhood house coordination program.

This funding boost builds on the more than \$30 million per annum the Andrews Government already provides to support 375 neighbourhood houses, 16 neighbourhood house networks and the peak body, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria.

The Labor Government's record investment in neighbourhood houses is almost eight times more than what was delivered under the previous Liberal Government.

This is in stark contrast to the Turnbull Liberal Government who are slashing the occasional childcare program which will potentially leave more than 50 neighbourhood houses stripped of funding from July 1 this year.

The Andrews Labor Government is calling on the Turnbull Government to continue the program to give local families some peace of mind, or immediately provide adequate, comparable alternative childcare subsidies.

I have written to The Hon Simon Birmingham, Federal Minister for Education and Training, to emphasise how important NOC funded programs are, particularly those that support rural or disadvantaged families with limited access to affordable child care. I have asked Minister Birmingham to provide greater flexibility for NOC services to access funding under the Families Package, as well as support to transition to the new arrangements.

I thank the member for her strong support and advocacy for neighbourhood houses in the Eastern Victoria Region.

Yellow Ladybugs

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Mr Finn
Raised on: 8 November 2016

REPLY:

The Andrews Labor Government is responding to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry into services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We are delivering a five year plan which addresses the detail of the 101 recommendations and, in the meantime, the Government has provided \$22 million to begin strengthening the educational outcomes and community connections that make a difference to people with autism and their families.

The Yellow Ladybugs organisation has been an active member of the autism advisory group providing information and advice to the development of an autism plan. The focus on girls and women with autism provides a unique perspective. I applaud the energy of the organisation and the outcomes it is achieving, often for young girls and their families who might otherwise feel disconnected and isolated.

I look forward to hearing of the continued activities of the Yellow Ladybugs as we work together with people with autism, their families and supporters to create a more 'autism inclusive' Victoria.

Latrobe Valley youth programs

Raised with: Minister for Youth Affairs
Raised by: Ms Shing
Raised on: 10 May 2017

REPLY:

Through our *Youth Policy — Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria*, the Andrews Labor Government is creating a range of mechanisms to engage with young people, including those whose voices often go unheard.

Through the development of a new Youth Space in Morwell, underpinned by a \$4.3 million investment, we have been engaging with young people in the Latrobe Valley and listening to their views so that we provide the type of programs and activities that young people want and need in this region.

In order to design, establish and operate a new Youth Space in Morwell, we have undertaken extensive consultation with over 300 young people in Latrobe to identify what they want Youth Space to provide.

We have consulted young people through schools and other educational institutions, through community pop up stalls, workshops with young people and in one-to-one discussions.

We have established a co-design team of fifteen young people who have been developing the Youth Space concept and have come up with principles which will guide the location, design and operation of the Youth Space.

We are also engaging with other government and community organisations in the Latrobe Valley to ensure the new Youth Space complements and builds on existing activities and services provided in Morwell rather than duplicates these.

Youth Space aims to target multiple risk factors leading to youth disengagement and will support young people's engagement in education and training and importantly will provide employment pathways for young people in Latrobe.

I thank the member for meeting with the core design team working on the Youth Space and for encouraging young people in her electorate to be involved in this exciting project.

E-cigarettes

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

REPLY:

I have consulted with the Minister for Health, The Hon Jill Hennessy MP, as this matter falls within her portfolio responsibilities. Minister Hennessy has advised that the sale and possession of nicotine for use in e-cigarettes (also referred to as personal vaporisers or electronic nicotine delivery systems) is illegal under Victorian drugs, poisons and controlled substances laws. This is because nicotine for human use in e-cigarettes is a Schedule 7 dangerous poison, and e-cigarettes or their liquids have not been assessed for safety, quality or efficacy.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration is the Commonwealth regulatory body for medicines and therapeutic goods in Australia, and the responsible agency for controlling nicotine as a substance for use in e-cigarettes. In late 2016 and early 2017, the Therapeutic Goods Administration considered an application to exempt nicotine from Schedule 7 at concentration of 3.6 per cent or less for use in an electric nicotine delivery system for the purpose of tobacco harm reduction.

In March 2017, the Therapeutic Goods Administration decision was that the scheduling of nicotine as a Schedule 7 poison remains appropriate. Therefore, unlike nicotine replacement products, such as patches and lozenges, e-cigarettes containing nicotine have not been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for use as a smoking cessation aid.

If the Therapeutic Goods Administration determines differently in the future and approves a particular brand of e-cigarette containing nicotine as a smoking cessation aid, provision exists in the Victorian legislation for the e-cigarette to be excluded from the restrictions.

South Melbourne public housing estate

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 27 March 2018

REPLY:

I take issues of safety and security, whether at Park Towers or across all our public housing estates, extremely seriously.

Whether it is for residents, service providers, our staff or anybody else who might visit our estates — even Liberal politicians who fleetingly discover them in election years — we take safety on our estates extremely seriously.

I have worked very closely with service providers when they have raised issues with security in past years and continue to do so.

I have worked extremely closely with residents, talking to them about what upgrades we can bring that will bring them greater security on the estate.

I have also worked closely with my Labor colleagues to give Victoria Police the record resources and powers they need to keep Victorians safe, including 13 additional officers in Port Phillip.

We've recently announced additional upgrades to fire safety and security at Park Towers, strongly welcomed by residents, and I look forward to continuing our successful work on the estate for our tenants.

Greater Geelong infrastructure funding

Raised with: Minister for Regional Development
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 28 March 2018

REPLY:

The Greater Geelong region deserves the support of a government that works hard to encourage growth and create jobs. But the Coalition abandoned regional Victoria.

Labor promised to get regional Victoria back on track.

And for the past three years, the Andrews Government has been getting things done.

This year's budget continues that momentum.

The Victorian Budget 2018/19 invests \$153.2 million towards the Geelong City Deal, with funds going to build the new Convention Centre, progress the Shipwreck Coast Masterplan, and advance a strategy to revitalise the city's centre.

The much talked about Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre will breathe new life into Geelong's iconic waterfront, while attracting new visitors and creating new local jobs.

The Convention Centre will boast 3700 square metres of multipurpose space configured to incorporate an exhibition hall and banquet room, and a 1000+ seat plenary hall.

We're also getting on with delivering for the Shipwreck Coast — an international icon and a key tourism attraction — which draws well over two million travellers each year.

The Labor Government wants to get on with the next stage of the Shipwreck Coast Masterplan, including a Glenample Visitor Experience Centre, a shuttle service between Glenample and Loch Ard and infrastructure improvements to the Twelve Apostles National Park.

The City Deal will also support further work on the Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan — Malop Street Green Spine Project, to create new parkland connecting a redeveloped Geelong Station precinct, Johnstone Park and the Arts Precinct to Geelong's retail core, and ultimately to Eastern Park.

The Labor Government has already committed \$7.5 million to Stage 1 of the Geelong Waterfront Safe Harbour project and will continue advocating for the Commonwealth to contribute the final \$3.5 million required to deliver this project.

The Geelong City Deal is expected to inject an additional \$1.1 billion into the Geelong economy and deliver nearly 1000 Victorian jobs per annum.

The Labor Government will continue to engage with the Commonwealth on the landmark Geelong City Deal and seek matching funds to deliver these world class projects.

Latrobe Special Developmental School

Raised with: Minister for Education
Raised by: Ms Bath
Raised on: 28 March 2018

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Andrews Labor Government's record investment in our schools will ensure every Victorian family, wherever they live, has access to a great government school. It will ensure Victorian schools can cater for the state's rapidly-growing population, with more than 90 000 additional student places needed over the next five years. The latest State Budget brings this Government's investment in school infrastructure over the past four years to \$3.8 billion, funding 70 new schools, more than 1300 school upgrades and ten Tech Schools.

Thanks to the lobbying efforts of Harriet Shing, Member for Eastern Victoria, on behalf of the school community, I am pleased to advise that \$6 million was allocated in the 2018-19 State Budget to the Traralgon Secondary and Special School Regeneration Project. This will allow Stage 1 works to begin, which will lead to the consolidation of the Traralgon Secondary and Latrobe Special Development School Facilities and will resolve many of the existing infrastructure concerns the school is currently experiencing.

Finally, governments are judged not by what they say, but by what they do. I'm proud of Labor's efforts to date to address the school infrastructure backlog we inherited, and I just note that the previous Liberal-National Government did not invest a single dollar for capital works at Latrobe Special Development School.

Zoe Support Australia

Raised with: Minister for Families and Children
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 28 March 2018

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to enabling all young people access to quality education and the services that assist their success.

The regional city of Mildura has a number of agencies and organisations funded by both the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) that provide direct support to the community, including Mallee Family Care and Mildura Accommodation Services Program.

DET and DHHS have met with Zoe Support's Executive Director, Anne Webster, on several occasions to explore sustainable models for Zoe Support to continue to provide support to young women raising children. The models, would see Zoe Support entering partnerships with agencies and organisations currently funded by DHHS or DET to provide services for teenage mothers.

DET and DHHS will continue to work with Zoe Support to assist in brokering partnerships with funded agencies including those connected with the Navigator Program for case management support for young mothers in Mildura.

There are further educational opportunities for these young women to pursue through the Andrews Labor Government's funding of free TAFE courses.

South Yarra Primary School

Raised with: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Raised by: Mr O'Donohue
Raised on: 29 March 2018

REPLY:

VicRoads advises me that over the years, it has implemented several safety improvements at this location to increase pedestrian safety. This included:

- Installation of advanced Signals Ahead warning signs to raise motorist awareness of this intersection;
- Modification of the operation of traffic lights to increase the red signal time to ensure that drivers are given more time to stop before pedestrian signals are activated;
- Installation of two Children Crossing warning signs with a School supplementary plate on both the north and south approaches to this intersection; and
- VicRoads engaged a consultant to undertake an independent road safety audit resulting in several actions including trimming nearby trees to improve sightlines as well as future improvements to ground surface plates in the footpath to improve access to the pedestrian crossing for visually impaired pedestrians.

VicRoads advises me that it has submitted applications to the Department of Justice and Regulation (DoJR) requesting its consideration of a road safety camera at this location.

Observations made by DoJR and VicRoads identified that congestion issues through the intersection have resulted in slow moving traffic queuing through the intersection, which is something that a road safety camera would not be effective in addressing.

However, VicRoads advises me that over the next few months, it plans to review the operation of traffic signals that operate further north of this intersection (i.e. namely at the intersection of Punt Road and Toorak Road), to determine what changes could be made to traffic light sequencing to reduce queues extending south towards and through the intersection of Punt Road and Pasley Street North.

Public housing

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Dr Ratnam
Raised on: 29 March 2018

REPLY:

The Department of Health and Human Services has advised me that heaters are being checked and replaced as a matter of urgency.

Middle Gorge railway station

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport
Raised by: Mr Ondarchie
Raised on: 1 May 2018

REPLY:

I thank the Member for Northern Metropolitan for his interest in one of the Andrews Labor Government's largest rail infrastructure projects — the \$600 million Mernda Rail Extension.

Creating more than 3000 jobs, we are extending the South Morang line for eight kilometres north to Mernda, with three new stations — Middle Gorge, Hawkstowe, and Mernda — and adding 8000 commuters a day to the line.

This project, originally promised by Labor before we entered office, is now six months ahead of schedule and will have trains running later this year.

It was a Labor Government that extended the line from Epping to South Morang, and the early opening of the new rail line to Mernda continues the Andrews Labor Government's record of delivering major public transport projects ahead of schedule.

Caulfield–Clayton rail link

Raised with: Minister for Public Transport

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 9 May 2018

REPLY:

The State Government has committed \$3 million in the 2018-19 Budget for the planning and design of a new tram route between Caulfield and Rowville. This includes funding for design and planning works to examine alignments, park and ride options, stop locations, cost and travel time benefits.

Planning and designing the new route between Caulfield and Rowville is a critical first step in linking the growing employment, retail and study precincts in the city's south east.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

Macedon Ranges planning

Raised with: Minister for Planning
Raised by: Mr Davis
Raised on: 27 March 2018

REPLY:

The Victorian Government is delivering on its promise to protect the iconic and historic Macedon Ranges region from inappropriate development. The Macedon Ranges region is a popular place for Victorians to live, work and visit because of its significant environmental and cultural values and proximity to Melbourne and Bendigo. To ensure the region's long-term sustainability, the Victorian Government is taking action to ensure that the region's unique features and characteristics are conserved and enhanced for current and future generations.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is working in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority and Macedon Ranges Shire Council to deliver a package of protections that recognise the Macedon Ranges region as a significant area. The partnership is working closely with the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and the Wurundjeri peoples to ensure that Aboriginal cultural heritage values are understood and protected.

In December 2017, I introduced the *Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill* into Parliament that provides the strongest level of protection for the Macedon Ranges region. I also released a draft Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement for community consultation.

Over a period of 12 weeks, a range of community engagement activities have been undertaken including face-to-face meetings and information sessions for residents, businesses and other interested people. This engagement builds on the findings of earlier consultation conducted by the Macedon Ranges Protection Advisory Committee that I established in 2015 to provide independent advice on the best level of protection for the Macedon Ranges region. The community's feedback is a critical input to the finalisation of the policy. More than 350 submissions have been received and all submissions are being taken into account.

During the consultation process for the draft Localised Planning Statement there was considerable discussion regarding settlement boundaries and what they could mean for the future of the Macedon Ranges. We are now in the process of analysing and reviewing the draft Localised Planning Statement so that it may provide the best protection possible for the Macedon Ranges.

The Macedon Ranges region will be the first state significant area to be declared under the *Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill*. This is landmark legislation that enshrines a statement of planning policy for the region in Victorian law.

The policy statement will include long term settlement boundaries that require ratification by Parliament to be changed. This will provide certainty to communities that the values of this iconic region will be protected for the long term. I am listening closely to the views of the Macedon Ranges community and other key stakeholders to ensure we get the policy implementation right.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 24 May 2018

Point Cook police station

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Dr Carling-Jenkins
Raised on: 21 February 2018

REPLY:

I would like to assure the community that the Andrews Labor Government and Victoria Police are committed to keeping Point Cook, and all Victorian communities safe.

That is why the Victorian Budget 2018/19 allocating funds to search for and acquire land for a future Point Cook Police Station to deliver for the needs of the growing Point Cook community.

This is in addition to our record \$2 billion investment in the biggest boost to police numbers in Victorian history, with an additional 3135 new police officers.

Many Victorian communities can look forward to seeing an increased police presence in their area this year with 825 of these additional police officers being allocated across Melbourne's growth suburbs from May 2018.

These frontline police officers are being allocated to areas with the highest need for policing services, with an additional 12 frontline officers and six family violence specialists allocated to the Wyndham Police Service Area, which services Point Cook.

This rollout is the second wave of police resources to hit the beat since the deployment of the additional resources funded under the 2016-17 State Budget.

Recent crime data from the independent Crime Statistics Agency shows that this investment is having an impact, with a 10.9 per cent drop in the crime rate in Wyndham, in the year to December 2017.

Firearm permits

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Mr Ramsay
Raised on: 22 February 2018

REPLY:

As part of the public consultation on the proposed Firearms Regulations 2018, I have been made aware of the potential impact of the fee for a permit to carry or use a firearm in a populous place on historical re-enactment groups.

The Government highly values the efforts of the Geelong Military Re-enactment Group and other historical re-enactment groups who voluntarily give their time to support commemorative ceremonies and community events across Victoria. Their presence contributes to the solemnity of important commemorative occasions.

The commitment of these groups to educating the public about events in our history and their significant contribution to community events is also greatly appreciated.

The Government has listened to the submission of the Geelong Military Re-enactment Group and the submissions of other historical re-enactment groups and decided that no fee will be payable for a permit to carry or use a firearm

in a populous place under section 130(3) of the Firearms Act 1996 for the activities of historical re-enactment groups.

Interim regulations are in place and substantive regulations will be introduced within the coming months. I have written to each of the historical re-enactment groups who made a submission to the Regulatory Impact Statement for the proposed Firearms Regulations 2018 to inform them of the Government's decision.

Police weapons

Raised with: Minister for Police
Raised by: Dr Ratnam
Raised on: 28 March 2018

REPLY:

I note the members concerns about new weapons and the use of force by police, particularly at public protests.

The Andrews Labor Government will always uphold the rights of people to publicly convey their opinions lawfully, including at protests and street marches. I am proud to live in a society where our community has the opportunity to peacefully protest. This is an integral part of our open and democratic way of life.

The role of police at protests is to maintain public order, enforce the law and ensure the safety of the participants and the broader community. This approach aligns with modern 'safety first' police methodology and the desire to maintain a positive relationship with all groups in the community.

Victoria Police will only intervene when there is a real risk to public order or community safety. Ideally the equipment will never be used, however it is important that Victoria Police are equipped with the necessary tools to protect the community should a public demonstration escalate into violence.

I can assure you that any force used by police must be in line with legal requirements and the principles of the Crimes Act 1958 and Victoria Police Policy.

Additionally, Victoria Police officers are required to complete Operational Safety and Tactics Training before they are able to use specialist public order equipment. The training focuses on minimising or avoiding the use of force in conflict situations, with a view to maintaining the safety of police officers, the general public, and offenders.

Freedom of information

Raised with: Special Minister of State
Raised by: Ms Fitzherbert
Raised on: 1 May 2018

REPLY:

FOI processing is the responsibility of each individual department. Therefore, any questions about the department's handling of a specific FOI request, should be referred to the responsible department and minister.

On 31 October 2017 during question time Ms Fitzherbert asserted that amendments to FOI decisions were being made in a minister's office. My response to that question indicated that if Ms Fitzherbert had evidence of this activity, I would be happy to receive it and respond accordingly, including to give the chamber confidence that an investigation of the matter would not result in adverse outcomes for any FOI officer.

Under this government, unlike the former government, ministers have delegated authority for FOI decisions to trained and independent departmental officers.

My response to Ms Fitzherbert's question does not imply or should be understood to mean that I would intervene generally in FOI matters on behalf of members of parliament.

Government departments and agencies are committed to processing FOI requests transparently, efficiently and in the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

Delays in processing requests can occur and I encourage any applicant who is not satisfied with a department's handling of an FOI request to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner. Agencies and ministers have an obligation to cooperate with the Information Commissioner in relation to complaints made about them.

North Melbourne public housing estate

Raised with: Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Raised by: Ms Crozier
Raised on: 1 May 2018

REPLY:

Reference an enquiry by a tenant of 159 Melrose Street, North Melbourne regarding an infestation of bed bugs in his unit.

I am advised that:

The Andrews Labor Government takes the issue of maintenance of public housing properties seriously. Our recent budget outlines \$44 million in new investment into our high rise buildings, underlining our commitment to tenants such as the resident you have cited.

The Department of Health and Human Services arranges pest control services to investigate and treat units when tenants report the presence of bed bugs in their properties.

Tenants are advised, by the Head Contractor's licenced pest control sub-contractor, to follow a list of tasks that must be carried out prior to treatment for bed bugs. These instructions include details of a second, follow up treatment that will occur within 7-10 days after the initial treatment.

Should a tenant require assistance with the necessary preparation tasks, the department will where appropriate make relevant referrals for support.

Departmental staff continue to address all requests for pest control services from tenants residing on high rise estates.