

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

**WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
WITHOUT NOTICE**

9 February to 22 February 2018

(Extract from book 2)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

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Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Sullivan, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

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

Legislative Council standing committees

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

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

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — #Ms Crozier, #Mr Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, 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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The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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

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Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John ¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David 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 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Responses have been incorporated in the form provided to Hansard and received in the period shown.

9 February to 22 February 2018

Fire Wise funding

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Minister for Trade and Investment
Asked on: 7 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The Victorian Government greatly values the work of CFA volunteers, who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the community.

The Government last year announced an additional \$60 million in funding to CFA and its volunteers to help keep communities safe and further strengthen its service delivery.

The \$60 million funding — part of the Fire Services Statement released last May — will underpin a number of commitments including increased training and capability for our volunteers, infrastructure and equipment upgrades and initiatives to improve culture and diversity within the CFA including increasing the diversity of staff and volunteers.

These initiatives will be critical to positioning CFA as a highly capable, modern emergency services organisation which is reflective of the community it serves and responsive to it.

It is essential any expenditure of public funds be done with proper governance, accountability and value for money.

CFA has updated its funding arrangement for the Fire Wise publication from an annual cash grant to a paid advertising approach.

It is essential any expenditure of public funds be done with proper governance, accountability and value for money.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

It is essential any expenditure of public funds be done with proper governance, accountability and value for money.

Arrangements for funds provided to VFBV by CFA are a matter for CFA.

Heavy Vehicle National Law

Question asked by: Mr Bourman
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 7 February 2018

RESPONSE:

I am advised that:

Since 1997, heavy vehicle law has included the concept of chain of responsibility (CoR) for heavy vehicle road transport.

A key to CoR is the idea that off-road parties have the ability to influence on-road activities, which can potentially result in risks to road safety. CoR identifies parties that may control, influence or encourage on-road behaviour by making them legally accountable for their own actions.

From 1 July 2018 (in Victoria, NSW, South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland), the Heavy Vehicle National Law will be amended to clarify that all parties in the CoR have a duty to ensure safe practices for Heavy Vehicle Compliance.

The parties in the CoR have not changed, so if a farmer currently has responsibilities under CoR those responsibilities continue.

The only extension to the CoR duties is for operators to take responsibility for their vehicles being roadworthy. Farmers would be included in this if they operate vehicles over 4.5 tonne.

I am advised that under the changes, the level and nature of a party's responsibility under the CoR depends on the party's capacity to control, eliminate or minimise the risk. Under the primary duty, each party in the CoR will need to ensure the safety of on road activities, so far as is reasonably practicable. The application of the standard "so far as is reasonably practicable" means that a farmer cannot be held responsible for something they have no control over.

The changes to the CoR provisions will ensure that those who can influence on road behaviour take positive steps to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of heavy vehicle road transport to make sure we can all get home safely.

Forest Industry Taskforce

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 7 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The Government provided secretariat support to the Forest Industry Taskforce, but was not party to its internal deliberations. The Taskforce was engaged to consider a number of complex issues.

During its deliberations, the Forest Industry Taskforce identified a select number of forest coupes with high conservation value. I am advised that VicForests agreed to defer any harvesting operations in these coupes, and this practice remains in place; this did not include coupes on Granite Mountain.

Beyond this I understand that the Forest Industry Taskforce also identified broad areas of conservation importance and requested that VicForests should avoid or de-prioritise harvesting operations in these locations. These areas covered a wider portion of Eastern Victoria, and included some locations around Granite Mountain. VicForests aim to avoid harvesting in these areas where feasible. However in order to meet contractual obligations to customers, harvest of these areas cannot be completely avoided.

The Government is currently considering the best way forward on matters raised by the Taskforce, using their findings and assessments undertaken by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council.

Heyfield timber mill

Question asked by: Mr Ondarchie
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 7 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The terms offered to the Heyfield mill were determined by VicForests — the people responsible for managing Victoria's forests sustainably and in the long term interests of Victoria's forest industries.

VicForests prepares a Resource Outlook to forecast future quantities and types of timber that can be sustainably supplied from the available State Forest in eastern Victoria.

This process looks at how much forest is available, how much timber is contained in these forests and how much they will grow over time. Forest that is too young cannot be scheduled for harvest in the short term and pre-1900 Mountain Ash trees are not harvested.

The 2017 Resource Outlook forecast a reduction of approximately 88 000m³ per year when compared to the 2013 Resource Outlook. This is due to a range of factors, including recent fires, reduced harvesting in water catchment areas, removing areas due to commercial or ecological reasons, and the protection of the endangered Leadbeater's possum.

The Resource Outlook is publicly available on the VicForests website.

Eureka Stadium

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 7 February 2018

RESPONSE:

I am advised by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning that the lease with the North Ballarat Football Club is still in place, and that the Ballarat City Council is in constructive discussions with the football club.

The Ballarat City Council compulsorily acquired the freehold land owned by the North Ballarat Football Club in April 2017.

The Andrews Labor Government worked in partnership with City of Ballarat, the AFL and the Western Bulldogs to bring premiership league games to regional Victoria, in a win for fans and the regional economy.

The completed redevelopment of Eureka Stadium will mean more than 5000 undercover seats and a total stadium capacity of more than 11 000.

The project is expected to attract an extra 1500 participants per year, draw another 21 000 visitors to Ballarat each year and increase annual tourism spending in the city by up to \$3.6 million.

Vocational education and training

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 8 February 2018

RESPONSE:

Since 2017, private and community providers have been offered VET Funding contracts with an initial commencement limit (up to 1000 commencements). Within the qualifications they have on scope, each provider has the flexibility to deliver training which meets the needs of students, industry and the community. TAFE and Dual Sector providers do not have a limit on the number of students they can commence in a year.

Non-TAFE providers offered a contract for 2018-19 were given an initial commencement allocation that reflects the Department of Education and Training's careful consideration of each organisation's history of delivery and alignment of anticipated delivery with student and industry needs and government priorities. To ensure best value for its investment in skills, government-funded places in some areas are primarily targeted to traineeship delivery.

The Department will continue to actively monitor training delivery by all contracted TAFE, Dual Sector, Community and Private training providers throughout 2018. Where there is a government priority or industry need identified, the Department will consider whether an increase to allocations is required.

Geelong Regional Vocational Education Council

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 8 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The Andrews Labor Government will continue to provide support to ensure that Victorians have access to the skills they need for the job they want.

In 2017, this Government provided \$2.89 million in funding through the Skills First TAFE Community Service Fund to The Gordon. This funding supports The Gordon TAFE's Geelong Technical Education Centre, which offers an alternative senior education pathway for young people at risk of disengaging from mainstream schooling.

The program incorporates the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning with Certificate II or III level training in areas such as building and construction, mechanical trades, community services and creative design. It also includes on-the-job work skills training with employers through Structured Workplace Learning, School-based apprenticeships or Traineeships.

I am proud that young people in the Geelong region can easily access the careers and training advice that they need to make a successful transition through school and on to further education, training and employment.

The Geelong Regional Vocational Education Council was funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Local Community Partnerships program for its work with young people until December 2009.

On the conclusion of this program Geelong Regional Vocational Education Council was funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions for delivery of the Workplace Learning Coordinator program from 2010 to 2014, again by the Commonwealth Government.

At the conclusion of the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions the then state government provided an additional year of funding for the Workplace Learning coordinator program in 2015 in the hope that your Federal colleagues would reverse their decision in 2016.

I am advised that late in 2013 Geelong Regional Vocational Education Council registered as a Learn Local provider. Geelong Regional Vocational Education Council did not deliver any pre-accredited training in 2014 but delivered 500 hours of pre-accredited training in 2015 and 307 hours in 2016.

GRVEC did not request pre-accredited training delivery in 2017.

Geelong convention and exhibition centre

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 8 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The Andrews Labor Government is getting on with delivering jobs and development opportunities for Geelong.

The reason the government is not releasing the business case for the Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre is because within it are a range of sensitive pieces of information that are being considered by government.

As the Member would be aware, a Memorandum of Understanding for an historic City Deal for Greater Geelong and the Great Ocean Road was recently signed. While the key elements of a Geelong and Great Ocean Road City Deal will be identified through three-way discussions with other governments, the Andrews Labor Government will push for projects to be included such as:

- The Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre — to capitalise on Geelong’s unique location near the Great Ocean Road and the Surf and Shipwreck Coasts’
- The Shipwreck Coast Master Plan — to upgrade one of Australia’s top tourist attractions
- The Geelong Waterfront Safe Harbour Project
- The Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan — to make Geelong a more attractive place to visit and do business with the expansion of the linear park through the CBD
- The relocation of Comcare to central Geelong— to further strengthen the region’s reputation as a social insurance hub
- The development of the advanced manufacturing precinct at Waurn Ponds — to boost local jobs and support Deakin University’s Geelong Innovation Precinct

These projects would build on the strong investment by the Labor Government in the Geelong and South-West regions since being elected in 2014 — including \$75 million for Kardinia Park’s Stage 4 Upgrade, over \$100 million of upgrades to the Great Ocean Road, and the rebuilding of the Geelong Performing Arts Centre.

Public sector code of conduct

Question asked by: Mr Rich-Phillips
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 8 February 2018

RESPONSE:

An internal and informal investigation was instigated following media reporting of this matter on 30 January 2018. The changes to the Wikipedia page are not endorsed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. All public servants are bound by the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees. The investigation was instigated as the Department was concerned that a staff member may have been acting in a manner that did not accord with the Code of Conduct.

Social media monitoring

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 8 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The social media insights service is an extension of the long standing media monitoring service that provides newspaper clippings and radio and TV news analysis to government departments and agencies.

The media monitoring service operates from 6am to 8pm and the social media service has been designed to operate during similar timeframes.

The use of social media insights services within governments is not a new concept. In 13/14 the Napthine Coalition Government had spent in excess of \$600 000 in social media listening capability. This included the licensing of tools, staff and consulting services.

This service was developed to provide insights to help government deliver better services and policies to meet the needs of Victorians.

The Government has continued to invest and enhance its capability to engage better with the community online and social media remains an important channel for government to engage with users who typically do not engage with or have a strong voice with government.

A key focus of this investment has been to ensure government is efficient in its use of these technologies to ensure it is delivering good return on investment to taxpayers. In that vein the government's new consolidated approach to community engagement has delivered a \$1M saving to taxpayers in its first year of operation. Similarly the planned full 2017-18 year expenditure on social media insights services is \$383 000 which represents a more than 30% saving of expenditure when compared to similar services delivered in 13/14.

Public housing

Question asked by: Dr Ratnam
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 8 February 2018

RESPONSE:

I reject the premise of the question. The Greens' scare campaign in social housing is a disgrace. I use this opportunity to counter the deliberate distortions being peddled by the Green and Liberal parties on the Public Housing Renewal Program — a part of the Andrews Labor Government's Homes for Victorians package, which will grow social housing by 6000 units, whilst building more diverse and inclusive medium density communities where they are needed.

Tenants in our Public Housing Renewal Program estates are encouraged to talk to their individual case manager, the ones we are told Greens tell residents not to speak to. The team is doing everything they can to understand their individual needs and assist tenants throughout the relocations process, with much success.

Residents' properties will also receive all of the maintenance as per requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act during this time. Tenants know they can speak to the Housing Call Centre 24 hours a day to get things fixed and issues attended to.

While the Greens join the Liberals in a coalition of mutual loathing of public housing, telling lies and running scare campaigns, we'll stand with our tenants. We believe they deserve better quality housing and a better quality of life. We are building brand new energy efficient homes that will meet the accessibility needs of tenants, many of whom are aging or have a disability. We believe that our public housing tenants deserve better and that we should no longer be condemning them to live in the estates of the past.

Instead of fearmongering and using public housing tenants as political footballs, the Greens need to support this program so that we can get on with providing 21st century housing to those Victorians most in need.

Naltrexone implants

Question asked by: Dr Carling-Jenkins
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 8 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The Andrews Labor Government recognises that drug problems are complex, and naturally our communities are worried about how to best tackle addiction in their families and workplaces. The Government has no current plans to establish a trial of Naltrexone implants for opioid addicted Victorians.

At present, Naltrexone implants are not approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for widespread human use in Australia due to a lack of results from clinical trials demonstrating their pharmaceutical quality, safety and efficacy.

The government is committed to reducing the harm caused by both licit and illicit drugs and is investing at unprecedented levels to improve access to treatment.

In 2017-18, the State Budget provided \$220.1 million for alcohol and other drug services — an increase of 33 per cent in three years — with the new Drug Rehabilitation Plan providing a further \$87 million over four years.

Multicultural Business Ministerial Council

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Small Business
Asked on: 20 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The Multicultural Business Ministerial Council actively promotes Victoria as a culturally diverse business centre, providing a forum for business networking and supports Victoria's trade agenda in emerging markets.

A number of applications were received in relation to membership of the Ministerial Council, and each candidate was appointed after a thorough governance and probity check was conducted by the department.

FURTHER RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The Multicultural Business Ministerial Council actively promotes Victoria as a culturally diverse business centre, providing a forum for business networking and supports Victoria's trade agenda in emerging markets.

Nominations for the Council were publically open with expressions of interest sought by the department through a range of business and cultural community channels including chambers of commerce, business networks, social media and advertisements in community newspapers.

Each candidate was appointed after a thorough governance and probity check was conducted by the department.

Minister for Small Business

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Small Business
Asked on: 20 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

It is possible that members of these organisations were present at events that I have attended, however, I can confidently say to the house, that I nor my staff have not had meetings or telephone conversations with members of these organisations in either an official or personal capacity.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Yes.

Firearm permits

Question asked by: Mr Bourman
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 20 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The proposed Firearms Regulations will impose a fee of \$333.90 for a permit to carry or use a firearm in a populous place. No fee was imposed previously.

As discussed in the Firearms Regulations Regulatory Impact Statement, the absence of a fee is inconsistent with the general Government policy of full cost recovery, especially given that substantial work is involved in assessing an application for a permit, including a site inspection. If a fee is not charged, these costs must be cross-subsidised by other licence and permit holders.

The majority of permit applications are made by vermin controllers and the amount of applications has varied in recent years. A minor proportion of applications are for historical re-enactment purposes and the Government has decided that a fee will not be imposed on these applications.

An estimate based on the number of applications in previous years indicates that the projected revenue is likely to be up to \$70 000. With increasing population on the rural fringe, it is possible that the volume of these applications will increase in the future.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

As mentioned above, the Government has assisted historical re-enactment groups by indicating it will exempt them from this fee. Victoria Police has also commenced a pilot program to assist vermin controllers by replacing populous place permits that are date and location specific. Populous place permits of 12 months duration are now issued for the purpose of vermin control in any populous places, with verbal approval of the Divisional Firearm Officer.

Murray-Darling Basin plan

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 20 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The projects that Victoria has put forward to achieve the Basin Plan's environmental targets will enable delivery of environmental water to targeted floodplains and wetlands and will provide equivalent or greater environmental outcomes at these priority sites, including in the Gunbower and Murray-Sunset National Parks.

The environmental works projects enable water to be returned to the floodplain in the frequency and duration that is needed by the water dependant plants and animals. This pattern of delivery cannot be provided in the absence of the environmental works projects.

Water does not shift between the environment to irrigators if sustainable diversion limit projects proceed.

The environmental works program allows for the water recovery target to be offset through projects that deliver equivalent environmental outcomes without the need for water from the consumptive pool (i.e. irrigators). The Basin Plan from the time it was signed made provision for this adjustment of the sustainable diversion limit.

The environmental works projects mean that environmental water can be provided to areas high on the floodplain without affecting regional communities. Additionally, water can be delivered during extended dry periods to maintain healthy refuges that plants and animals can shelter in so that they can expand when wetter periods return.

All works undertaken under the Basin Plan's environmental works program will be undertaken in accordance with State and Commonwealth legislation to preserve and protect these high value sites.

Duck hunting season

Question asked by: Ms Pennicuik
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 21 February 2018

RESPONSE:

Authorised Officers from the Game Management Authority (GMA) and other departments and agencies will be out in force over the opening weekend of the 2018 duck season.

The duck season opening will see officers from the GMA, Victoria Police (including Water Police), Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Parks Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning assisting in the opening weekend compliance effort.

Compliance inspections are undertaken in a variety of ways, including approaching hunters directly on the water with the assistance of Water Police.

Parkville youth justice centre

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 21 February 2018

RESPONSE:

I am advised that:

The premise of the members question is incorrect, yet again. I am advised the number quoted by the member may refer to Victoria Police despatch data during September and October 2017. As the member should be aware police can visit a youth justice centre for a number of reasons, not necessarily related to offences that have been committed in custody, such as serving a summons, making an enquiry or to obtain a witness statement.

Violent and anti-social behaviour is not tolerated in youth justice centres. In 2017, the Government introduced stronger consequences for young people who commit crimes while in custody as part of the Children and Justice Legalisation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017 — legalisation the member and the Liberal Party attempted to scuttle.

All allegations of criminal behaviour occurring in youth justice centres are referred to Victoria Police and decisions as to whether charges are laid are entirely a matter for them. I am concerned that the member is suggesting that criminal behaviour occurring in youth justice centres should not be referred to Victoria Police. I am also concerned that there is a significant discrepancy between Crime Statistics Agency offence related data and Workcover claims during the time of the previous government that also changed incident recording practices.

Our government has improved incident reporting practices to ensure greater transparency of reporting and to ensure system improvements.

The Andrews Labor Government has made a record \$2 billion investment and is delivering 3135 new police which are being deployed across the state on top of attrition. That means more police on the frontline keeping our community safe.

Questions on the specific deployment of Victoria Police resources to respond to reports of alleged criminal activity do not relate to my portfolio. Where charges are laid and the matter proceeds to Court, sentencing decisions are at the discretion of the court.

Lara prison expansion

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 21 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

Any land acquisition will comply with the Victorian Government Land Transactions Policy and Guidelines.

Early childhood education

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 21 February 2018

RESPONSE:

The Andrews Labor Government is committed to giving Victorians the skills they need for the job they want.

In line with the Government's commitment to improve the quality of government funded training in Victoria, the Department of Education and Training has undertaken a fair and rigorous assessment of each application in accordance with the published criteria in the relevant Call for Expressions of interest (EOI) documentation.

As part of the EOI process, Program Delivery Plans submitted by Training Providers, were assessed in conjunction with the 2018 Regional Jobs and Training Needs Reports. Through this process the Department determined that training delivery proposed in some qualifications in 2018 was in excess of jobs and training needs forecasts in Victoria.

To reduce the risk of students undertaking government subsidised training in qualifications that would not lead to a job or improved employment outcomes, and to reflect the economic needs of the Victorian economy, funding in some qualifications across the State has been primarily targeted to traineeship delivery.

Training delivery in Victoria in 2018 is being kept under active review by the Department.

Prisoner transport

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 21 February 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The distribution of prisoners to rural locations has required the scheduling of additional transport services; however, the prisoner transport contract provides for this within the existing contract arrangements.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

There have been no breaches in the prisoner transport contract since its commencement in October 2015.

GOTAFE

Question asked by: Mr O'Sullivan
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 21 February 2018

RESPONSE:

It is unsurprising that you and your colleagues would seek to distract the public from your real plans for the TAFE sector.

TAFEs will once again be forced to bear the brunt of Coalition cuts with Matthew Guy's plan for a Commission of Audit.

The Coalition's Commission of Audit will see funding ripped out of TAFEs and educational support services, repeating the shameful history of the former Coalition Government.

You should be honest with the Victorian people about which campuses of GOTAFE are in the firing line for closure under your plans.

Only the Andrews Labor Government can be trusted to rebuild our TAFE system.

As an inquiry is currently underway at GOTAFE it would not be appropriate to comment on individual issues.