

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

**WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
WITHOUT NOTICE**

12 June to 22 June 2018

(Extract from book 9)

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)

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
Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy, and Minister for Small Business	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	The Hon. L. D' Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
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 Mulino, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, #Dr Ratnam, #Ms Symes, Ms Truong and Mr Young.

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

President:

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

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. JENNINGS

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

CONTENTS

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

12 JUNE TO 22 JUNE 2018

<i>Kangaroo control</i>	3097
<i>Medicinal cannabis</i>	3097
<i>Hemp products</i>	3098
<i>Crown Casino</i>	3098
<i>Regional Development Victoria</i>	3098
<i>Foster carers</i>	3099
<i>Vocational education and training</i>	3100
<i>TAFE funding</i>	3100
<i>Prisoner transport</i>	3101
<i>Prison security</i>	3101
<i>Corrections system</i>	3101
<i>Child protection</i>	3102
<i>Recycling industry</i>	3102
<i>Clergy mandatory reporting</i>	3103
<i>Men's health</i>	3104
<i>Native forest logging</i>	3104
<i>Crown Casino</i>	3104
<i>Lara prison expansion</i>	3105
<i>Apprenticeships and traineeships</i>	3106
<i>Parole legislation</i>	3106
<i>Youth justice system</i>	3107

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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

12 June to 22 June 2018

Kangaroo control

Question asked by: Mr Ramsay
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 7 June 2018

RESPONSE:

Kangaroos are an important part of Victoria's natural ecosystems and are protected under the Wildlife Act 1975. Unfortunately, kangaroos can cause damage to pasture, crops and biodiversity values or pose risks to human safety. In these situations, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning can authorise the control of kangaroos under Authorities to Control Wildlife (ATCWs) to mitigate the damage they are causing.

A Kangaroo Pet Food Trial has been operating in Victoria since March 2014, and was recently extended to the 31 March 2019.

Under the extension, changes were made to the authorisation conditions to address some compliance and enforcement risks identified during the trial evaluation. This resulted in minor delays in the issuing of authorisations. These changes have now been applied.

The purpose of the trial is to test a process to reduce waste of kangaroo carcasses controlled under ATCWs where they are causing damage, that would otherwise be buried or left on site to decompose.

The Wildlife Act requires assessment of each ATCW application in order to be satisfied that the control of kangaroos is necessary to mitigate damage. It is vital that proper due process is followed when assessing each ATCW application. Given the high volume of applications that were received in April and May 2018, department officers are working through assessing applications, and issuing authorisations and tags, as quickly as possible.

In late 2018, the trial will again be evaluated to inform my decision as to whether kangaroo processing will continue in Victoria following 31 March 2019.

Medicinal cannabis

Question asked by: Ms Wooldridge
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 7 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The Victorian Government's early compassionate access scheme providing an imported medicinal cannabis product to children with severe epilepsy commenced in March 2017. The Department of Health and Human Services has informed me that over the 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years, a total of \$1 015 000 has been spent on importing medicinal cannabis.

Hemp products

Question asked by: Ms Patten
Directed to: Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy
Asked on: 7 June 2018

RESPONSE:

I thank the Member for her ongoing interest in future proofing Victoria's manufacturing capabilities.

Victoria was the first state in Australia to legislate and allow industrial hemp production under regulation. Currently, there are 30 authorised growers of low-THC cannabis (industrial hemp) in Victoria with approximately 400 hectares of hemp grown this season.

Since the recent amendments to the Australia New Food Standards Code to include a standard that permits low-THC hemp seeds to be sold domestically as food, this sector has experienced rapid growth. Advancements of industrial hemp products is a focus of several Victorian institutions including the Centre for Materials Innovation and Future Fashion, RMIT University, CSIRO Manufacturing and the Institute for Frontier Materials at Deakin University.

Last year, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and the CSIRO initiated the Industrial Hemp Stakeholders Forum, held at Deakin University in Waurn Ponds. This forum, supported by the Industrial Hemp Association of Victoria, brought together 48 industry stakeholders including farmers, researchers, producer and government agencies to examine the opportunities to growing the industrial hemp industry in Victoria.

As originally flagged in the House, I look forward to meeting with the Member to further discuss the work of this sector, and how its development may translate to future jobs for Victorians.

Crown Casino

Question asked by: Dr Ratnam
Directed to: Minister for Trade and Investment
Asked on: 7 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The allegations that Crown provided plastic devices to tamper with gaming machines are currently being investigated by the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Crown Casino's existing regulatory arrangements for gaming machines were not set by the current parliament.

In 2014, the Coalition Government entered into a new licence agreement with Crown to preserve these arrangements until 2050.

Regional Development Victoria

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Minister for Regional Development
Asked on: 8 June 2018

RESPONSE:

In February this year, Midfield Meats ended its commercial leasing arrangement for the former Clarkes Pies site in Mortlake.

Regional Development Victoria, through the six staff located in the Warrnambool office, has engaged with a potential new investor who is in the food sector and has looked at multiple sites, including the Mortlake site.

Government's facilitation efforts help to connect investors with vacant properties and has proven to be highly successful in connecting people and creating jobs.

Foster carers

Question asked by: Mr Morris
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 8 June 2018

RESPONSE:

I am informed that:

In November 2014, the Andrews Labor Government inherited a child protection system in crisis. In March 2014, in an audit of residential care services for children, the Victorian Auditor-General found that "...there has been a fundamental failure to oversee and ensure the safety of children in residential care." At a time when serious issues relating to residential care facilities was made public, the former Liberal Government failed to take measures to keep children living in residential care safe.

In June 2016, the Victorian Auditor-General tabled an audit following up on recommendations from the 2014 audit. This 2016 report noted that "the 2014 audit found that the residential care system had been operating over capacity and was unable to meet the needs of children. As a result, the Department had to buy additional capacity or contingency places known as 'unfunded contingency placements' at a cost of \$24 million in 2012-13." The Auditor General in 2014 found that "Demand for residential care was outstripping supply, and children were being accommodated in temporary and unsuitable emergency placements such as motels and caravan parks."

The 2016 VAGO report commended the early results of our Govt's reforms. It found that "investments in moving children out of residential care have resulted in a reduction in the daily occupancy of unfunded contingency placements from 141.9 places in 2012-13 to 38.7 places at the end of February 2016. Total spending on unfunded contingency placements fell from \$24 million to about \$11 million during the same time."

It also noted that since the change of Government "departmental policy changed from a focus on growing the capacity of the residential care system, to residential placement prevention and quality initiatives".

The previous government had no plan to reduce reliance on residential care and unfunded contingency placements.

Short term placements are utilised out of necessity to keep siblings together in a single placement, accommodate a child or young person whose complex needs prevents them from being placed in a standard out-of-home care placement, or to accommodate a child or young person who has been removed from their home in an emergency situation at a late hour when no alternative placements are available. As part of our government's reform of the child protection and out-of-home care system the Andrews Labor Government is committed to reducing the use of emergency, short-term placements, particularly where those placements involve the use of hotels or caravan parks.

Between 1 July 2017 and 30 April 2018, 17 children have been placed in a motel or cabin across Victoria. 16 were in a motel and 1 was in a cabin. \$2.13 million has been spent on these placements.

In 2017-18, the Andrews Labor Government invested \$2.9 million over three years, and \$0.7 million ongoing, for the rollout of a Home Based Care Retainer model with two funded targets in each division, that focus on reducing the use of emergency short term placements.

Under the model the department identifies foster carers in each division to be exclusively available, on a retainer basis to provide emergency, short-term care for children, young people and sibling groups unable to be placed in a funded placement. The model is based on a successful pilot already operating in the South Division.

The remaining Divisions are establishing the new retainer model and expect to be operational in the coming months.

Our Rapid Response model currently being trialled in the South Division also works with families to keep children safely at home and reduce the need for an emergency placement.

Vocational education and training

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

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

No.

FURTHER RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

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

All Victorians are guaranteed access to training to upskill their existing qualifications in courses linked to real jobs.

There has been no 'cut' to training enrolments — the only cuts on the horizon are those planned in Matthew Guy's Commission of Audit.

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

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

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

There is no Budget Performance Measure on the 'number of students gaining qualifications that will lead to jobs and economic growth'.

There is a performance measure that reports the 'proportion of government subsidised enrolments related to qualifications that will lead to jobs and economic growth'.

This measure was introduced for the 2017-18 Victorian State Budget with a target of 83%, which is expected to be exceeded by 1.9%.

TAFE funding

Question asked by: Ms Lovell
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 8 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The Audit and Assurance Program seeks to ensure that funding provided under Skills First has been expended for the purposes for which the funds were provided, in accordance with requirements of the VET Funding Contract.

TAFEs and Dual Sectors have had annual funding assurance audits as part of the Department of Education and Training's planned Audit and Assurance Program.

FURTHER RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The Department undertakes an annual Audit and Assurance Program, which involves an examination of training providers' business processes, as well as an examination of transactional data, qualitative information and records relating to Skills First.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

In the last three years, no other TAFE has had to repay funding for non-compliance with training packages, enrolment of students into inappropriate courses or interstate enrolments.

Prisoner transport

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 19 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

It is interesting that the member has asked this particular question given his very poor record on this issue when he was the Minister for Corrections. In 2013, in a period of less than four months, over \$140 000 was paid to the courts for non-delivery of prisoners in contravention of a court order. This means the Coalition were on track to costing tax payers nearly half a million dollars over a 12 month period. For the period 1 July 2017 to 19 June 2018, Corrections Victoria has paid \$131 645.41 for non-delivery of prisoners. The prison population has grown by 71% in the past 10 years, and there has been a doubling of remand numbers since 2013.

Prison security

Question asked by: Ms Fitzherbert
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 19 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

As I stated in the House, the circumstances surrounding the escape have been referred to Victoria Police for investigation and as such it is not appropriate to comment further.

Prisoner transport

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 19 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Industrial discussions are a matter for the private contractor, G4S, and its staff. G4S has assured the department it will continue to meet its contractual obligations.

As this has also been listed before the Fair Work Commission, it is not appropriate that I comment further at this time.

Corrections system

Question asked by: Mr Finn
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 19 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The assertion made by the member regarding police resources is wrong and misleading.

The Andrews Labor Government has delivered the biggest ever investment in law and order in our state's history, including the funding, recruiting and deploying of an extra 3135 new police.

There are more sworn police officers in every region across Victoria as a result of the Andrews Labor Government's record investment. And crime has decreased as a result, as evidenced by the latest set of data released by the independent Crime Statistics Agency.

I am regularly briefed by Corrections Victoria on all issues regarding Victoria's Corrections system, including regular contact with the Commissioner whenever particular incidents occur.

Child protection

Question asked by: Ms Crozier
Directed to: Minister for Families and Children
Asked on: 19 June 2018

RESPONSE:

I am advised that:

The courts and VCAT makes decisions independently of Government and it wouldn't be appropriate to comment on individual cases.

The Department of Justice and Regulation appeals those decisions where legal advice supports such an appeal.

The Government has already made significant changes to strengthen the Working with Children Check scheme, including making the application process more rigorous.

DJR is currently working with the Commonwealth, and other states and territories to explore options to develop national standards relating to Working with Children Checks, including the treatment of certain serious offences and the appeals process.

A positive working with children check does not automatically mean someone will be given a job working with children or young people. Youth Workers and residential care workers are not directly employed by the department of Health and Human Services but by community service organisations providing direct service.

The Children Youth and Families Act 2005 and its regulations combined requires that registered out of home care service providers must check criminal records and criminal history prior to engaging, employing or approving a person as an out-of-home carer, including when recruiting residential care workers.

The Child Safe Standards, introduced by our Government in 2016, is a regulatory regime established under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 which seeks to ensure that organisations put systems in place to prevent child abuse. Child Safe Standards apply to organisations that provide out of home care services to children in Victoria.

Child Safe Standard 4 requires organisations to have policies and procedures for recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that support a child safe environment. The independent Commission for Children and Young People is the regulator for the child safe standards, and can take enforcement action if there is non-compliance.

Recycling industry

Question asked by: Mr Purcell
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 19 June 2018

RESPONSE:

The 2018-19 State Budget provided a \$14.5 million assistance package to help councils continue kerbside recycling collections, and industry to fast-track infrastructure upgrades. As part of this package the government is also developing a strategic plan to support the recycling industry to transition to a more sustainable, resilient model, in the medium to long term.

Concurrently, the Andrews Labor Government is actively working to reduce the fire risk posed by stockpiled combustible recyclable materials. In July 2017, immediately after the fire at the SICM Coolaroo site, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change established the Resource Recovery Facilities Audit Taskforce, chaired by the Environment Protection Authority and including the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Country Fire Authority, Emergency Management Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The taskforce is inspecting resource recovery facilities across the state to tackle stockpiles that pose a fire risk. As of 12 June 2018, 278 inspections have been carried out at 112 sites across the state. The taskforce will continue its audit program to ensure all priority sites are inspected.

The Andrews Labor Government also established the 12-month interim Waste Management Policy (Resource Recovery Facilities) to improve safety standards at Victorian waste and resource recovery facilities. Consultation is open until 1 August 2018 on a more permanent tool to manage the risk of fire at resource recovery facilities and ensure these regulatory powers continue to protect Victorians.

Victoria is well placed to tackle recycling issues in the long term. Last year, in an Australian first, the Andrews Labor Government finalised its comprehensive waste and resource recovery infrastructure planning framework, which sets out the infrastructure needed to manage and recover resources from the waste that Victoria's growing population will create over the next 30 years. The framework is complemented by specific strategies on waste education, market development for recovered resources, and organic waste recovery. The government is investing at record levels in waste and resource recovery initiatives that will help implement the framework and strategies, with more than \$80 million provided through the last four state budgets.

Clergy mandatory reporting

Question asked by: Ms Springle
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 19 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The Victorian Government is giving detailed consideration to all the recommendations of the Royal Commission, including that mandatory reporting laws should not exempt religious ministers from being required to report information disclosed in a religious confession.

The Royal Commission highlighted the importance of individuals in religious organisations, including individuals in religious ministries, reporting knowledge or suspicion of child sexual abuse. This enables authorities to act to investigate abuse, and first and foremost to protect child victims of abuse.

The religious confessions privilege is set out in section 127 of the Evidence Act 2008, and applies generally to evidence given in court proceedings, not just to cases of child sexual abuse.

Victoria's Evidence Act 2008 is a part of the Uniform Evidence Law. The Uniform Evidence Law has been adopted by the Commonwealth, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania.

South Australia is not a Uniform Evidence Law jurisdiction, so did not need to consider the need to amend uniform laws when it enacted its 2017 laws.

The Council of Attorneys General agreed, at its meeting on 8 June 2018 in Perth, Western Australia, that, given the place of the religious confessional privilege in the Uniform Evidence Law, it was desirable that a national approach be developed.

The Council agreed to refer this matter to a Working Group which is currently considering other Uniform Evidence Law reforms arising from the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

As noted, the Victorian Government is giving detailed consideration to all the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

We have already implemented a number of the Royal Commission's recommendations relating to Working with Children Checks, civil law reform and criminal justice, and consulted extensively on those reforms.

The meeting of Attorneys General in Perth agreed that a national response to the confessional seal was desirable, and commissioned further work to develop a nationally consistent approach.

The Council of Attorneys General Working Group will consider what consultation will take place as part of this process.

Men's health

Question asked by: Mr Young
Directed to: Special Minister of State
Asked on: 20 June 2018

RESPONSE:

The Victorian Budget 2018-19 provides a record \$705 million investment in mental health and alcohol and other drugs services. This investment is a commitment to making sure people, irrespective of gender, can get the treatment they need, when they need it.

As the question notes, suicide is higher amongst men. The Victorian Government has a clear goal to halve the rate of suicide rate by 2025. We have invested in many initiatives that are currently expanding supports available to Victorians at risk of suicide and following a suicide attempt, including working with men and tailoring prevention activities based in their communities.

For Men's Health Week, the Government advised the E. J. Whitten Foundation that it is extending its current support for their men's health initiative. This funding package is worth \$1.3m over four years comprising;

- \$700 000 from 2018–2021 for a Men's Health Initiative "It's Time to Test"
- \$600 000 over four years for naming rights for a mid-career research fellowship in prostate cancer.

"It's Time to Test" seeks to raise general awareness of the importance of men's health and promote health seeking behaviours, including talking about their own health, consulting with general practitioners and having relevant health checks.

Health issues and support services for men were highlighted on the Department for Health and Human Services intranet on the 18th June.

Native forest logging

Question asked by: Ms Dunn
Directed to: Minister for Agriculture
Asked on: 20 June 2018

RESPONSE:

VicForests has direct responsibility for honouring its contractual arrangements with its contractors and customers. VicForests advises that currently, two of its contractors have been stood down. I am advised that the duration and final cost of these two stand downs remains to be determined.

Crown Casino

Question asked by: Dr Ratnam
Directed to: Minister for Trade and Investment
Asked on: 20 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

Under the Casino Control Act 1991, it is the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation, not the Minister, which specifies the areas of the casino in which gaming machines can operate in unrestricted mode.

The areas are specified by way of a notice published in the Government Gazette.

The last notice by the VCGLR relating to specified areas was published on 22 October 2015.

Whilst there have been changes to the area of the casino in which these machines can operate (the specified area), there has never been any increase in the maximum number of gaming machines that are permitted to operate in unrestricted mode.

Under the Tenth Deed of Variation entered into by the previous Coalition Government, the State will be required to pay compensation to the Melbourne casino operator, Crown Melbourne Limited, if it removes, reduces in number or amends or restricts the way in which gaming machines in unrestricted mode are permitted to operate.

The Andrews Government has introduced a number of measures to address gaming machine harm at Crown. These include the YourPlay pre-commitment scheme which is available on all gaming machines and is mandatory for players to use to set limits in order to play machines in unrestricted mode. The Gambling Regulation Act 2003 has also been amended to allow the Minister to make regulations in relation to the standards, requirements and content of a code of conduct.

The VCGLR is currently conducting the sixth casino review to assess Crown's suitability to hold the casino licence.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

The notice issued by the VCGLR on 22 October 2015 did not increase the maximum number of gaming machines permitted to operate in unrestricted mode at the Melbourne casino.

Lara prison expansion

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 20 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

Funds were required in this financial year for land and environmental assessments on potential sites, for activities associated with the procurement of land and for the commencement of the design and planning process for the new facility.

Lara prison expansion

Question asked by: Mr O'Donohue
Directed to: Minister for Corrections
Asked on: 20 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

The maximum-security 400-bed Macquarie prison in NSW has dormitory accommodation, with sixteen pods and twenty-five individual cubicles.

The new maximum-security prison in Lara will have individual cellular accommodation to cater for at least 700 prisoners. This design model was chosen because in Victoria we have a focus on the safety of staff and an emphasis on rehabilitation — both of which could be compromised with a design such as the one used at the Macquarie Prison the member mentions.

In the past, Mr O'Donohue has criticised Victoria's medium-security Karreenga Annex for having "very few cells", but is now advocating for a maximum security facility with no cells at all.

The local community can be confident that Labor is investing in the model we are putting forward, and not taking flawed advice from Mr O'Donohue and the Coalition.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

I have visited prison facilities internationally and I was briefed on the Macquarie Prison project at a meeting of the Nation's Corrections Ministers in Sydney. Corrections Victoria also brief me on prison design and construction from prison projects around the country and the world.

Apprenticeships and traineeships

Question asked by: Mrs Peulich
Directed to: Minister for Training and Skills
Asked on: 20 June 2018

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

No caps have been placed on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training.

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

As previously stated, no caps have been placed on pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training.

The Andrews Labor Government knows how important apprenticeships and traineeships are to employers, job-seekers, and the Victorian economy. This commitment is demonstrated through the 2018-19 Victorian State Budget, whereby the Government invested an additional \$644 million into the training and TAFE system, to restore confidence, meet projected demand in key industries and ensure that all students have the opportunity to get the skills they need for the jobs we are creating. This investment includes \$43.8 million to implement quality initiatives for apprenticeships.

The Commonwealth's proposed National Partnership on the Skilling Australians Fund (SAF) is flawed. The Andrews Labor Government remains concerned that the SAF National Partnership features unrealistic apprenticeship targets, significant uncertainty of the revenue available, and budget benchmarking that penalises states without an appreciation of how demand driven markets or TAFE funding works.

We will continue to negotiate with the Commonwealth Government to get the best deal for Victorians.

Parole legislation

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

RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:

I am advised that this prisoner's telephone list has not been cancelled.

Parole legislation

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

RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:

As of 21 June 2018, external legal fees were \$20 403.

Youth justice system

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

RESPONSE:

I am advised that:

I am unable to provide comment on individual matters involving young people in Youth Justice centres.

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 restricts the public identification of young people within the Youth Justice system. In addition, under the Act it is an offence for a person to disclose confidential information relating to security arrangements at Youth Justice facilities. This is to safeguard the safety and security of these facilities, and to keep staff, young people and the general community safe. It is essential that these requirements are stringently adhered to.

However, what I can say is that any incidence of violent behaviour or assaults by young people in custody is absolutely unacceptable, and the safety of our staff, young people and the community is of utmost importance. All incidents or allegations of violence or assault by young people or staff in Youth Justice Centres are reported and referred to police for investigation.

As part of the Government's commitment to transparency, Category 1 incident data is now published on the department's website on a quarterly basis. In addition, the Government has legislated that all Category 1 incidents, which comprise the most serious incidents, are reported to the independent Commission for Children and Young People.

Recent data shows there has been a 57 per cent reduction in Category 1 incidents during the January to March 2018 quarter. I note that this data represents allegations and observed incidents. It does not reflect whether an allegation was substantiated.

Following passage of the Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017, legislation the Liberals tried to scuttle, new laws that crack down on serious offenders and toughen consequences for young offenders are now in effect.

This includes increasing the maximum period of detention that the Children's Court can impose for multiple offences (of any type) from three years to four years. Our reforms require the Children's Court to have regard to the protection of the community when sentencing a child for a serious offence and the Youth Parole Board must be notified of incidents that occur while in custody.

Decisions to grant bail or other court orders is made independently by the courts.