

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS  
WITHOUT NOTICE**

**9 March to 29 March 2018**

**(Extract from book 4)**

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## **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 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**

**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 <sup>1</sup>      | Northern Metropolitan      | Greens | Morris, Mr Joshua                          | Western Victoria           | LP     |
| Bath, Ms Melina <sup>2</sup>              | Eastern Victoria           | Nats   | Mulino, Mr Daniel                          | Eastern Victoria           | ALP    |
| Bourman, Mr Jeffrey                       | Eastern Victoria           | SFFP   | O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>8</sup>      | Eastern Victoria           | Nats   |
| Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel <sup>3</sup>   | 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 <sup>9</sup>  | Northern Victoria          | Nats   |
| Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon        | Eastern Metropolitan       | LP     | Patten, Ms Fiona <sup>10</sup>             | Northern Metropolitan      | RV     |
| Davis, Mr David McLean                    | Southern Metropolitan      | LP     | Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret               | Southern Metropolitan      | Greens |
| Drum, Mr Damian Kevin <sup>4</sup>        | 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 <sup>11</sup> | Northern Metropolitan      | Greens |
| Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret                  | Southern Metropolitan      | LP     | Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth           | South Eastern Metropolitan | LP     |
| Gepp, Mr Mark <sup>5</sup>                | Northern Victoria          | ALP    | Shing, Ms Harriet                          | Eastern Victoria           | ALP    |
| Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred <sup>7</sup> | Western Metropolitan       | Greens | Somyurek, Mr Adem                          | South Eastern Metropolitan | ALP    |
| Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph <sup>6</sup>     | 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 <sup>12</sup>             | Western Metropolitan       | Greens |
| Melhem, Mr Cesar                          | Western Metropolitan       | ALP    | Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling         | Eastern Metropolitan       | LP     |
|   |                            |        | Young, Mr Daniel                           | Northern Victoria          | SFFP   |

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 28 September 2017

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 15 April 2015

<sup>3</sup> DLP until 26 June 2017

<sup>4</sup> Resigned 27 May 2016

<sup>5</sup> Appointed 7 June 2017

<sup>6</sup> Resigned 6 April 2017

<sup>7</sup> Resigned 9 February 2018

<sup>8</sup> Resigned 25 February 2015

<sup>9</sup> Appointed 12 October 2016

<sup>10</sup> ASP until 16 January 2018

<sup>11</sup> Appointed 18 October 2017

<sup>12</sup> 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

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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 March to 29 March 2018**

**Metropolitan Fire Brigade enterprise bargaining agreement**

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

**RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Mr Blandthorn's company has been paid \$52 500 under a contract for services which commenced on 15 December 2017 and will conclude no later than 15 May 2018, with a total value which may be less than, but not exceed, \$70 000.

**Vocational education and training**

**Question asked by:** Mr Morris  
**Directed to:** Minister for Training and Skills  
**Asked on:** 8 March 2018

**RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

No.

I am particularly concerned that your question seeks to mislead Victorians regarding the government's investment in training and skills.

The Andrews Labor Government is investing over \$2.43 billion in 2017-18 — through the Training, Higher Education and Workforce Development budget output — to support Victorians to get the skills they need for the job they want.

**Barwon Prison**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Corrections  
**Asked on:** 8 March 2018

**RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:**

It is important to note that whilst these statistics do reflect an increase of alleged offences recorded at Barwon Prison, the actual number of additional criminal offences recorded by Victoria Police over three years is just 27.

Barwon Prison accommodates some of the most complex and dangerous prisoners in Victoria, and any incidents that occur in prison of a criminal nature are not tolerated and are referred to Victoria Police for investigation.

This is not a reflection of 'lawlessness', but rather, one of law enforcement.

**RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

The challenges of preventing violence and drug use in our community are also faced in our prisons. Of note is the massive spikes in the positive drug tests that occurred at Barwon prison in 2011/12 and in 2013/14 under the former government.

Nonetheless, the safety of staff and prisoners is our highest priority. Violent behaviour and drug use in prison are completely unacceptable and incidents of this nature are routinely referred to Victoria Police.

This Government passed laws in May 2016 to ensure that prison officers are considered in the same way as other emergency services workers when assaulted in the course of carrying out their job. Any prisoner responsible for injuring a prison officer faces significant punishment, including extra time in prison.

Victoria's prison system has one of the toughest and most extensive drug-testing regimes in Australia. It is noted that between 2015 and 2018 an average of 89% of drug tests at Barwon Prison returned a negative result.

A range of security measures are employed to combat drugs in prisons, including:

- employing the latest technology to detect contraband upon entry;
- undertaking intelligence-led searching;
- drug testing;
- use of drug detection dogs;
- removing contact visits for those found with contraband or using drugs; and
- providing drug rehabilitation programs and drug substitution programs.

### **Youth justice centres**

**Question asked by:** Ms Fitzherbert  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 8 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE:**

I am advised that:

In your question you cite data on offences committed by young people in custody. My department advises me it has not been able to validate the data you referred to.

The independent Crime Statistics Agency (CSA) produces reported crime data, sourced from Victoria Police's LEAP database, which includes data on all recorded alleged offences at Youth Justice Precincts.

My department has confirmed with the CSA that the data does not capture the level of detail required to ascertain whether the alleged offender is a young person in custody, or whether the alleged victim is a staff member. The data does not categorise the recorded alleged offenders or victims according to whether they are young people in custody, staff, service providers, contractors or visitors.

What I can say is that violent behaviour, assaults and anti-social behaviour by young people in custody is absolutely unacceptable and is not tolerated in youth justice centres.

All incidents which involve alleged criminal offences are reported to Victoria Police.

The Government introduced stronger consequences for young people who commit crimes while in custody, as part of the *Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017* — legislation the Liberal Party tried to scuttle.

As part of the Government's \$50 million response to the Ogloff/ Armytage Review, we have implemented a new classification and placement system that reviews the security risk of all young people in custody to ensure they are placed at the appropriate security level.

The Government has also improved transparency by introducing the publication of incident reporting data on a quarterly basis. I note that this data represents allegations and observed incidents. It does not reflect whether an allegation was substantiated.

Your own Inquiry's report made no finding against the Government's current reporting of serious incidents. Rather, it suggests Ms. Wooldridge's decision to remove Category 3 incident classification and replace it with Significant Incident Case Notes may have reduced public visibility of critical incidents and created a culture of underreporting within the youth justice system and to Victoria Police, thereby placing staff and young people at risk.

Unlike the previous government's reporting of incidents, the Andrews Labor Government is committed to robust reporting, review and oversight of incidents in youth justice to ensure the safety of our hard working staff and wellbeing of young people.

Following the move of youth justice to the Department of Justice and Regulation, there has been a general increase in the reporting of incidents due to an increased focus on ensuring that all incidents are appropriately reported and categorised.

There has been a focus on ensuring the impact on young people and staff is appropriately considered when categorising incidents, resulting in a greater number of incidents categorised as Category One.

Previously, assaults were only classified as Category One if they resulted in admission to hospital. It has been reinforced with staff that the potential for harm and the seriousness of the intent can also meet the threshold for a Category One incident.

### **Electorate office budgets**

**Question asked by:** Ms Wooldridge  
**Directed to:** Special Minister of State  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE:**

This is a matter that is not within my responsibilities as Special Minister of State or as Leader of the Government as it is a matter relating to the Australian Labor Party.

However, I wish to make it clear that in responding to issues identified in the Ombudsman's report the Australian Labor Party takes responsibility for any decisions made in connection to electorate officers resources and campaign activity and has taken action to repay all funds identified in the Ombudsman's report.

### **Electorate office budgets**

**Question asked by:** Mr Rich-Phillips  
**Directed to:** Special Minister of State  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE:**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet offered to provide supplementary funding of \$1.5 million to cover operational costs of the Ombudsman's office.

DPC provided an increase to the VO 2016-17 budget of \$409 000 to cover costs incurred in that financial year. DPC provided an increase to the VO 2017-18 budget of \$1.09 million. I am advised that DPC does not know the costs associated with the referral, including costs incurred in relation to legal proceedings in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and the High Court. It is for the Ombudsman as an independent officer of Parliament to account to Parliament for these matters.

I note that the Ombudsman indicated in her annual report that she considers that the investigation which commenced following the referral from the Legislative Council is not within the core work of her office.

The Ombudsman was requested to notify the Department if the costs associated with the referral from this house were anticipated to exceed \$1.5 million. The Department has not received any such notification from the Ombudsman.

**Electorate office budgets**

**Question asked by:** Ms Fitzherbert  
**Directed to:** Special Minister of State  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

**RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

The Solicitor-General is a salaried officer of the Crown appointed by the Governor in Council. The Solicitor-General does not invoice the State for his/her services and therefore it is not necessary for his/her office to record the time or costs associated with his/her involvement in any particular matter.

The Solicitor-General is the chief legal adviser of the Government and it is customary for the Government to engage the Solicitor-General for his or her assistance in important legal matters.

The \$139 001 in legal costs that I previously advised this house were incurred by Government in relation to the proceeding included costs charged by junior counsel assisting the Solicitor-General. Junior counsel is a member of the private bar who invoices Government directly for their services.

**Electorate office budgets**

**Question asked by:** Mr Rich-Phillips  
**Directed to:** Minister for Agriculture  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

**RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

I do not recall the particulars of when I became aware of the field organiser pooling arrangements, but I can confirm I was aware of them prior to the 2014 election.

**FURTHER RESPONSE:**

I do not recall the particulars of when I became aware of the field organiser pooling arrangements, but I can confirm I was aware of them prior to the 2014 election. However, my budget and staffing entitlements were fully allocated in my electorate.

**Electorate office budgets**

**Question asked by:** Ms Crozier  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

**RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

The Ombudsman gave me the option of how to participate in her investigation. I cooperated with the Ombudsman in the manner she specified in the report. The report contains several extracts of my statement to her.

**Electorate office budgets**

**Question asked by:** Ms Wooldridge  
**Directed to:** Special Minister of State  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

**RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:**

In Parliament on 2 September 2015 Mr Davis asked me in a supplementary question whether I was aware of any direction that was given to Members to employ staff and I responded by providing the quote which you have included in your question of 27 March 2018.

I stand by that statement. The other quote you cite in your question is included in paragraph 321 of the Ombudsman's report and was in response to a different question asked by investigators (their question to me at that time is not cited in the report).

I do not accept that this demonstrates a situation where I misled the House on 2 September 2015. However, for completeness I wish to put on the record that I am not relying on hair splitting in relation to this matter. In September 2015 I believed that the employment relationship assigned to electorate offices and how that intersected with the recruitment process and activities of field officers within the Community Action Network was more highly delineated than what has now been assessed by the Ombudsman to be the case in practice. The Ombudsman formed the view that this absence of delineation was a breach of Parliamentary Guidelines. The Ombudsman also concludes that there is 'undoubtedly a blurred line between permissible and impermissible uses of parliamentary funds.' I agree with the Ombudsman's assessment on both matters.

#### **RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

I have listened to the recording of my interjection which occurred during an answer of my colleague Ms Pulford. You have misquoted my interjection in your question. Ms Pulford had used the sentence "sharing resources to undertake matters like supporting constituents with issues that matter to them", and I interrupted her sentence to comment that this is not something you could do. I think it is very likely that this was a barb directed at the Liberal Party but I refute the additional intent you place on this when you misquote my interjection.

#### **Western Victoria fires**

**Question asked by:** Mr Purcell  
**Directed to:** Minister for Trade and Investment  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:**

I thank the Member for Western Victoria for his question.

Since the devastating fires that swept through South-Western Victoria and affected the municipalities of Corangamite, Moyne and Southern Grampians, a significant and sustained effort has been undertaken by our emergency service organisations, municipal councils, and the broad network of agencies, government departments, volunteer and charitable organisations involved in relief and recovery activities.

Under Victoria's emergency management arrangements, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has responsibility for the regional coordination of relief and recovery. DHHS has been working closely with the impacted municipal councils and Incident Control Centres to ensure the coordination of relief efforts and the clear communication of relief services to community members.

This has included support for the many volunteer and charitable organisations that have come together to assist communities after this event, such as the Victorian Farmers Federation, which has established a Disaster Relief Fund to support farmers with the cost of fodder transport, collection and distribution, and Bendigo Bank, which has established a Community Relief Fund to support recovery initiatives developed in partnership with impacted communities.

#### **RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

I thank the Member for Western Victoria for his supplementary question.

Our emergency management sector is committed to ensuring that those communities impacted by emergencies are supported in their recovery through tailored and sustainable assistance that responds to the needs of the impacted community.

Following the South-Western Victorian fires, DHHS has put in place a thorough and robust regional recovery structure that brings together a broad network of agencies, government departments, industry groups, charitable organisations and volunteer associations involved in the recovery effort: As part of this work, a regional recovery

committee has now been established, which formalises the long-term commitment of these groups to the recovery process for impacted communities.

A key focus of the regional recovery committee will be the economic and psychological recovery of impacted households, primary producers and communities. This will build on support that is currently available to impacted farmers, such as financial relief assistance, support with fodder and animal health, and psychological support services. The Victorian government has recently announced \$100 000 to extend the 'Look over the Farm Gate' program to provide mental health support for these farming communities, and is partnering with the Victorian Farmers Federation to support a \$300 000 fodder drive, where critical feed will be provided to affected farmers to address essential fodder needs.

The Victorian government will continue to work with Agriculture Victoria, the Victorian Farmers Federation and impacted primary producers to ensure that appropriate and timely support is available to address the long-term impacts of this event.

### **Noojee logging**

**Question asked by:** Ms Dunn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Agriculture  
**Asked on:** 27 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:**

This Government takes mitigating the risk of bushfire and the risks to the Victorian community seriously.

Amongst other matters, the occurrence, source and severity of bushfires in our native forests is complex. I am advised that peer reviewed research published in a leading international journal, the Society for Conservation Biology in 2013, by some of Australia's most respected fire scientists, including Dr Attiwill from the University of Melbourne, rejects the assertion that logging makes Victoria's forests more fire-prone.

### **Brighton incident**

**Question asked by:** Mr O'Donohue  
**Directed to:** Minister for Corrections  
**Asked on:** 28 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:**

This matter is currently before the Coroner. It would be inappropriate to comment before the coronial process is complete.

What I can say is that the Andrews Labor Government is strengthening counter-terrorism laws, following a review led by former Chief Commissioner of Police Ken Lay and former Supreme Court of Appeal Justice, the Honourable David Harper.

The Government has also started work on a new Fixated Threat Assessment Centre to better identify and target high risk individuals who may pose a serious threat to the Victorian community.

### **School cleaning contracts**

**Question asked by:** Mrs Peulich  
**Directed to:** Minister for Small Business  
**Asked on:** 28 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE QUESTION:**

The Andrews Labor Government is establishing a fairer schools cleaning contract model that will ensure schools get consistent, high quality services and cleaners are paid properly.

As I informed the House yesterday, these reforms fall within the Department of Education and Training (DET) which has established a program of practical support tailored to the needs of businesses and contractors affected by these reforms. Programs include mediation services, confidential business mentoring, business development workshops and well-being support.

Further, DET is working with Small Business Victoria to ensure the best possible transition for small businesses to the new arrangements while ensuring we protect some of Victoria's most vulnerable workers.

I would also like to advise the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs that 'Dalidakis' is the correct spelling of my Greek surname.

### **Youth justice system**

**Question asked by:** Mr Finn  
**Directed to:** Minister for Families and Children  
**Asked on:** 28 March 2018

#### **RESPONSE:**

I am advised that:

My department advises me that there is no report available on the number of young people since 1 January 2016 who did not present for a scheduled court appearance.

While this data is recorded on individual files of each young person in custody, it would require extensive resources to manually collate this information. I am advised that the vast majority of young people do present for their court appearances.

It is not appropriate for me to comment on an individual young person that is currently before the court. What I can say is that it is completely unacceptable for a young person not to present for a scheduled court appearance where they are able to do so. I note there are a range of legitimate factors that may prevent a young person from attending a scheduled court appearance including their physical and mental wellbeing.

The Andrews Labor Government is fixing up the mess left to us by the previous Liberal government. Following the Machinery of Government change of Youth Justice from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Justice and Regulation, a concerted effort has been made to ensure that all young people present for scheduled court appearances.

Youth Justice has procedures in place to guide custodial staff in preparing a young person for court attendances. These procedures include regular discussions with young people ahead of scheduled court appearances, encouraging the young person to attend, highlighting that it is in their best interests to do so, highlighting the consequences of not attending, and providing timely advice to the courts in the event that a young person does refuse to attend.

Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, physical force cannot be used for the purpose of compelling a young person to attend court.

Youth Justice custodial staff work with young people to understand their refusal and ensure their attendance whenever possible. Staff will also work closely with the Court to identify whether an appearance by video link is appropriate. The decision to allow this or any further arrangements are ultimately at the discretion of the Court.

In the event a young person refuses to attend a scheduled court appearance, the Court has the discretion to make an order regardless.