



Question: 127 QUESTION ON NOTICE — Mr Wakeling to ask the Minister for Education —
With reference to future funding for the Victorian Virtual Learning Network (VVLN):

(1) Will funding be allocated for the VVLN for 2016 to 2018.

(2) What will the allocation of VVLN funding be each year for 2016 to 2018.

(3) Will any VVLN funding be reduced or withdrawn during 2016 to 2018; if so, which year(s) and how much will the funding be reduced or withdrawn by.

Answer: I am informed as follows: •

The VVLN is one of six key virtual providers in the state.

•The VVLN has received over \$2m in funding since its inception in 2009 through a range of Commonwealth and state government initiatives, with the aim of becoming self-funding.

- In 2015, the Department has engaged an independent financial advisor to work with the VVLN to develop a Financial Sustainability Options Analysis to assist in the VVLN becoming self-sustaining. This work will be completed by 30 June 2015 and will inform future directions for VVLN operations, including how they will cover costs associated with the administration, management and updating of VCE study designs.
- If a sustainable option cannot be agreed, students currently enrolled in the VVLN will not be disadvantaged as the Department will ensure that those students can access the subjects from alternative providers such as the Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV).

The Hon. James Merlino, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 25/05/2015

Question: 128 QUESTION ON NOTICE — Mr Wakeling to ask the Minister for Education —
With reference to the Government's Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids —
Breakfast Club program:

(1) When will the promised \$13.5 million be invested into Foodbank to establish breakfast clubs at 500 government primary schools across the State.

(2) What is the selection process that will be used to determine which 500 government primary schools will be chosen to participate as breakfast clubs.

(3) How will the 25,000 children across the State be chosen to take part in program.

(4) When will the 500 government primary schools be advised of their selection.

(5) Will the schools that are not selected be advised of their non-selection and why.

(6) What is the expected commencement date of the breakfast clubs.

(7) Who will conduct the breakfast clubs.

(8) Will volunteers or paid staff assist to conduct the breakfast clubs.

(9) If paid staff are used to assist the conducting of the Breakfast Clubs, has extra funding been allocated to cover these costs.

Answer:

I am informed as follows:

- (1) The Government has committed funding to Foodbank Victoria (Foodbank) to establish breakfast clubs in 500 of the most disadvantaged Victorian government primary schools, from January 2016. An Agreement will be executed between the Department and Foodbank shortly after the Budget Announcement on 5 May to support implementation of this initiative.
- (2) A target list of schools eligible for participation has been identified based on Student Family Occupation (SFO) index data. The SFO is the equity funding component of the Student Resource Package, aimed to target the allocation of funds to schools most in need. SFO is calculated based on parental occupation data collected at the school level.

Schools with a high SFO have a higher density of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This indicates these schools have the highest level of disadvantage and are therefore the most appropriate schools to target for participation in line with the election commitment.
- (3) The figure of 25,000 children is based on an average of 50 students in each of the 500 schools participating in the program. This is based on Foodbank's estimates provided to the Department in their proposal.
- (4) I launched the Breakfast Club program with the Premier on May 11 at Richmond West Primary School.
- (5) Yes. All non-targeted primary schools will be sent information through existing channels. This will include an explanation of why they are not eligible for the program, including a rationale for how the Department determined the 500 most disadvantaged schools.
- (6) The breakfast club program is due to commence on the first day of Term 1 (January) 2016.
- (7) Foodbank will supply and deliver quality breakfast products to participating schools on a regular basis and will work with other organisations to provide volunteers to facilitate and support delivery of the program. Schools will be responsible for providing a safe and appropriate place for breakfasts to be served with supervision from a member of staff. If schools have locally-initiated breakfast clubs in place no disruption is anticipated- Foodbank will simply provide the food.
- (8) Volunteers will be required to assist in the running of the breakfast club. This may be in the physical helping at breakfast times, but also in promoting and supporting the program, such as developing and managing rosters. A member of staff will be required to supervise the breakfast clubs to meet duty of care obligations to the students who attend.
- (9) No extra funding has been allocated to cover the costs of paid staff members.

The Hon. James Merlino, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 25/05/2015

Question: 129 QUESTION ON NOTICE — Mr Wakeling to ask the Minister for Education —
 With reference to the Government's Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids —
 Camps, Sports and Excursions program:

- (1) When will the \$150 million Camps, Sports and Excursions fund (the fund) be established.
- (2) Who will be responsible for the distribution of the funds.
- (3) Will the funds be distributed to the schools or the parents.
- (4) How will the amount of the funds for each student be determined.

- (5) Is every student eligible to participate in the program.
- (6) Will every student who participates in the program receive monetary assistance.
- (7) Is the Support for our Kids — Camps, Sports and Excursions program for primary school students and secondary school students.
- (8) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of camps.
- (9) What will the cost of camps cover.
- (10) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the cost of sports.
- (11) What will the costs of sports cover.
- (12) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of excursions.
- (13) What will the costs of excursions cover.
- (14) When will the Camps, Sports and Excursions program commence.

Answer: I am informed as follows:

(1) When will the \$150 million Camps, Sports and Excursions fund (the fund) be established.

The government has committed \$148.3 million over four years, commencing from the 2015/16 financial year, to establish a Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

The Department of Education and Training is currently working through the details of this commitment as rapidly as possible to get support to schools and families that need it. The Department will inform schools and the community of the new program as soon as possible.

(2) Who will be responsible for the distribution of the funds.

Schools will be responsible for administering the program and allocating the funding towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for eligible students.

(3) Will the funds be distributed to the schools or the parents.

Funds will be distributed directly to the eligible student's school, but tied to the individual student.

(4) How will the amount of the funds for each student be determined.

Financial assistance of \$125 per year will be paid for each primary school student and \$225 per year for each secondary school student - subject to the family meeting the eligibility criteria for the program.

(5) Is every student eligible to participate in the program.

Students' participation in the program is based on the family meeting the eligibility criteria, which requires them to hold a means-tested concession card.

(6) Will every student who participates in the program receive monetary assistance.

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools students per year will be paid to the student's school for every student, and for the benefit of that student who meets the eligibility criteria for the program.

(7) Is the Support for our Kids - Camps, Sports and Excursions program for primary school students and secondary school students.

Yes. The program is for eligible students at primary schools and secondary schools.

(8) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of camps.

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools per year will be paid to schools towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for the eligible student. Under this program, there will not be a separate payment for families.

(9) What will the cost of camps cover.

Schools will be required to use the payment towards any expenses relating to camps, such as; food, travel and/or entry fees which benefit the eligible student.

(10) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the cost of sports.

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools per year will be paid to schools towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for the eligible student. Under this program, there will not be a separate payment for families.

(11) What will the costs of sports cover.

Schools will be required to use the payment towards any expenses relating to sports, such as; participation in swimming programs or other sporting activities which benefit the eligible student.

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(12) Will a separate payment be available for families to cover the costs of excursions.

A payment of \$125 for primary school students or \$225 for secondary schools per year will be paid to schools towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for the eligible student. Under this program, there will not be a separate payment for families.

(13) What will the costs of excursions cover.

Schools will be required to use the payment towards any expenses relating to excursions, such as; the costs associated with school trips or participation in outdoor education programs which benefit the eligible student.

(14) When will the Camps, Sports and Excursions program commence.

The government has committed \$148.3 million over four years, commencing from the 2015/16 financial year, to establish a Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

The Department of Education and Training is currently working through the details of this commitment as rapidly as possible to get support to schools and families that need it. The Department will inform schools and the community of the new program as soon as possible.

**< span style="font-family: 'Verdana','sans-serif'; font-size: 10pt">The Hon. James Merlino, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education**

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 08/05/2015

Question: 130 QUESTION ON NOTICE — Mr Wakeling to ask the Minister for Education —
With reference to the Government's Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids —
Glasses for Kids program:

- (1) When will the \$500,000 to sponsor the State Schools Relief program be invested.
- (2) What is the expected commencement date of the program.
- (3) What will the funds cover with regards to the program.
- (4) What is the selection process that will determine which 250 most disadvantaged schools will have optometrists visit their schools to conduct eye tests.
- (5) How will the students from the chosen 250 schools be selected to have their eyes tested.
- (6) Will parental approval be required before selection of the students takes place.
- (7) How will the visiting chosen school optometrists be selected.
- (8) If the optometrist determines that glasses are required, who will pay for the frames for the students.
- (9) If the optometrist determines that glasses are required, who will pay for the prescription lenses for the students.
- (10) Are there likely to be any other associated costs relating to the implementation and running of the program.
- (11) Will any part of this program be covered by Medicare.
- (12) Will parents be asked to pay or claim through Medicare, or private health insurance for those who have it, for any part of this program.

Answer: I am informed as follows:

- 1) Monies will be available after the passing of the budget.
- 2) Currently there is a pilot program being undertaken in a small number of government primary schools. The program will formally commence in the second half 2015.
- 3) The funds will cover project management costs of screening clinics for all Prep-Grade 3 children at the 250 most disadvantaged government primary schools.
- 4) A number of indices of socioeconomic disadvantage are available that will allow a simple ranking of need, including Student Family Occupation. The decision is yet to be made on the final measure.
- 5) There will be universal screening of all Prep-Grade 3 children in the designated schools.
- 6) A consent form is to be completed by parents.
- 7) The screening clinics are entirely comprised of volunteers, initially from OPSM. There are other potential partners under active consideration.
- 8) All frames are provided free of charge by OneSight, OPSM's global charitable arm.
- 9) All lenses are provided free of charge by OneSight, OPSM's global charitable arm.
- 10) The funds are all inclusive.
- 11) All screenings are free. If children require follow up the costs will be bulk billed to Medicare. The costs will be covered by OneSight for any child not covered by Medicare.
- 12) Private Health Insurance does not apply to any part of the program.

**< span style="font-family: 'Arial','sans-serif'; font-size: 11pt">The Hon. James Merlino, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education**

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 08/05/2015

Question: 131 QUESTION ON NOTICE — Mr Wakeling to ask the Minister for Education —
With reference to the Government's Back to School: Skills for our Future, Support for our Kids —
Uniform program:

- (1) When will the \$15.5 million be invested to sponsor State Schools Relief.
- (2) How will the government ensure that the money is distributed fairly.
- (3) Who will decide who is eligible to receive books, stationery, software and more expensive items such as school blazers.
- (4) What are the more expensive items other than a school blazer.
- (5) When will parents be able to benefit from this program.

Answer:

I am informed as follows:

- 1) The funding will be provided to State Schools' Relief over four years to enable families of disadvantaged children attending government schools to purchase school uniforms, textbooks and other essential items. The funding will extend the current State Schools' Relief school uniform distribution program. The first instalment of \$4.0 million is included in this year's Budget.
- 2) State Schools' Relief has been distributing assistance to disadvantaged children since 1930. The funding will be delivered via a Common Funding Agreement.
- 3) Provision of assistance is based on a needs assessment by individual schools according to criteria detailed by State Schools Relief. Short term crisis and long term chronic need are the primary qualifying criteria for support. State Schools Relief tracks the drivers of service demand at the point of application, including refugee status, homelessness, family violence, house fire, natural disaster, financial hardship, illness and emergency. Provision of assistance is not an extension of welfare entitlement traditionally evidenced by a healthcare or pensioner card.
- 4) The funding will assist the purchase of textbooks and other essential items for disadvantaged children attending government schools.
- 5) As part of its ongoing operations, State Schools' Relief has been distributing assistance for uniforms to disadvantaged children since the start of this school year. Assistance for the purchase of textbooks and other essential items will be available for the 2016 school year.

**< span style="font-family: 'Arial','sans-serif'; font-size: 11pt">The Hon. James Merlino, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education**

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 25/05/2015

Question: 132 QUESTION ON NOTICE — Mr Wakeling to ask the Minister for Education —
With reference to the Victorian Government's payment of Gonski funding for the years 2016 to
2019:

- (1) How much Gonski funding will be allocated each year.

(2) Will each school be advised of their individual allocations for each year; if so, when will each school be advised.

Answer: The Minister for Education: I am informed as follows:
The Government is currently finalising the 2015-16 budget and an announcement on the State's Gonski funding contributions will be made shortly.
The Government is committed to transparency of Gonski funding allocations. Schools will receive advice in September when they receive their indicative Student Resource Package.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 30/04/2015

Question: 133 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mr Southwick to ask the Treasurer —
My question is for the Treasurer. Caulfield is an amazing and vibrant multicultural electorate with a particularly large Jewish community. Regrettably, due to recent global events, there has been a rise in hate and anti-Semitic attacks on the Jewish community, and over a number of months the community has been on high alert, with an increased security presence being required.

In the 2014 state election there was bipartisan support for security funding for schools and community organisations, including promised funding for emergency management plans. On behalf of Caulfield residents I ask the Treasurer to deliver vital funding in the 2015-16 Victorian budget to address the immediate security concerns of our multicultural centres, synagogues and Jewish day schools.

Answer: The Government shares the member's concern that our community should be safe and inclusive, and is investing \$74 million in the 15/16 Budget to bolster multicultural affairs and social cohesion as well as ensuring Victorians of all backgrounds feel at home.
This includes fulfilling the Government's election commitment to contribute \$500,000 to the cost of upgrading the security infrastructure and exterior renovations at the Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre, the heart of the Jewish Community's advocacy and charitable activities in Victoria.
This also includes an additional \$25 million to reinforce Victoria's social cohesion and community resilience and to prevent radicalisation and extremism.
The Department of Education and Training will also be delivering on the Government's election commitment to help schools develop and implement Emergency Management Plans. \$600,000 will be allocated to grants to schools and for the engagement of experts to provide advice on school security planning.
Further funding for security upgrades at schools may be also available through the 2015/16 Budget's delivery of the Government's election commitment to provide \$120 million over four years to contribute to capital costs for independent schools.

TIM PALLAS MP
Treasurer

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 19/05/2015

Question: 134 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Blandthorn to ask the Minister for Health —
My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. It concerns the future of the Brunswick Business Incubator, which operates from a facility owned by the Department of Health and Human Services. In July 2002 the Brunswick Business Incubator was opened on Victoria Street in Brunswick; it is an important initiative that is jointly funded by the Australian government, the Victorian government and the Moreland City Council.

At its current location the Brunswick Business Incubator offers 66 office spaces for prospective tenants and provides a range of services and support to new and emerging businesses to assist them in becoming established and profitable organisations. The Brunswick Business Incubator holds a lease on the property which is soon to expire, and members of the local business community are concerned about whether they will be able to renew their lease on the property for the long term or whether the department has other plans for the property. It is vitally important that emerging businesses retain access to this facility.

I ask that the Minister for Health detail plans for this property and request that, whatever plans are made, they provide for the continued operation of the Brunswick Business Incubator from this location.

Answer:

The Brunswick Business Incubator, located at 420 Victoria Street, Brunswick is situated on land owned by the Secretary to the Department of Health & Human Services and leased to Moreland City Council on a non-commercial rent for a term of 10 years.

The Government is committed to ensuring that its property assets are appropriately used for service delivery needs of government agencies and my Department is currently working with the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources regarding the future of the Brunswick Business Incubator at this site.

I recognise the important role played by the Brunswick Business Incubator in supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and jobs generation for the local community and beyond.

As you outlined in your question, the Brunswick Business Incubator is undoubtedly an important business development and community asset.

It is certainly my intention to find a suitable arrangement for the property in line with the government and departmental asset management frameworks and policies, and I will keep you updated on matters as they are progressed.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 18/05/2015

Question: 135 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mr Bull (Gippsland East) to ask the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water —
My constituency question is for the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. The information I seek relates to the Gippsland Lakes Environment Fund and whether the minister will continue this important fund. The fund, which is overseen by the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee, has supported an enormous amount of work in the areas of research, education and investigation of matters pertaining specifically to the Gippsland Lakes, none more important than its work on the unique burrunan dolphins and understanding more about marine pests and water monitoring.

It is very clear that these programs need to continue and there are other important projects to be undertaken, and that is why this funding is so critical. The coalition committed a further \$8 million pre-election, but with the clock ticking there are many in my community of Gippsland East, including members of community groups who were the beneficiaries of much of this study work, awaiting news.

Funding for the Gippsland Lakes has always attracted bipartisan support, and I ask the minister if she will continue to support the Gippsland Lakes via this fund.

Answer: The Victorian Government is committed to protecting the health of the Gippsland Lakes.

The Victorian Government recognises the important environmental, social, cultural and economic values of the Gippsland Lakes.

On-ground management activities and a range of other projects supported by the Gippsland Lakes Environment Fund will continue to be implemented in 2015.

We will release a renewed Gippsland Lakes Ramsar Site Management Plan in mid-2015, with clear actions to meet our international obligations for maintaining the ecological character of the Gippsland Lakes.

The Victorian Government is committing a further \$2.5 million in 2015-16 towards on-ground management activities to maintain or improve the environmental condition of the Gippsland Lakes.

HON LISA NEVILLE MP

Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 04/05/2015

Question:

136 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mr Brooks to ask the Minister for Education —
My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. An indicator of the Andrews Labor government's strong commitment to public education was the capital improvement package it took to the last election. In particular I was thrilled that Labor committed to rebuild Greensborough College in my electorate, with a specific amount of \$10 million allocated in its first term to complete the first stage of this project. It is a great local school, but its facilities were shamefully neglected by the Liberals.

The school community is keen to begin formal planning of its new school facilities as soon as possible, and I ask the minister if he can advise when funding to commence planning work will be provided.

Answer:

Investment in education and school infrastructure is a priority for the Victorian Government which has announced a \$730 million education infrastructure package for Victoria. The 2015-16 State Budget provides funding to refurbish and renovate schools, deliver brand-new relocatable classrooms and construct new schools.

I am pleased to confirm that the Government has announced \$1 million for Greensborough College in 2015-16. This allocation will fund the initial stages of the project to rebuild the school. Further funding will be resourced in future budgets.

The Department of Education and Training has commenced planning for all schools announced in the 2015-16 State Budget, including Greensborough College. I understand that the school has commenced preparing its Asset Management Plan and that, following initial training in March, members of the leadership team will attend a second training session in May to allow them to complete the plan. This planning will ensure that when further funding is provided works can commence as soon as possible.

I have asked the Department to continue to work closely with the school on their future plans for capital improvement.

**< span style="font-family: 'Verdana','sans-serif'; font-size: 10pt">The Hon. James Merlino, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education**

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 22/05/2015

Question: 137 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Staley to ask the Minister for Health —
My question is for the Minister for Health. Will the minister ensure that funding is provided in this year's state budget to deliver the Ararat Active City program. Funding this exciting initiative will ensure that the great strides towards better health already made by the Ararat community are sustained. I refer the minister to recent comments made by the mayor of the Rural City of Ararat, Cr Paul Hooper, reported in the Ararat Advertiser. He said: "It is vital we continue this effort and that the state government support this program to succeed."

Cr Hooper pleaded with the new government to: "... come back on board and assist our community to convert this very successful program into a long-term lifestyle of choice."

The Liberal-Nationals government established the Healthy Together Victoria program in 2011, and Ararat rural city was an inaugural site. To continue this work the Liberal-Nationals government committed \$2.5 million to fund a new and innovative preventative health program developed in Ararat for local needs. This should now move forward. All the development work has been done; all that is needed is the current government to provide funding.

Answer: Healthy Together was Victoria's response to the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health, introduced by the Federal Labor Government in 2009 and endorsed by Victoria's then Premier Brumby. I am delighted to hear the Member for Ripon praise this Labor investment, though surprised to hear her take credit for it.
I would be thrilled if the Member for Ripon advocated to her Federal Liberal and National colleagues and expressed her dissatisfaction at the cruel up to \$90 million cut million cut to National Partnership Agreement announced in last year's Federal Budget, a cut that will directly impact Healthy Together Victoria programs.

I have made several representations to the Federal Health Minister on behalf of the Victorian community, including the people of Ararat, highlighting the consequences of the Federal Government cuts to this Agreement.

I am aware of the tremendous preventative health work being done by the Ararat City Council. Both the Council and the community are committed to tackling chronic disease, particularly diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, preventative health programs have never been more important.

I am aware the previous Minister for Health from the former Liberal Government called in councillors from Bendigo, Cardinia, Dandenong, Geelong, Hume, Knox, Latrobe, Mildura, Whittlesea, Wodonga, Wyndham and Central Goldfields prior to the last State election and asserted that he had secured a deal for more money for the Healthy Together Victoria program from the Federal Government. I look forward to hearing where the Federal Government money is and hope the member for Ripon can help me persuade the Federal Health Minister to honour her commitment to the Victorian Community, including the people of Ararat, through next week's Federal Budget.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 11/05/2015

Question: 138 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Green to ask the Minister for Education — My constituency question is to the Minister for Education and relates to the Andrews government's commitment to build a new technical school in the Whittlesea region. This promise is in contrast to what the coalition presided over - that is, savage cuts to education, a lack of school capital investment in growing suburbs and the shameful closure of the Greensborough TAFE. Can the minister outline initial works and consultation regarding the location of the Whittlesea region technical school and what curriculum and industry participation are envisaged?

Answer:

I am informed as follows:

The Victorian Labor Financial Statement 2014 included capital funding of \$100 million and operating funding of \$25.37 million over four years to establish ten Tech Schools in Gippsland, Bendigo, Ballarat, Geelong, Monash, Casey, Wyndham, Banyule, Yarra Ranges and Whittlesea.

My Department will consult with regional offices, industry, training providers, unions, schools, local government and other key stakeholder groups. Preferred locations for the Tech Schools in each of the ten areas are currently being investigated.

Tech Schools will be strongly encouraged to offer courses in developing industry areas identified by the Government as having potential for extraordinary economic growth, including: medical technology and pharmaceuticals; new energy technology; food and fibre; and transport, defence and construction technology. The Tech Schools initiative will help our secondary school students to build the employability skills needed for high-tech, high-skill jobs.

Further announcements on key developments and consultation with local stakeholders and communities will be made throughout the year as they occur.

**< span style="font-family: 'Verdana','sans-serif'; font-size: 10pt">The Hon. James Merlino, MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education**

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 22/05/2015

Question: 139 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mr Mulder to ask the Minister for Police — My constituency question is for the attention of the Minister for Police on behalf of the residents of Colac and district and Colac police officers. Last week, in an article in the Colac Herald of 6 April, the secretary of the Police Association Victoria, Ron Iddles, backed my call in this house for the state government to fund a new police station in Colac. The Colac police station has been identified as one of the top three stations in the state that need to be replaced. The last upgrade was carried out in the 1970s, and occupational health and safety officers have flagged a number of factors at the station that impact on the way police officers carry out their duties. The funding of a new station for Colac was an election commitment of the coalition government and is strongly supported by the Colac

community and the Police Association. My question is: will the minister provide an assurance to Colac police officers and to Colac and district residents that he will prioritise funding in the upcoming state budget for a rebuild of the Colac police station, which is necessary to support Colac police officers with a modern workplace from which to carry out their day-to-day activities?

Answer: The government recognises that Victoria Police requires appropriate facilities to support police in the work that they do, in keeping our communities safe.

I am happy to receive feedback from Victoria Police and the Department of Justice and Regulation about future priorities for station upgrades, including Colac.

The operational need for new and upgraded police stations is established through the Victoria Police Strategic Facilities Development Plan, where projects are considered in the context of other priorities across the State. Where the need for additional police infrastructure funding is identified, the status of projects is determined by government through the Budget process.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 06/05/2015

Question: 140 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Graley to ask the Minister for Emergency Services — My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services and concerns the Hampton Park Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade. I had the great pleasure of visiting this fantastic fire brigade late last year to meet with the volunteers and see the state of the current facilities. The station lacks change rooms, adequate training areas and secure parking for members, and has limited meeting room facilities. In fact everything, including the equipment, is located within one small space. The brigade is also forced to do its training away from the station. The brigade is growing, which is great news, yet the facilities are preventing further growth. I have written to the CFA on the brigade's behalf. However, I have been advised that the CFA does not have any immediate plans or funding allocated to replace or upgrade the Hampton Park fire station. It is an unfortunate situation. It is a great team that works hard, and if it had a better facility, it would be able to serve the area much more effectively. I ask the minister to visit the Hampton Park CFA to meet with the outstanding volunteers, who do so much for our local community.

Answer: The Victorian Government greatly values the work of volunteer firefighters of the Hampton Park Country Fire Authority Brigade who selflessly devote their time and skills to promote the safety and wellbeing of the Hampton Park community as well as attending to large scale emergency events across the South East Region.

The government has committed to a range of measures to better support firefighters, including the recruitment of 350 CFA career firefighters; new CFA stations and upgrades; installation of toilet and washroom facilities at up to 100 rural CFA stations; delivery of 50 Medium Tankers; and expansion of the Emergency Medical Response Program.

Furthermore, the government has committed to implementing presumptive legislation for career and volunteer firefighters.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 04/05/2015

Question: 141 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Mr Clark to ask the Minister for Public Transport — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport. I refer the minister to the Labor Party's election promise to establish a ministerial advisory group on the Box Hill transport interchange — a promise made only after I had already initiated arrangements for ongoing consultation between the previous government and stakeholders about the redevelopment of the Box Hill interchange and shopping centre — and I ask: given that it is now more than four months since the election, when will this promised ministerial advisory group finally be established?

Answer: Minister for Public Transport - I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised: The Government is finalising the terms of reference and membership for the Ministerial Advisory Group and expects to make an announcement shortly.

Attachments: No Attachments

Answer Published Date: 05/05/2015

Question: 142 CONSTITUENCY QUESTION — Ms Ward to ask the Minister for Planning — My constituency question is to the Minister for Planning. One of Victoria's treasures is our green wedges. These are the result of a visionary approach taken by the late Rupert Hamer to protect and preserve unique and diverse natural spaces of non-urban areas in metropolitan Melbourne. My electorate of Eltham is a place where the advantages of the green wedges are obvious to see. It is surrounded by beautiful parks, bushland, native trees and wildlife. Kangaroos can be seen grazing every evening only a few kilometres from my home. Before last year's state election Labor promised that it would enshrine the green wedges in legislation to ensure that the benefit of these wonderful parts of our city would be preserved for future generations. This commitment was welcomed in my electorate,

where many people were concerned at the cavalier approach taken to planning by the previous government. I ask the minister for an update on the government's position on the preservation of the green wedges.

Answer: I thank the Member for Eltham for her ongoing support for Melbourne's valued green wedges.

Melbourne's sustainability remains at the forefront of our liveability agenda. To that end we have committed to lock down the urban growth boundary and develop appropriate policies and mechanisms in consultation with the community to ensure our green wedge areas are not subject to any further encroachment and there is greater certainty about what can happen in these areas.

Green wedges contain significant native species, picturesque landscapes and open spaces that have health and well-being benefits for our residents and are important drawcards for visitors to our city. They are also the location of essential resources such as water catchments, productive agricultural land, quarries and major infrastructure that contribute enormously to the state's economy and are strategically important to the functioning of our city and surrounding region.

Our unique and diverse green wedges have been part of Melbourne's planning legacy for over 40 years. It is critical that these areas are sustainably managed and protected from the ongoing pressure of urban encroachment and inappropriate development. Green wedges are enshrined in the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and I am committed to working with Councils and all key stakeholders in taking action to ensure green wedges are preserved for future generations of people to enjoy and experience.

Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning

Attachments: No Attachments

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