

Budget Estimates 2023-24

Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance

Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research

Thursday 26 October 2023

PRESENT

The Hon. David Harris MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty,
Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTION (page 5 of transcript)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Can I just be very clear in asking this. The LECC recommended that NSW Police Force publish a Closing the Gap delivery plan and it recognised the valuable role that Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers and First Nations officers play. I'm sure you agree with that, but do you back LECC's calls that NSW Police Force should publish a Closing the Gap delivery plan?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My understanding is that's what we do under the reporting that comes back through the department. I will check. I'll take that on notice and check specifically, but all of the different departments are reporting back centrally on what they're doing to close the gap.

ANSWER:

The 2023/24 NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan specifically provides a commitment for NSW Police to 'Design and deliver community-led prevention and early intervention initiatives including a place-based community policing model. All Departments and agencies are required to report on all 142 initiatives in the Implementation Plan, and this includes NSW Police. Progress against the initiatives is presented in the Closing the Gap Annual Report, which is tabled in NSW Parliament towards the end of each year.

QUESTION (page 8)

The CHAIR: Minister, are you aware that there is a special requirement in the Gaming Machines Act, clause 21 (4), which creates a barrier to a club deciding to go poker machine free? CEOs and/or boards can decide by themselves to divest any number of machines, but when they are down to the last 10 there has to be a special meeting of members. Is the Minister aware of this, and how many clubs have had to hold a special general meeting to consider whether to sell their last 10 or fewer machines?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It's a very specific questions. I'll have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

See answer to question on page 27 of the transcript.

QUESTION (page 9)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Minister, this was a letter to the former Minister, to be clear, recommending—urging—the establishment of a special commission of inquiry into money laundering in hotels and registered clubs by the head of the independent watchdog into gambling because he was so concerned at what he'd found. Firstly, are you not concerned that you weren't made aware of this as you were coming in—just to ask you once again—that you weren't made aware of a letter from the head of ILGA urging the former Government to establish a special commission? You weren't made aware of that, and you're not concerned?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It goes back, Ms Faehrmann, to the fact that we were aware of the recommendations that were made around money laundering and making sure that we understood the sorts of reforms we had to put in place. The letter preceded Islington and that inquiry looked into all of these issues. I would have to confirm the date when the letter was written and make sure that the issues that it raised were addressed during Islington. My memory is that all of those issues were looked at and became part of the report and the recommendations, but I'm happy to get back to you with more detail on that.

ANSWER:

The letter from Mr Phil Crawford to the former Minister pre-dated the establishment of the NSW Crime Commission Project Islington inquiry. Mr Crawford has indicated at page 52 of the transcript that the Project Islington inquiry addressed his concerns.

QUESTION (page 10)

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The panel has a 12-month period to come back to the Government, not just on cashless gaming but on other issues. But if there's something that they think is urgent that the Government needs to put in place before then, then we'd certainly be listening to them. That's why we've set them up as an advisory group to inform government on the different things that have to be done. But I have to tell you too, within the department itself and in a whole range of other areas, there's been reform. This isn't a case of everyone stood still. And as a government person, in defence of the previous Minister, he puts things in place too, he didn't sit there twiddling his thumbs. This is a process that's been ongoing from Project Islington, and things are being put in place.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Can I check then, in terms of things put in place—the report is in front of you—41 per cent of suspicion transactions along 10 venues, which include Canterbury League Club and Bankstown Sports Club. What have you done since you found out about this via that call for papers with those 10 venues? What's happened? Are you saying nothing's happened?

The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE: Point of order—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I just told you that we've been putting things in place.

The CHAIR: Minister, a point of order has been taken. Mr Lawrence?

The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE: The point of order is that that precise question was asked two questions ago and, I would suggest, was answered clearly. The questioning is repetitive.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: To the point of order: That is not a point of order. I am entitled to ask the same question again, but it's not the same question.

The CHAIR: I do not uphold the point of order. But if the member wants to repeat the question over and over again, that would probably be discourteous and outside the procedural fairness rules. The member can use the time as she sees fit, but I'd remind her to be courteous to the Minister at all times.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: What I will do for you, Ms Faehrmann, is I will take it on notice, and we'll get a fuller answer for you so you can fully understand all of the different reforms that have taken place from the end of the previous Government into the new Government.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: That would be useful.

ANSWER:

The reports were provided to the NSW Crime Commission, as part of Project Islington. The NSW Government is committed to minimising money laundering via EGMs and has established the Independent Panel on Gaming Reform to trial cashless gaming and provide a roadmap for gaming reform. The Government has committed to implementing the recommendations from Project Islington and has already implemented the supplementary recommendation to reduce cash load up limits to \$500 for new machines. Preliminary work has commenced to implement the rest of the recommendations.

QUESTION (page 10)

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Good morning, Minister. Minister, have you been approached by any executive or director from Racing NSW to extend the term of its chairman, Russell Balding?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Not directly from Racing NSW. I have received correspondence from a range of organisations involved with thoroughbred racing, requesting that we consider an extension of the current Chair's time, and we're currently looking at that situation. The reasoning was that there are some important reforms happening at the moment and the Chair would need the additional time to finish that work.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Are any of these requests coming from a director or a senior executive?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My recollection is no, it is coming from industry people. But I'm happy to check. I may have received something else, or my office may have received something else, that I'm not aware of.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you, if you could take that on notice? Are you aware if anyone was encouraged by Racing NSW—

The CHAIR: Sorry, I'll just intervene there. You asked if the Minister would take that on notice.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER:

No correspondence was received from Racing NSW executives regarding this matter.

QUESTION (page 12)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I just wanted to ask about the funding for Closing the Gap. In the forward estimates, the Coalition budgeted over \$700 million. We've got \$131.4 million on

Closing the Gap, in this budget. I just wanted to understand how you advocated for that money and if you'd made representation to other Ministers about their Closing the Gap targets.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The short answer is yes. We've absolutely been advocating. It is a key plank of the new Government in meeting the Close the Gap targets. That money that you quote, that was allocated before— a fair bit of that was spent up-front, setting up some of the structures. What we have put into the budget is the next amount of money, moving forward, to support the next round of reforms. Of course, this is over a 10-year period. So it goes beyond the forward estimates. We fought very hard. We actually got extra money. I think it was about \$35 million extra to support Closing the Gap initiatives.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That is extra, in addition to the forward estimates for the Coalition?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes. We've actually put extra money into it. I'm very confident that we are putting in place, as I've said earlier, the structures within government to deliver and monitor on the Closing the Gap targets.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: What will that \$35 million be spent on, that extra?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Specifically?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I can take that on notice and get you that specifically.

ANSWER:

A further \$31.2 million was re-purposed to Closing the Gap, resulting in a total of \$221 million over four years to support the delivery of initiatives developed in partnership between NSW Government and the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations.

The breakdown of that funding over the four year forwards is detailed below:

PROGAM	(22/23)	(23/24)	(24/25)	25/26)	Total
Community and Place Enhance	\$7,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,000,000
Delivering Better Outcomes	\$5,133,000	\$3,644,000	\$3,644,000	\$0	\$12,421,000
PR Five Initiatives	\$1,313,000	\$1,396,000	\$3,771,000	\$3,521,000	\$10,001,000
CtG Delivery	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$451,000	\$1,801,000
TOTAL	\$13,896,000	\$5,490,000	\$7,865,000	\$3,972,000	\$31,223,000

QUESTION (page 20)

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, are you aware that there are no funding or grants programs in New South Wales for the rehoming of greyhounds, other than a one-off grant that was given by the previous Government Last year?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'm aware of a range of programs for rehoming greyhounds that are being funded through the industry and I have a range of discussions with those groups. For more detail on specific funding, whether you want to do it now or this afternoon. GWIC might be able to give you more information.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: My question was more about whether or not you were aware that there was no funding from Government, particularly for the majority of these rehoming

organisations. There is one industry rehoming organisation, as you mentioned. The Project actually ran a story on the GAP program and they said that a lot of greyhounds were actually being rejected or refused by the industry's rehoming organisation for reasons as small as a broken toe. Do you actually have the figures of how many greyhounds are being rejected by the industry rehoming body, Greyhounds As Pets? I am happy for you to take that on notice if you don't have it.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes, we can take that on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. Do you think it's acceptable that the industry rehoming body is actually rejecting a whole lot of animals and that those animals are then falling on privately funded rehoming organisations to rehome them?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll have to take that on notice, I'm sorry.

ANSWER:

I am advised by Greyhound Racing NSW that no greyhound is rejected from the Greyhounds As Pets program.

QUESTION (page 22)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just very quickly, when does the next round of ClubGRANTS open?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The current ones?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: They are open.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: They are open already. When would you anticipate having the next round available for announcements?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It is open for a period. It is all on the website.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I just looked at the website and it seemed to indicate it wasn't opening until November, but I know some people have put in applications. I'm sure about that.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My understanding was that it is open.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you have the dates, Mr Barakat?

TAREK BARAKAT: I can take that on notice and come back to you today.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great. Thank you.

ANSWER:

See answer from the Hon. David Harris MP on page 26 of the transcript.

QUESTION (page 26)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, section 37A of the Gaming Machines Act allows the regulator to approve up to 150 machines for a club being established in a new development area, with no community benefit payment required. You're aware of that?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I was wondering, in the past five years, how many clubs have received gaming machine entitlements under this provision and how many entitlements were given to each club?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We'll have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

There have been two applications for gaming machine entitlement (GME) increases under s37A in the past five years:

- one application was withdrawn
- one application was refused.

QUESTION (page 26)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Okay. In addition to that—I presume you will also take this on notice— assuming that some entitlements have been approved under section 37A, what is the foregone community benefit payment, given the special provision which requires no contribution by the successful club? And that is even if it is a subsidiary under an existing club.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Sure, we'll take that on notice too.

ANSWER:

Nil.

QUESTION (page 29)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thanks. Just a couple of specific tracks I want to bring to your attention. There was \$5 million proposed for the Tamworth greyhound track, as you might be aware. But reports that we've heard is that that's been delayed. Same with Goulburn—\$6 million was committed to upgrade that track in August. Is there any update you can give me on Tamworth or Goulburn?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: They're questions for Greyhound Racing NSW and GBOTA. They make those decisions.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take it on notice and come back with the process of those?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes. We can take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised by Greyhound Racing NSW that both the Tamworth and Goulburn projects are subject to Development Application consideration by those councils.

QUESTION (page 29)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Again, you might need to take it on notice, given the comment that you've just made, but the Kempsey Macleay track and also Wauchope, my understanding is they were downgraded just to practice tracks and they're not—I might get the terminology wrong—actually having racing per se. If there's

any update on there—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My latest update with that is that they haven't released the racing calendar for the next thing yet. But I will take that on notice and get a more fulsome answer.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If there is an intention to have a Saturday race to any track on the mid North Coast would be handy, if you're able to let us know.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We can certainly ask Greyhound Racing NSW.

ANSWER:

The allocation of race meetings is a matter for Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW) in accordance with its legislative functions.

I am advised by GRNSW that:

- The Kempsey, Wauchope and Taree greyhound racing clubs agreed to merge in 2022 to form the Mid-North Coast Greyhound Racing Club
- GRNSW recently advised the Wauchope Greyhound Racing Club that it will conduct eight non-TAB Saturday race meetings during November, December and January.
- Following the Taree redevelopment, The Wauchope and Kempsey tracks will continue to be utilised for training and trialling.

QUESTION (page 29)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I also want to take you to some thoroughbred racing again. The Racing for the Regions program, you'd be aware—I think it was almost \$60 million—was earmarked for that particular program. Once again, I think Gosford Race Club's having some delays. You would well know about that, being the Minister. But again, there's a lot of community concern or questions around what's happening in terms of those particular projects. I think they have been announced some time ago. My understanding is Racing NSW, according to the website, are the ones who are administering that program.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: They are.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But again, if that's something that you could get some information on—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We'll take that on notice and get you some updates. I would be dishonest if I said I wasn't frustrated about some of these things. We've certainly had discussions generally about it.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I won't read them, but there's a number that are listed. If you could come back on each of the projects, that would be certainly appreciated.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Sure.

ANSWER:

Racing for the Regions status updates by Racing NSW as at 8 November 2023:

Project	Status
Gosford polytrack training track	Completed October 2021.
Sapphire Coast race day amenities	Completed February 2022.
Tamworth sandtrack upgrade and stables and associated infrastructure	Sand track completed in January 2022. Stables construction subject to approval of development application.
Scone Stables and associated infrastructure	Racing NSW advised it is negotiating terms of the final contract, with anticipated construction completion timeline December 2024.
Scone Polytrack training track	Anticipated construction completion by April 2024.
Sapphire Coast stables and associated infrastructure	Subject to approval of Development Application, lodged August 2023.
Gosford stables and associated infrastructure	Working through council density and minimum height issues prior to lodgement of development application.
Hawkesbury stables	Initial planning meetings held with council and working through council flood mitigation requirements prior to lodgement of development application.
Moruya stables and associated infrastructure	Working through council bushfire report requirements prior to imminent lodgement of development application.
Muswellbrook grandstand upgrade	Working through final design issues prior to imminent lodgement of development application.

Cessnock stables and associated infrastructure	Racing NSW noted that as the stabling on this site will be based on the Scone prototype, the Cessnock project could not proceed to final design stage until the Scone design was finalised through tender process. Final site master plan consultation process now underway to best incorporate proposed use and stable design from Scone.
Cessnock Polytrack training track	Development application to be lodged for approval alongside stable construction once final master plan is completed.
Albury stables and associated infrastructure	Detailed design process to be completed.

QUESTION (page 30)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes. Just coming back to the grants again. Sorry to be jumping around a little bit. Probably, any grant that go to either Racing NSW or Greyhound Racing or anyone—I think you've said that that money goes but they administer the process of getting that money out and getting the projects done. Is there oversight from ICAC or the Auditor-General or any sort of independent body in terms of how that process is rolled out? How does that actually work in practice? Does Government give them the money and they're responsible for the delivery, but what's the check and balance in terms of that probity piece? I'm trying to better understand.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Obviously they have to report back to us through their annual reporting structures. They also have to make sure that they are, at all stages, making sure that they are complying with all of the checks and balances in terms of how they distribute money et cetera. It is part of the discussions that we have. I'll take on notice whether there's a more formal process than that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be good.

ANSWER:

Each project is supported by a funding agreement (deed) between the Grantee and the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade. This sets out a range of requirements for the Grantee, including for:

- ensuring the grant is used only for the approved project
- the associated scope of works
- reporting to the Department
- compliance with relevant laws, and policies, guidelines and directions from the Department
- grant acquittal reporting
- record-keeping (to enable auditing).

Payments are made in instalments, contingent on the grantee meeting the requirements of the deed. The Department checks that requirements are met before making instalment payments to the Grantee.

Before final instalments are paid, the Department reviews a grant acquittal report for each project. The grantee is required to report on the delivery of the project. As part of reporting requirements, the grantee's financial statements must be audited by an independent qualified accountant to certify that they present fairly that the Grant has been spent solely on the project.

QUESTION (page 30)

The CHAIR: Minister, in regard to medical research, you'd be aware that medicinal cannabis has been legal in Australia and New South Wales for six years now, and that it is a growing industry. Its value to the economy now is in the order of \$300 million in terms of GDP and that in New South Wales hundreds of thousands of people are now being prescribed medicinal cannabis through various national schemes and that there are fantastic companies in New South Wales who are conducting clinical trials for medicinal cannabis, cannabinoids, cannabidiols and the rest. How much money, if any, out of the medical research support programs or other programs that the Government has is going to medicinal cannabis research?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I think that's a question we'll have to take on notice. I'm not sure if, this afternoon, you might be able to give a fuller answer on that one.

ANSWER:

I'm advised:

Information about NSW Government grants is publicly available at:

- www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding
- www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/project-directory

Information about the NSW cannabis medicines program is publicly available at www.medicinalcannabis.nsw.gov.au/about/cannabis-medicines-program.

QUESTION (page 31)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, the last time we spoke, I think there were five LALCs that were under administration. Can you provide an update about what is happening in terms of those, and is there any more looking on the horizon or—how are we tracking?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We can get you the exact figures on those for all the current LALCs.

ANSWER:

Across the Aboriginal Land Rights Network there are 121 Local Aboriginal Land Councils. There are currently only three Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) under administration under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*:

1. Jubullum LALC – expiry 13 March 2024
2. Red Chief LALC – expiry 13 March 2024
3. Cobar LALC – expiry 14 Feb 2024

In March 2023, an Investigator was appointed to Deerubbin LALC. In light of the recently finalised Investigator's Report, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) recommended appointment of an Administrator for a period of 6 months. A show cause process has commenced to allow the Deerubbin LALC the opportunity to demonstrate why they should not be placed under Administration.

The NSW Government works closely with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and the Office of the Registrar of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* to ensure LALCs are supported and that only when necessary is an Administrator appointed to a LALC.

QUESTION (page 32)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Minister, I wanted to go back to pokies. I understand that you are saying that revenue from pokies is going down. Is that correct?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The last half-yearly figures were less than the previous half year. There are seasonal issues around that. On the figures, it's not clear. But, anecdotally, the industry is telling me that it is softening.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Last quarterly did you say or last six months?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Six-monthly, I apologise.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Is this the last financial year?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: It's from the data from ILGA?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: No. It's CMS data, isn't it?

TAREK BARAKAT: What the Minister is saying is that from the current six-monthly data that has just been released, compared with the prior six-monthly data that was released, the figures are lower for this six-monthly period of data. As the Minister says, that can reflect seasonal differences.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: What does "seasonal differences" mean?

TAREK BARAKAT: Just that there's more activity over summer. The previous six-monthly data would cover the spring-summer period, and you see more activity in venues during that time generally.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: What about poker machine numbers, Minister? What's happening to those?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My understanding is—and we can get you the exact numbers—the number of machines has reduced.

TAREK BARAKAT: The total number of entitlements reduces. The thing to remember here, Ms Faehrmann, is that the number of entitlements is what reduces every time machines are forfeited through transfers and things like that. The Government has reduced the overall State cap for entitlements by 3,000 recently. The number of machines will fluctuate within the approved number of entitlements. Machines might be in storage, for example. Venues might be undergoing renovation, so those machines won't be in use. So the number of machines fluctuates; the number of entitlements will always reduce.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: The actual number of machines is what's important because that's what people lose money on. Over the last financial year, have they increased or decreased?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My recollection is that the actual number has decreased. But we'll take that on notice and get you the exact figures, because I don't want to mislead you.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: It has been reported that they have increased, actually.

ANSWER:

Refer to answer on p33 of the transcript from Mr Barakat.

QUESTION (page 33)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: What's that increase? Is it 600 and something more machines out there in the last financial year?

TAREK BARAKAT: Effectively, yes. We can probably take on notice to see whether we can get you any more detail around why there's that fluctuation. As I said, it can be around venues putting machines in storage for things like renovations and things like that, and then reopening back up and having those machines available again.

ANSWER:

The number of gaming machines in operation continually fluctuates due to a range of factors, including venues with gaming machines opening and closing, venues purchasing new machines or storing machines due to renovations, and transfers of machines between venues.

QUESTION (page 38)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In relation to ILGA, I note that the budget papers show there is a 9.7 per cent decrease in the budget from the last financial year to the next one. In 2022-23 it was a \$5.4 million. In 2023-24 it is down to \$4.9 million. What are those savings? How have you found that \$500,000 cut?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I might hand over to the secretary to answer that one.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I can get you that detail on notice, but I think the prior year was in the year before the NICC was stood up and while the external reviews and inquiries were underway. So the ILGA budget would have included funding that covered those things. In this current year the NICC and the ILGA are split out and it's just the operational budgets. If it would help, we can get you the detailed breakdown.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be good.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: That would be the reason for it. We haven't reduced the funding of the underlying operation.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So your overall funding, in terms of your operation, hasn't changed. It's that difference.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: It has not changed, no.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could get that on notice, that would be very helpful.

ANSWER:

Net Cost of Services 2022-23 \$3,034,000, actual expenditure \$5,400,000; Net Cost of Services 2023-24 \$4,875,000. One-off factors including the establishment of the NSW Independent Casino Commission separate from the NSW Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority occurred in 2022-23.

QUESTION (page 38)

TAREK BARAKAT: The \$100 million has been committed, as the Minister said. This financial year, in the most recent budget, \$3.4 million of that is to support the independent panel to undertake the trial and advise Government on the recommendations

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That is \$3.4million of that?

TAREK BARAKAT: That is \$3.4 million. Then there is \$6.4 million over the forward estimates to implement Government's commitments around facial recognition and third party exclusion in pubs and clubs. Then there is \$10 million that has gone into the Responsible Gambling Fund for the fund to determine how best to spend on harm minimisation initiatives. The balance is about \$21.7 million over the forward estimates, and that will be used to implement the recommendations of the independent panel. So that money has been committed in the budget over the forwards, and it will be used to implement whatever recommendations the Government accepts or the panel provides to Government in relation to gambling reform.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So \$21 million of that will go to the recommendations of the panel. Is that what you said?

TAREK BARAKAT: That is \$21.7 million over the forward estimates. It is \$65 million over the forwards, with the balance of about \$15 million from the \$100 million total in the planning years. So the whole \$100 million has been committed to—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But not all of the \$100 million is harm minimisation, from what you are saying. Some of it has gone to facial recognition technology or setting up—

TAREK BARAKAT: That's in this first year. There is \$3.4 million to the panel, \$6.4 million to the facial recognition and third party exclusion and \$10 million to the RGF. The balance will be spent according to the recommendation of the independent panel.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We would argue that facial recognition and those sorts of things—there's still a wider discussion to have about that—is actually around harm minimisation, and it will help that third party exclusion process.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Barakat, I know you have just answered it but, on notice, could you give us a full breakdown of that \$100 million, what is going where and over which period of time? That would be really handy.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, no problem.

ANSWER:

The \$100 million has been allocated to:

- \$10 million additional investment in 2023-24 for the Responsible Gambling Fund, through the Office of Responsible Gambling, for the provision of GambleAware counselling and support services, awareness and education campaigns, initiatives like Reclaim the Game, and to support world-leading gambling research.
- \$6.4 million to enhance self-exclusion and introduce third-party exclusions in pubs and clubs.
- \$3.4 million for the independent expert panel, established in July this year, to run and evaluate a 12-month cashless gaming trial in pubs and clubs.
- \$21.7 million each year, for three years from 2024-25, to fund other gambling harm minimisation initiatives and reforms, including those recommended by the Independent Panel

QUESTION (page 39)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I just quickly wanted to note that, in your diary disclosures, no such meeting is present.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Right.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are you confident that you had that meeting within the first three months of you becoming Minister? Your diary disclosures are not accurate?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I would have to check on that, but I definitely met with Mr James.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Could you just take on notice to check the accuracy of your diary disclosures because it's obviously a fundamental part of how we ensure accountability for our Ministers.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

ANSWER:

Answer provided on page 44 of the transcript.

QUESTION (page 48)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How many staff?

SHANE HAMILTON: How many staff in Aboriginal Affairs?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes.

SHANE HAMILTON: It is 220.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That is based across the State?

SHANE HAMILTON: Across the State, yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm happy for you to provide it on notice—maybe a breakdown of those positions, what levels and where they are based, if possible. If you have something that you could provide on notice, that would be great.

SHANE HAMILTON: Yes, we can provide that.

ANSWER:

As at September 2023:

Headcount breakdown	Count
Clerk Grade	197
Contractor	11
Legal Officer	2
Public Service Senior Executive	10
TOTAL	220

Headcount per location:	Count
Batemans Bay	5
Bourke	4
Broken Hill	3
Coffs Harbour	11
Dubbo	5
Mascot	157
Newcastle	10
Parramatta	19
Tamworth	6
TOTAL	220

Headcount per grade:	Count
Band 3	1
Band 2	2
Band 1	7
Clerk Grade 11/12	37
Clerk Grade 9/10	66
Clerk Grade 7/8	59
Clerk Grade 5/6	24

Clerk Grade 3/4	10
Clerk Grade 1/2	1
Legal Officer IV	2
Contractor	11
TOTAL	220

These figures include Aboriginal Languages Trust staff and Office of the Registrar of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* staff, but do not include the Registrar of the Office of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.

QUESTION (page 48)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you have information about the funding of the Aboriginal Affairs division within the Premier's Department this year and into the forward estimates?

SIMON DRAPER: Yes, I've got the number for this year. I think Shane has the same number there. It is \$145 million in recurrent expenditure in this financial year. The previous year was \$115 million. I don't have the numbers for the following years but, if you like, we can get them.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful.

ANSWER:

Total recurrent expenditure is detailed below.

2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Four Years
(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)	(\$000)
145,435	71,805	61,193	54,671	333,104

The reduction is due mainly to time bound programs in relation to closing the gap initiatives and completion of the Stolen Generation Reparations Scheme.

QUESTION (page 53)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Going back to the question that was last answered about the budget and the forward estimates, would it be possible to get a table of those budget items, the forward estimates, on notice?

SHANE HAMILTON: For Closing the Gap?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes.

SHANE HAMILTON: Yes.

ANSWER:

	PROGAM	(22/23)	(23/24)	(24/25)	25/26)	Total
1	NSW Implementation Plan	\$68,800,000	\$70,300,300	\$29,300,000	\$22,300,000	\$190,700,300
Enhanced Funding						
2	Community and Place Grants Enhance	\$7,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,000,000
3	Delivering Better Outcomes	\$5,133,000	\$3,644,000	\$3,644,000	\$0	\$12,421,000
4	PR Five Initiatives	\$1,313,000	\$1,396,000	\$3,771,000	\$3,521,000	\$10,001,000
5	CtG Delivery	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$451,000	\$1,801,000
	TOTAL	\$82,696,000	\$75,790,300	\$37,165,000	\$26,272,000	\$221,923,300

A further \$31.2 million was re-purposed to Closing the Gap, resulting in a total of \$221 million over four years to support the delivery of initiatives developed in partnership between NSW Government and the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations.

QUESTION (page 54)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are you working with Investment NSW on the Aboriginal employment and enterprise strategy?

SHANE HAMILTON: No.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are you aware of that being undertaken? Sorry, Ms Mildwater?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes, by coincidence, I can probably speak to it.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We're happy for anyone to answer.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Our team at Investment NSW does have the lead on a couple of priority development of Aboriginal people and their communities. So we do have a team working on those.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know anything about the delivery time line for those, by any chance?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I guess, on the employment one, the target is to have 75.2 per cent of First Nations people in New South Wales between the ages of 25 to 64 years in employment by 2031.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I was just referring to the strategy rather than the target itself.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes, so that one is on track. In terms of the socioeconomic outcomes, what we've doing is some research first to then work out the next steps in the strategy. I got a briefing on this late last week. We are at a bit of a milestone where the research and the initial work has been done. I think the next step is to take those findings

up to the broader working group to work on the more detailed strategy, but it's just sort of crossed that milestone.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Will that research be made public?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I can take that on notice, if you like?

ANSWER:

The project is still underway and decisions about publication would be taken at the appropriate stage of the project in consultation with Closing the Gap partners, the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations.

QUESTION (page 54)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be great. Also when that final piece is going to be delivered, which I presume would be public, but if there's a deadline or not?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I can take that on notice as well.

ANSWER:

It is expected that the approach to the strategy will be finalised for discussion through Closing the Gap and government processes by the end of 2023.

QUESTION (page 54)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Could you also take on notice when the Aboriginal employment and enterprise strategy will be delivered and made public?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes, certainly.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That is very helpful.

ANSWER:

The strategy will be made public through a pilot of the approach in Western Sydney planned for 2024.

QUESTION (page 60)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I was asking questions before about the \$3.4 million out of the \$100 million—50,000, 25, 25. What is going towards secretariat support? What's happening with the other \$3.3 million?

TAREK BARAKAT: Thanks, Ms Faehrmann. The largest component of that will probably be towards the independent researcher to develop our research evaluation framework to

make sure that the outcomes of the trial are robustly evaluated and defensible for the recommendations to be made for government. That's where the bulk of the funds go. To your point about secretariat support, there might be some small costs associated with a secure document storage portal and things like that for papers that the panel needs to assess. I'm happy to get you more detail in terms of the breakdown, on notice, if it would be helpful. But the largest portion will be for that research evaluation framework. I can tell you, to the earlier question, that the executive committee's met seven times.

ANSWER:

In addition to running and evaluating the 12-month cashless gaming trial, the \$3.4 million allocated to the Independent Panel will cover costs associated with remunerating the Panel's Executive Committee (comprised of the Chair and two independent panel members) and the panel member with lived experience; and minor costs associated with meetings and the timely and secure provision and storage of meeting papers and other relevant documentation.

QUESTION (page 60)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Thank you. Are you saying, potentially, evaluation of the trial, which—is that this year? Or is that going to be spent beyond this financial year, the remainder?

TAREK BARAKAT: The framework to evaluate the trial and the independent person to set that up with the right expertise will need to be spent this year so that the evaluation framework is in place, the trial is going on.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Just to be clear, that \$3.4 million—it says it's toward the independent panel. The independent panel's really only supposed to be going for 12 months. Is that right?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes. The \$3.4 million is for this year towards panel expenses, to the sorts of things that I've spoken about.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: It's towards panel expenses? So some research company—it just seems a lot of money. Maybe it's not, within government. But \$3 million—what are they doing? Evaluating this year? Evaluating the trial, which hasn't been—

TAREK BARAKAT: They're setting up. You wouldn't set up an evaluation after something's been completed. We need to set the evaluation framework up and have the right people appointed to independently evaluate that trial. That will need to be funded this year, even though the trial won't be completed until the end of next year. That's what a portion of that money's for. We're working through that process at the moment, so I can't tell you exactly how much from that \$3.4 million will be allocated to that. But I'm saying I think that will be the largest component of expenditure from the \$3.4 million. If you do want some more detail on the other types of things, aside from executive committee payments and small secretariat costs, then I'm very happy to provide that on notice.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes.

ANSWER:

See previous answer to QoN on p60 from Mr Barakat.

QUESTION (page 61)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Right. Out of this \$100 million, we've got \$15 million that is not going to be spent on gambling harm reduction until 2027 or so, but you're not sure what that is going to be allocated to. That's just put in the reserve for four years' time.

TAREK BARAKAT: That's just the balance of what—the Government has made commitments of \$21.7 million each year over the forward estimates. That leaves about \$15.1 million left. How that is allocated will be a matter for the Government at the time. The \$21.7 million each year will be spent according to the recommendations of the panel.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: When you're saying \$10 million in terms of additional investment to the Responsible Gambling Fund for the provision of GambleAware, counselling and support services—what additional counselling and support services has that provided that weren't being provided before, say, six months ago?

TAREK BARAKAT: Just to be clear, it's not just for GambleAware. It would be for GambleAware, counselling and support services, education awareness campaigns for young people and initiatives like Reclaim the Game. There might be some harm minimisation research that is commissioned by the fund out of that \$10 million. It has only recently been allocated. The budget was only handed down recently, so I don't think we're clear exactly how that is going to be spent. But I'm very happy to get you some information on notice about the additional support services that that additional funding would be able to provide.

ANSWER:

The total approved budget of the Responsible Gambling Fund is \$34.732 million for 2023-24. This funding will be allocated to six main areas:

- research and evaluation: \$1.62 million
- leadership and influence: \$1.88 million
- education and awareness: \$4.78 million
- GambleAware services and support: \$19.54 million
- technology and innovation: \$2.42 million
- program delivery and administration: \$4.5 million.

QUESTON (page 61)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: That would be useful, thank you. Again, maybe in relation to all of it, to get more detail in terms of what it is spent on, the \$6.4 million to enhance self-exclusion and introduce third-party exclusions into pubs and clubs, what is that for?

ANSWER:

To undertake preliminary work to scope the implementation of Governments commitments to introduce a state-wide exclusion register and mandate facial recognition technology to support such a register.

The preparatory work will include obtaining technical scoping including on IT infrastructure and cyber security measures, legal advice, and other associated costs

QUESTION (page 61)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I want to ask about the cashless gaming trial, the one in west Newcastle that I believe concluded in June this year.

TAREK BARAKAT: I think it was around that time. I can get you the exact date on which it finished, for sure.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: No, that is fine. In terms of what happens, my understanding is there is an independent researcher that will be looking at what that trial discovered, and accessing and analysing the qualitative and quantitative data. Is the plan for that report to be with the Government by the end of the year? Will that be announced or released publicly? What's the intention behind that?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'll get you an exact time line, but the panel has actually had, in my understanding, a preliminary presentation from the independent researcher associated with that trial. I think that work is well on the way to being finalised, but I can get you exact time frames.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And what will be made public in what time frame would be useful to have as well, if anything.

TAREK BARAKAT: Absolutely, I'll take it on notice.

ANSWER:

The Aristocrat trial at Wests Newcastle concluded in June 2023. A report will be completed by an independent researcher shortly and provided to the Independent Panel for consideration.

QUESTION (page 62)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great. Likewise, with the trial that started at Club York as well, that's ongoing at the moment. Is that correct?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, wrapped up in October, I think.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Will it go through the same process?

TAREK BARAKAT: Exactly the same process. The name escapes me of the venue, but there is another one commencing that will also go through that same process. And the findings from each of those will be provided to the independent panel so they can assess them in the context of their broader trial that they are going to run

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: How many trials at different venues? There's Newcastle—

TAREK BARAKAT: Club York—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: There's Club York.

TAREK BARAKAT: —and there's this third one that is yet to commence.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you know where that is?

TAREK BARAKAT: It's in Crows Nest. I forget the name of the venue, but I can get that easily enough.

ANSWER:

The third regulatory sandbox trial for cashless gaming technology will take place at the Crows Nest Hotel with gaming machine manufacturer Light & Wonder.

QUESTION (page 63)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I want to go back to the discussion around the spend on what is essentially facial recognition technology. In line with the Government announcement around facial recognition technology, what was that announcement again?

TAREK BARAKAT: I haven't got the wording in front of me, but it was an election commitment along the lines of mandating self- and third-party exclusion and facial recognition and the use of facial recognition technology.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: In every pub and club in New South Wales?

TAREK BARAKAT: That is my understanding.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: The \$6.4 million in this \$100 million that is going towards the delivery of harm minimisation programs and gaming reform, that is this year? The \$6.4 million is to be spent this year?

TAREK BARAKAT: No, that is over the forward estimates. There is \$3.5 million this year for that. The remainder is over the forwards.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: How much of that is going to external consultants or industry, of what you know of the \$3.5 million this year?

TAREK BARAKAT: At the moment, none of it, because we haven't spent anything and we're working out now how we think we need to approach addressing these commitments of self- and third-party exclusion and

facial recognition. That money hasn't been spent on anything yet.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Was there something that was presented as a brief to outline why \$6.4 million specifically was going to be spent on self-exclusion, on facial recognition technology? Was there a document to justify that spend?

TAREK BARAKAT: We provided a lot of advice in consultation with Treasury and the broader department on this and a range of budgetary issues through the budget process. What specifically was provided on this, I'd have to take on notice.

ANSWER:

The estimate includes technical scoping including on IT infrastructure and cyber security measures, legal advice, and other associated costs to implement the election commitment.

QUESTION (page 64)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: One of the concerns that was quite loudly voiced by industry at the time, when there were discussions from both sides of Parliament about this, was what the impact would be. Particularly, being a regional member, I would say a lot of our small pubs and clubs have viability concerns around what that would look like, time frames or if there were requirements to replace machines that they might have had for a period of time and end of life for their machinery, so to speak. Having those representatives on the panel has been done to try to eliminate that, or to at least ensure that those sort of issues are being looked at?

TAREK BARAKAT: Obviously they've got expertise themselves that is relevant for the panel to consider. Yes, I think that they are making sure that those sorts of things are being considered. They know their industry. They know the viability of their industry, particularly in rural and regional areas like you've mentioned. Their views outside of the expertise they're offering, around how this could happen in a sustainable way, are partly what they're there for.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Then for a departmental response, you just need to wait until the panel does its work before looking at what other supports or implementation might need to be available?

TAREK BARAKAT: Correct. The panel will provide its advice and road map to Government, and then Government will need to consider what the panel's recommendations are and make its decisions as to how best to do the things the panel is recommending.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I wanted to clarify, earlier you said that the findings from the trials will be made available to the panel.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But will those findings also be made available to the public?

TAREK BARAKAT: I can confirm that on notice but, yes, I think that is the plan

ANSWER:

The independent research reports will be published when they are finalised.

QUESTION (page 65)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's not my area of expertise, so I'd appreciate your guidance. In terms of moving other tracks to having double-arm lures, is that a costly exercise? Is that something you could put in place at other tracks quite easily? What's the mechanism in order to do that? It is something that would require, obviously, some funding, but I'm trying to understand how hard that would be to roll out more broadly?

STEVE GRIFFIN: I can't answer with the actual costs per se, because that's up to Greyhound Racing NSW, but it would be significantly less money than developing new tracks or upgrading tracks, which is a significant capital outlay. As we've indicated and suggested, use of these mechanisms to reduce collisions which give rise to serious injuries, is a quicker, cheaper solution to help drive down these serious injury rates that we have had in New South Wales.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm happy for you to take it on notice if you need to get advice from Greyhound Racing NSW, but even the cost of doing it in Dapto or something we could have a look at, if it's publicly available or is possible to understand, would be good, if you can. If not, that's fine, but happy for you to try.

STEVE GRIFFIN: We'll try and take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised by Greyhound Racing NSW that depending on any modifications required to existing catching pen infrastructure, the average cost of implementing double arm lures would be approximately \$5,000.

QUESTION (page 65)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: What happens with that eTrac if—you just mentioned then that if someone hadn't done the six- or 12-month check-in you then contact the owner. What happens if they don't respond? What's the enforcement that you have around that process?

STEVE GRIFFIN: We've developed a local rule for that purpose, if anyone can't account for a greyhound. If someone doesn't bring their greyhound for a check-in then it's turned into a case where we go out and visit the participant and inquire into why they haven't had their greyhound checked in. There is disciplinary action that follows from that if we're unable to account for a greyhound, or there are other reasons. What we're finding, by and large, is that for the vast majority of greyhounds that haven't been checked in, the

greyhound has already been rehomed or has died and the paperwork has been lost or there's been a data issue that's come forward.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you have any data in relation to how many times you've had people not complete that check-in process? It's fine if you take it on notice, but anything from the last 12 months that might be of interest.

STEVE GRIFFIN: I can take that on notice, if you don't mind.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great. Thank you.

ANSWER:

In 2022-23, 6,267 alerts were issued for 4,774 greyhounds to be checked in. As of 9 November 2023, 794 of these greyhounds are overdue for check-in. These greyhounds are subject to compliance follow-up. The Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission has a dedicated Traceability Team that manages the greyhound check-in process and follow-ups required.

QUESTION (page 66)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know how much from the point of consumption tax went to the industry last financial year?

CAROLINE LAMB: That's one for Mr Barakat.

TAREK BARAKAT: Which industry are we talking about, sorry?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The gaming and racing industries.

TAREK BARAKAT: If you just bear with me for a minute I can get a breakdown of what went to the racing industry. I think I've got it here but, if not, I am happy to provide it on notice. For point of consumption tax. I've got a total figure here. Since its introduction in January 2019, it has returned \$272.9 million to the New South Wales racing industry.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Sorry, could you just repeat that please, Mr Barakat?

TAREK BARAKAT: So this is a total figure since its introduction in January 2019. The point of consumption tax has returned \$272.9 million to the racing industry. I do have here a breakdown of what was paid by the State to industry from the point of consumption tax over the financial years 2018-19 to 2022-23 if you want me to read those out.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes, that would be helpful.

TAREK BARAKAT: This is to the racing industry again. In 2018-19 it was \$17,825,521, in 2019-20 it was \$40,724,247, in 2020-21 it was \$54,716,837, in 2021-22 it was \$62,377,710 and in 2022-23 it was \$97,311,014. I do have the breakdown as to how that's distributed but that might be easier to provide these on notice. It's across Racing NSW, Greyhound Racing and Harness Racing.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That sounds good.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: On notice, that would be good.

ANSWER:

Point of Consumption Tax revenue distributed by the State to NSW racing industry	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Racing NSW	\$12,834,440	\$29,328,658	\$39,396,123	\$44,911,951	\$70,063,930
Greyhound Racing NSW	\$2,317,239	\$5,285,452	\$7,113,189	\$8,109,102	\$12,650,432
Harness Racing NSW	\$2,673,842	\$6,110,137	\$8,207,526	\$9,356,656	\$14,596,652
Total	\$17,825,521	\$40,724,247	\$54,716,837	\$62,377,710	\$97,311,014

QUESTION (page 67)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is that where the Aboriginal Safe Gambling organisation is funded from, that \$5 million?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'd have to take that on notice. I can come back to you.

ANSWER:

The GambleAware Aboriginal Statewide Service delivered by the Aboriginal Safe Gambling organisation is funded from the Responsible Gambling Fund. Revenue to the Fund includes \$5 million per year from the Point of Consumption Tax (plus indexation from 2023-24 onwards).

QUESTION (page 67)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Queensland is at 20 per cent. Do you have any reflections on the difference between that 15 per cent and 20 per cent and how it impacts on the New South Wales industry?

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Point of order: I think the question is asking for a reflection on Government policy.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I can rephrase the question, if that is more appropriate.

The CHAIR: Sure.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Has any work been done in the department to consider the implications of the 15 per cent versus an interstate comparison of something like 20 per cent?

TAREK BARAKAT: Not since I have been at the department, which is only since the end of last year. But I can take that on notice to see if anything was done previously.

ANSWER:

The Department has not completed this work. The rate of tax in NSW is the responsibility of NSW Treasury.

QUESTION (page 67)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful. I know you are going to provide this on notice, but was that \$5 million for the Responsible Gambling Fund for 2022-23?

TAREK BARAKAT: Apart from 2018-19, it has been every year since 2019-20. There is a requirement in the Betting Tax Act for this funding to be paid into the fund.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: So that \$5 million has remained steady between last year's and this year's budget? There has been no increase to that \$5 million?

TAREK BARAKAT: That is my understanding.

ANSWER:

\$5 million each year was paid from 2019-2020 until 2022-23. From 2023-24 \$5 million plus indexation per year will be paid to the Responsible Gambling Fund Trust from the Point of Consumption Tax.

QUESTION (page 67)

The CHAIR: The Government is bringing in, in my opinion, excellent vibrancy reforms—the 24-hour economy—championed by Minister Graham. As part of those reforms there is an amendment in schedule 2 [46], which: provides for an offence that prohibits a responsible person for licensed premises from doing either of the following for the purpose of enabling another person to gamble on the licensed premises—

(a) providing money as part of a transaction involving a credit card or debit card, or debit card ...

What consultations have you had about this proposed reform?

TAREK BARAKAT: I would have to take the nature of the consultation on notice, but I think the proposed reform is just formalising existing prohibition on the ability of credit advances or cash for credit to stop people gambling with money that they don't actually have. So I think it is just formalising something that was already in place, and I can take on notice who was consulted and when.

The CHAIR: I would appreciate that, because it does actually say "credit or debit card", so that is not credit.

TAREK BARAKAT: That is a fair point. I will take that on notice and come back to you. My understanding of the intent—it was to stop people being able to access cash advances or credit, to use that for gambling. It is a harm minimisation measurement.

The CHAIR: I understand there is a prohibition on any venue having an ATM with a credit facility—

TAREK BARAKAT: Correct.

The CHAIR: —and that there have been warnings given for that.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes.

The CHAIR: But this is different, isn't it? This is an EFTPOS transaction.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, in the sense that it's a credit transaction, but I do take your point about debit. I can come back to you with some more detail on that.

The CHAIR: If you could, I would be very interested to know what consultations have occurred. Are you aware of that reform?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, we have been working closely with the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, Minister Graham, and the Cabinet Office on all of that broad suite of reform.

The CHAIR: That would be the responsibility of the person working there to determine what the cash was going to be used for?

TAREK BARAKAT: It would be the responsibility of the venue operator or licensee to make sure that facility didn't exist to allow people to get a line of credit or a cash advance on credit to allow them to gamble, yes.

The CHAIR: How are they going to determine whether or not it is for gambling or for some other use?

TAREK BARAKAT: At the moment, as you say, the ATM can't provide the credit facility. This would be, in a similar sense, that you couldn't provide a cash advance on credit. Venues don't do that anyway, to my knowledge. This is just formalising an existing prohibition to make it clearer in the legislation. I do take your point about—the debit question could be confusing.

The CHAIR: It could be very confusing that people could not get cash from a debit card for another purpose if the licensee or the employee of the licensee says, "I think you're going to gamble with that."

TAREK BARAKAT: I take your point that that could be confusing, so I will come back to you with some more detail on the rationale for that.

The CHAIR: I would appreciate that.

ANSWER:

The proposed amendments are intended to close the loopholes in existing legislation, to stop the manipulation of a cash dispensing facility (for example, an EFTPOS terminal) in order to give a person cash to gamble.

The manipulation of a cash dispensing facility is not limited to credit cards. Debit cards can also be used to issue cash to patrons to gamble on gaming machines, which is prohibited as it is a way to circumvent maximum ATM withdrawal limits.

In practice, this means that venue staff can facilitate patrons to withdraw large amounts of money from their credit or debit card for the purposes of gambling and record the transaction as something else – for example food and beverages - or make no record of the transaction.

This practice increases the risk of gambling harm in hotels and clubs. It circumvents:

- the prohibition of providing credit to a person for gambling under the Liquor Act.
- the prohibition of cash dispensing facilities that can provide cash from a credit account in a hotel or club under the Gaming Machines Act.
- maximum ATM withdrawal limits for debit accounts, which patrons can use to limit how much money they spend gambling.

This practice is not uncommon, has been the subject of numerous complaints received by Liquor and Gaming NSW and has resulted in disciplinary action by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority.

QUESTION (page 70)

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Do you have any more detail on the reasons for those medical euthanasias so we can track back? I mean, you would expect that some dogs—any dog—would have certain reasons that they might get incredibly sick or injured, but what I'm trying to do is work out exactly how many are being put down because they are effectively unable to race. If there is an injury during training, what are the rules then for them being euthanased? Does it get recorded as a training injury? What are we recording that as?

STEVE GRIFFIN: It would get recorded certainly as an injury, but it would need to be notified to the commission that there has been a related injury, that the euthanasia is related to a serious injury that couldn't be treated.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: What illnesses are they getting put down for?

STEVE GRIFFIN: A whole range of illnesses, no doubt. I could take on notice to give you further detail of what that is, but there is obviously a whole range of canine-related illnesses.

ANSWER:

In 2022-23, 49 per cent of medical euthanasias were for injuries and 47 per cent were for illness.

The reasons for euthanasia –medical and non-medical – are reported in the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission’s annual report.
<https://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/about/annual-report>

QUESTION (page 71)

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Yes, I will ask the Government. Are there any moves to ban surgical artificial insemination for greyhounds?

TAREK BARAKAT: It would be a matter of Government policy. It's not something that has been discussed with me, but if we have any further information I'm happy to provide it on notice.

ANSWER:

Surgical artificial insemination is a matter for the Minister for Agriculture.

QUESTION (page 72)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It's about the administration of the Liquor Act and something that I referred to earlier in my question to the Minister about the relationship between the Minister in his capacity with oversight of that Act and in his capacity as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. As Minister for Gaming and Racing he is required to consult with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for proposed restricted alcohol areas in recognised Aboriginal communities. I am just wondering how that process usually works and if that process would change, given the person is one and the same now?

CAROLINE LAMB: Given—I beg your pardon, what was the last thing?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Ordinarily the process would be to consult with two different Ministers, but given he is now a single entity, could you explain what the original process was and how that process has changed now that he is the same person?

CAROLINE LAMB: Well, I'll do my best. I was appointed in December last year and since then I haven't been aware of that process occurring. So I can't tell you very much about that, I'm afraid.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is it something that you'd be willing to take on notice?

CAROLINE LAMB: Of course, yes.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Perhaps there is some sort of example of how it has occurred in the past and perhaps any—maybe risk mitigation goes too far—strategy or plan that has been put in place to manage the fact that it is now the same person that would be consulted?

CAROLINE LAMB: Yes, I can.

ANSWER:

Please see answer to Supplementary Q17.

QUESTION (page 73)

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I am particularly interested in the Stronger Country Communities Fund because that one is administered through Regional NSW, is my understanding, or it has been. Is that correct?

HARRIET WHYTE: The Stronger Country Communities Fund has been administered through the Department of Regional NSW.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That's not continuing, though, as it was before?

HARRIET WHYTE: That is correct.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I have a number of specific projects here that I'm keen to get an update on. I don't know whether you will have detail of any of them with you.

HARRIET WHYTE: You can try me, but I might take them on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'll try, because we do have a little bit of time. I'll start with probably one of the biggest spends—\$1.3 million for the Sun Valley Regional Playspace in Green Point. Do you know where that one's up to, by any chance?

HARRIET WHYTE: No, I'll have to take that one on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: What about the Peninsula Leisure Centre, there is an outdoor water park, of 850,000?

HARRIET WHYTE: Yes, I can take it on notice to get you the specifics about where these projects are up to.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I have a list here but I might just put them all on notice, because I don't want you and I to have to have a repetitive conversation back and forth over certain projects.

HARRIET WHYTE: What I can say about the previous successful programs under the Stronger Country Communities Fund, all of those will be honoured and the payments continued to those previously successful projects under the Stronger Country Communities Fund.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is there a time frame for when you would hope all of those payments will be honoured or projects delivered by?

HARRIET WHYTE: All of those projects would have milestones, as part of their contracting, that the applicants would be expected to meet. But I can take the specifics on notice, about the milestones.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Okay, I'll put those on notice. There are about 10 projects here, so I won't go into detail. As competent as I know you are, Ms Whyte, I don't expect you to be across all of the detail.

HARRIET WHYTE: Thank you.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the response provided to question number 67 of the Supplementary Questions asked of the Minister for the Central Coast.

QUESTION (page 76)

The CHAIR: Mr Levesque, could you just take this on notice. Have you received any grant funding applications from medicinal cannabis companies in the State?

JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC LEVESQUE: From companies.

The CHAIR: Companies or institutions, academia. Really, it doesn't really matter about the entity. It's really about whether or not—funding for medicinal cannabis research.

JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC LEVESQUE: There was a program established in 2016 where there was an investment of \$21 million in medicinal cannabis research. That program has been allocated entirely. Since then, there's no specific program. I can take on notice clarifying if we've received any grants recently as part of our regular programs. There's only one additional that related to medicinal cannabis, that I can mention, which was part of our spinal cord injury program, where there was a trial on medicinal cannabis as a way to control pain for people with spinal cord injury. But we can take on notice to make sure that we are not forgetting any of those.

The CHAIR: If you could and provide some details of that.

ANSWER:

I'm advised:

Information about NSW Government grants is publicly available at:

- www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding
- www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/project-directory

Information about the NSW cannabis medicines program is publicly available at www.medicinalcannabis.nsw.gov.au/about/cannabis-medicines-program.

QUESTION (page 78)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: We were talking about community consultation in relation to facial recognition technology. Just to be clear, is it facial recognition technology? Maybe this is the only time it is going to get a genuine airing, so I feel like I still need to ask some questions on it. Is it facial recognition technology at venue scale at every entrance to the venue, or is it machines? What is the plan?

TAREK BARAKAT: I think that these are all really good questions, Ms Faehrmann, but these are all questions we're asking ourselves at the moment too. As I said, we are working through the process now of figuring all this out so we can appropriately implement this and deliver on the Government's commitment. But they are rightly all questions that need to be asked to determine how this will be rolled out.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Have any companies been engaged, or have you put anything out to tender yet?

TAREK BARAKAT: No.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So \$6.4 million, but nothing has really progressed in that space, you are saying.

TAREK BARAKAT: Well, the budget was only handed down fairly recently. Now that we've got the money confirmed, we know how much we are working with and we know now that we need to take the steps to spend that and have this implemented as per the Government's commitment.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: In terms of, within the department itself—with the independent panel, what is the body of departmental staff? Like, who was providing support and all of the information, research, reports, advice—whatever is needed—for the executive committee and the panel to be able to make these decisions? What does the support team look like?

TAREK BARAKAT: As per the terms of reference for the panel, which are publicly available on our website, the secretariat consists of staff from Liquor and Gaming NSW and the Cabinet Office. We provide meeting rooms, take minutes and provide papers for the panel to consider. In terms of exact numbers, I can take that on notice and come back to you. But, yes, that is Liquor and Gaming NSW and the Cabinet Office as per the terms of reference.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes, that's what I was asking, actually. If you are able to take on notice—

TAREK BARAKAT: Absolutely.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: —the exact roles and hours and what people are doing in that space, that would be good.

ANSWER:

There are five staff from Liquor & Gaming NSW and The Cabinet Office performing the following:

- administrative tasks, such as booking meetings, providing access to the building, taking minutes
- drafting and circulating papers, supporting panel members and executive committee
- reviewing papers, liaising with Chair

QUESTION (page 79)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I move to a couple of questions on the ClubGRANTS guidelines. I noticed that in the changes that Liquor and Gaming did last month—I don't know who is the best person to answer this— there were several changes made. Firstly, what was the genesis of the changes that were made? What was the process? Who was consulted on the changes, and how were those changes arrived at?

TAREK BARAKAT: It's slightly before my time, so I can come back to you with some more detail, but my understanding is that NCOSS had raised some concerns about the operation of the guidelines and levels of transparency and clarity and things like that. Off the back of those concerns, we consulted with both NCOSS and ClubsNSW, and a number of suggestions were made by both entities. Not all of them were incorporated. Some of them were incorporated. Those guidelines were then shared back with NCOSS and ClubsNSW as a bit of an interim update to make things a little bit clearer and address some of issues identified while the review commenced and was ongoing.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: One of changes, for example, that I'm aware of, is adding an acquittal process for grant recipients. Is that correct?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, that's my recollection.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Before the changes which were introduced last month, all the organisations that received anything from clubs grants didn't have to do any form of acquittal at all?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'll take that on notice and I can come back to you with exactly what the process was prior to the changes to the guidelines as compared to what the process is now. I'll give you detailed information on notice, if that's okay, Ms Faehrmann.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: That's fine. Thank you.

ANSWER:

The previous ClubGRANTS Guidelines required clubs to request reports from organisations that received ClubGRANTS funding of up to, and including, \$7,500 in a gaming machine tax year. The former Guidelines listed other varying reporting and evidence requirements which caused confusion for recipients and contributed to the complexity of the ClubGRANTS Scheme. The ClubGRANTS Guidelines were updated to simplify and clarify acquittal requirements.