

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2023-2024

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 8 – CUSTOMER SERVICE

Minister Chanthivong

Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and
Technology, Building, and Corrections

Wednesday 8 November 2023

Preston Stanley Room, Parliament House, Sydney

Responses to Questions taken on Notice

QUESTION (p16)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you very much. Minister, I was quite alarmed to see that you didn't meet with the Tech Council of Australia until August, which is almost six months after you were appointed as Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology. Did you initiate that meeting or did they?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: We met with them, and I have met with the Tech Council, I think —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But did you initiate that meeting, or did they request a meeting? Because I am just curious about your forward engagement.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Yes. Certainly, I meet with a lot of stakeholders, given the various portfolios —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Given you're not sure, I am going to take that as a no, you did not initiate the meeting.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: No, no. I don't think you can take that as a no. I'm happy to take

that on notice. But I know I've met with the Tech Council —

ANSWER

I am advised;

Required Ministerial diary disclosures have been made and are available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures/2023>

QUESTION (p17)

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I've been to the Westmead innovation district hub — at Westmead innovation district.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: When was that?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'd have to take that one on notice, but it's certainly in my diary, I suspect.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Required Ministerial diary disclosures have been made and are available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures/2023>

QUESTION (p17)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How many meetings with tech startups, entrepreneurs and innovators have you personally requested?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: That's all disclosed in my diary.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: No, I am asking how many —

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I've met with a number of them.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: No, it's not about the meeting, Minister.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I don't know the exact number. I'm happy to take that on notice in terms of the exact number.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That you initiated.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: But I have proactively initiated a number of discussions

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Just take it on notice.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: — with all the different stakeholders within the innovation space.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Required Ministerial diary disclosures have been made and are available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures/2023>

QUESTION (p18)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: They were, again, literally within walking distance. No, okay. I saw that you met with South by Southwest Sydney. I was wondering if you know how many tickets or badges, as they were called, were bought to that festival.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: A public — how many were sold to the festival?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Yes, how many people bought badges to the festival.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised;

The department's post-event assessment is ongoing. Information relating to badge sales and allocations from the Event Owner (SXSW Sydney via TEG) is not yet available.

QUESTION (p18)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Did you buy a badge to attend the South by Southwest Sydney festival?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'll have to take that one on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Destination NSW manages the event investment agreement with SXSW Sydney, which includes an allocation of badges for Destination NSW to provide to Ministers, Ministerial staff, stakeholders and staff. All NSW Government staff use and declare tickets in accordance their respective Gift, Benefits and Hospitality Policy. Direct invitations to Ministers are managed as per NSW Government declarations.

QUESTION (p20)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How much money is budgeted for the operation of the Innovation and Productivity Council in 2023-24 and in the forward estimates, Minister?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I will have to take that one on notice.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Can you confirm that there is budgeted money into the forward estimates for the council?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I said that it's in the budget papers, but I'm happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Funding for the Innovation and Productivity Council is included as part of the budget for Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade available at <https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/>

QUESTION (p20)

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: You don't know.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, you've previously declined to answer pretty reasonable questions about the budget, grants and staff that I and my colleagues have asked since you became the Minister. So I am hoping that you've had a change of heart today. How much less money has been budgeted for the office of the chief scientist in 2023-24 compared to the previous year?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to ask the secretary to answer that question, or Ms Katie Knight will take that on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Funding for the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer is included as part of the budget for Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade available at <https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/>

QUESTION (p20-p21)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Obviously, you don't know the expenditure in your own portfolio here, in your own department, so I'm happy to ask the staff later. I presume, then, the same answer is true regarding how much less money has been budgeted for the Sydney Startup Hub in 2023-24 compared to the previous year?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: With the Sydney Startup Hub, it's still going —

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: You don't know. You honestly don't know.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The Sydney Startup Hub is an valuable resource for the innovation space, and we are continuing — it's still operating.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I understand that. That's why I'm asking about the funding.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: That's right. It's still operating, and there are still resources allocated to it.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: What are the resources? How much less money —

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: But I'm actually happy to ask Ms Katie Knight to provide a specific —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, if you don't know, that's fine. I'll take that on notice from you, or I can ask staff later in the afternoon. The reality is, of course, that there is less money for the Sydney Startup Hub, and the fact that you have come to budget estimates without answers about the budget in your department is pretty concerning. Were you aware that the amount spent on grants and subsidies through the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade in the last financial year is now equivalent to the total departmental budget? Are you aware that that's how large the cuts in your department were?

ANSWER

I understand that Ms Mildwater outlined the former Liberal-National government's extensive cuts to programs within the Future Economy Funds during the Budget Estimates hearing. Page 76 of the Transcript indicates that:

“The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: All these programs that were paused — could you please confirm that they were actually budgeted for in the 2022-23 budget?”

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: In the budget last year, yes, they were all included, but over the course of 2022 some of that funding had been reduced. There was a difference between what we had available as funding and what was in the budget papers last year.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Was it a \$700 million difference?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: If you give me one second, the original — the figure of \$700 million that you're referring to is —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It's a bit above \$700 million.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes, it was the original FEF figure. We received a couple of reductions to that during the course of 2022. I think the total reductions to FEF were — let me just see. To FEF we had received — it was originally announced at \$703.4 million. During 2022 it was reduced by \$263.1 million, and then in the pre-election budget commitment \$158.3 million was reduced and another \$15.1 million. Then, in non-FEF funding, there were other savings applied during 2022 — in November, \$52.8 million, and in the pre-election budget commitment another \$127.3 million. I think all of those figures total up to somewhere near 650.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Those figures from the Future Economy Fund and then the figures that you just read out — they're all a part of the grants and subsidies line in the budget of the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade. Is that right?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: That's correct.”

QUESTION (p34)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, are you aware of the contention that the decision not to progress a number of the rebate applications, including the tech central scale-up accommodation rebate, was in contravention of the rebate program rules?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: What I know is that all this innovation work, whether it's a startup or the MVP or the other programs, these programs were significantly cut before the election, before we even started the comprehensive expenditure review.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, that's simply not true.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: It is true, Ms Munro.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, I've asked a very specific question. Could I please redirect you to the question?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I think it's very important for the Committee to be aware that before we even started a comprehensive expenditure review, the former Government had cut —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, this is not about the spending. This is actually about

the

process —

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Well, it's about the program, which is part of the cuts that were actually made.

ANSWER

I am advised;

The Tech Central Scaleup Accommodation Rebate program has been administered in accordance with the program guidelines.

QUESTION (p34)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: No, no, this is about the process of the rebate. Are you aware of the contention that the decision not to progress a number of the rebate applications was in contravention of the rebate program rules?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm certainly aware —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It's about the program rules.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Sure. I'm certainly aware, Chair, that the former Government made significant financial cuts to the program.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, this is very difficult. We're here to ask questions to understand the process.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The former Government cut \$416 million. That's almost half a billion dollars, Chair.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: If you're not going to answer questions, you can take them on notice. You obviously weren't aware.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: They've cut almost half a billion dollars into the program —

ANSWER

I am advised;

the Tech Central Scaleup Accommodation Rebate program has been administered in accordance with the program guidelines.

QUESTION (p35)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I am going to take it that you are not aware of the cost of halting this program, which was fully budgeted for, as you can read in the budget papers. I can pull out the budget papers. It's very clear that over \$700 million wasn't spent in grants and subsidies since you came into government. The reality is that, as Minister, you

have responsibility for the spending of moneys in your department. If you want to have a look through the budget papers, I can direct you to the point. But the reality is that grants and subsidies were stopped, that this program was halted and that at least one business had to front up \$1 million because of the decision of this Government to halt an already budgeted-for program, and you obviously were not aware of that. Minister, are you aware of any legal proceedings that have been enacted against the department relating to the administration of grants and subsidies?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that one on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised;

The Department is not aware of any legal proceedings that have been enacted against it relating to the administration of the Tech Central Scaleup Accommodation Rebate program.

I understand that Ms Mildwater outlined the former Liberal-National government's extensive cuts to programs within the Future Economy Funds during the Budget Estimates hearing. Page 76 of the Transcript indicates that:

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ELIZABETH MILDWATER: In the budget last year, yes, they were all included, but over the course of 2022 some of that funding had been reduced. There was a difference between what we had available as funding and what was in the budget papers last year.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Was it a \$700 million difference?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: If you give me one second, the original — the figure of \$700 million that you're referring to is —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It's a bit above \$700 million.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes, it was the original FEF figure. We received a couple of reductions to that during the course of 2022. I think the total reductions to FEF were — let me just see. To FEF we had received — it was originally announced at \$703.4 million. During 2022 it was reduced by \$263.1 million, and then in the pre-election budget commitment \$158.3 million was reduced and another \$15.1 million. Then, in non-FEF funding, there were other savings applied during 2022 — in November, \$52.8 million, and in the pre-election budget commitment another \$127.3 million. I think all of those figures total up to somewhere near 650.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Those figures from the Future Economy Fund and then the figures that you just read out — they're all a part of the grants and subsidies line in the budget of the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade. Is that right?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: That's correct.”

QUESTION (p38)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Could you please tell me the number of what the MVP Ventures grant program was worth to a business under the Coalition Government?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Take it on notice.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: You can take it on notice, if you don't know.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to answer it. If you want to answer it for me, that's okay.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Please do.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I am. The programs —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, there are people who are watching this today who are absolutely distraught about the level of engagement in their sector and you're telling me that you can't answer how much the MVP grant program was under the Coalition.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The MVP grant is still continuing.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How much was it worth under the Coalition?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I would say to those sectors who are watching this that cuts made by the former Government have greatly impacted on the sector.

ANSWER

I refer to my response at the hearing.

QUESTION (p52)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Your colleague Minister Houssos has said that you're largely responsible for domestic manufacturing. I'm just wondering, which department supports you on domestic manufacturing work?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade reports to me. I will be working closely with my colleague Minister Houssos with her new portfolio responsibilities and also with industry on policy. We have a suite —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How many staff are looking at that from the departmental view?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that on notice. It is a very specific question.

ANSWER

I am advised;

The Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade relies on the collaboration of multiple teams to support each of its portfolios and support related work across government. These include teams within its policy divisions, and corporate services teams such as finance, media and ministerial services.

QUESTION (p69)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you, everybody, for being here. I think this goes to Professor Durrant-Whyte about how much money has been budgeted for the office of the chief scientist in 2022-23 and also 2023-24?

HUGH DURRANT-WHYTE: In 2022-23, \$47 million; in 2023-24, \$55 million.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: In Investment NSW – perhaps, Ms Knight – the same question.

KATIE KNIGHT: Investment NSW for 2023-24 has a budget of \$355 million in recurrent expenditure and \$24.9 in capex.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That was for 2023-24. And the figure for 2022-23?

KATIE KNIGHT: I would have to take that on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Funding for the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer is included as part of the budget for Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade available at <https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/>

QUESTION (p75)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: In Investment NSW, how many people have actually been let go and how many people have left with no intention of replacement?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: We might need to take that on notice because we are midway through a process that hasn't – it's changing.

KATIE KNIGHT: And from what date in particular?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: From the budget.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes, we can take that on notice.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful. Also, could you perhaps take on notice how many you intend to essentially cut by December, please?

KATIE KNIGHT: Yes.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Staff numbers are included in agency annual reports. Staff numbers employed are commensurate with need and can go down or up as required.

QUESTION (p76)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: There's a significant jump in the investment revenue between 2022-23 and 2023-24. This is page 8-2 of Budget Paper No. 02 – Agency Financial Statements.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Sorry, page 82, was it?

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Page 8-2. If you look at the revenue half – the bottom half – and then to investment revenue, the investment revenue between 2022-23 and 2023-24 is fairly significantly different. I'm wondering what accounts for that difference?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I'll take that on notice. If I can get you an answer this afternoon, I will.

ANSWER

I am advised;

Budget figures are available at <https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/>

QUESTION (p77)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I understood the \$10 million for the Carla Zampatti fund was actually offered by Carla Zampatti as an organisation, so it wasn't really costing the Government that \$10 million in terms of a fund. So why is that not proceeding?

KATIE KNIGHT: That's not my understanding. It was a government-sourced program.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Okay. So there was no financial investment from Carla Zampatti?

KATIE KNIGHT: Not so far as I'm aware.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Okay, that's interesting. That's not my understanding.

KATIE KNIGHT: We can confirm that, but my understanding is that –

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: That's not my understanding.

ANSWER

I am advised;

The proposed funding for the Carla Zampatti fund, was to be provided by the NSW Government. There was no external financial investment.

QUESTION (p82)

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I understand and I know that we asked some questions in the context of the consulting inquiry on this but they weren't really directly relevant – at least they didn't turn out to be directly relevant – to the consulting inquiry in relation to the amount of venue, hospitality and ICT costs for SIRA events.

There's been a lot of talk about different events being held by SIRA. We talked about the higher innovation forum in the questions and answers for the consulting inquiry. There were also, I understand, two functions – one at Doltone House in Hyde Park and another one in at Doltone House in Darling Island – the innovation forum, which we have talked about, and then there was another function for around 250 members of Parliament House. There have been concerns that this is quite a lot of expenditure by SIRA on events. What has been the total spend on those venue, hospitality and ICT costs for SIRA events over the last two financial years?

ADAM DENT: I would need to take that question on notice, Ms Boyd. The events you refer to were all-staff meetings. We were able to, for the first time since COVID, get our staff together. The two Doltone House events were all-staff meetings, where we used them as a combination of a communication event and an education forum, if you will, for all of our people. We don't have access to spaces within government buildings big enough to do that, so those venues were chosen through a process of trying to work out which was big enough and which was affordable, relative to each other. But I will take the question on notice around the exact expenditure related to those events.

ANSWER

SIRA is committed to fostering the learning, development and recognition of its people to equip them with the skills and knowledge to ensure that NSW insurance schemes protect and support the people who need them, now and in the future. To support this, a number of internal events have been held over the last two financial years with venue, hospitality and audio-visual expenditure outlined below.

These include:

- Monthly hybrid Town Hall meetings to inform and engage staff on SIRA initiatives
- All-staff meetings to educate staff and workshop implementation of key SIRA publications, namely the SIRA2025 strategy, and SIRA's Regulatory Framework.
- People leader conferences to deliver professional development in a consistent and cost-effective way, particularly for non-executive people leaders.
- Staff awards to recognise the achievements and hard work of SIRA staff.

Date	Event	Venue	Attendance	Total
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				Expenditure
2021/22				\$40,779
Monthly	21/22 Town Halls	Hybrid – Sydney/Gosford	300*	
28/03/2022	2022 All staff meeting	Doltone House, Elizabeth Street, Sydney	221	
2022/23				\$93,311
Monthly	22/23 Town Halls	Hybrid – Sydney/Gosford	300*	
28/07/2022	SIRA People Leaders Conference	NSW Parliament House (Strangers Room)	93	
29/09/2022	2022 SIRA Staff Awards	NSW Parliament House (Strangers Room)	128	
6/12/2022	SIRA People Leaders Conference	UTS (Aerial Room)	93	
3/04/2023	2023 All staff meeting	Doltone House, Darling Island	342	

• * = average attendance monthly
 Note these events represent less than 0.02% of SIRA operating expenses.

QUESTION (p43)

The CHAIR: Minister, I'm just going to quickly jump back to animals and rentals. I've one follow-up

question, and it might be something you need to take on notice. I wonder how much it has cost the Labor Government to run the further consultation so far on this.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Can I take that one on notice?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The consultation was run using NSW Government departmental resources.

QUESTION (p48)

The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Right, sorry. Can you tell me what is the remuneration of the Rental Commissioner?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I will have to take that one on notice, but you are welcome to ask her. The appointment of Ms Trina Jones as the Rental Commissioner has been a really positive step to address some of the policy and difficult policy reforms we want to do. More and more people who are renting – given the housing affordability challenges, given the lack of supply that's been built up for the last 12 years, putting significant pressure on rental prices, we really want to get forward with this policy agenda. I have to say, the feedback I have had – Ms Trina Jones has done an excellent job in this

space.

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Rental Commissioner remuneration is set at NSW Public Service Senior Executive Service Band (SEB) 2.

QUESTION (p57)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Is it your expectation that there will be additional resources? I'm specifically referring to the fact that there aren't enough resources now within Fair Trading to deal with the extraordinary number of strata complaints and issues in relation to strata. Simply appointing a strata commissioner without additional resources isn't going to fix that problem, so when will more resources come?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The Government will consider its resources as part of the normal budget process.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So no more resources?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The Government will consider, in its next year budget, resources across the whole of government to ensure that we have the resources that we require...Essentially, the property services commissioner will report to the deputy secretary of the Fair Trading commissioner. I'm happy to ask her to elaborate further, but certainly he has access to the resources of the department to undertake the important policy reform in this space. Any resource requirements will be, naturally, delivered as part of the budget process.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: But in terms of the terms of reference and powers — for example, in regard to dispute resolution by Fair Trading and mediation — what are the powers of the commissioner? Are they outlined anywhere?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The role of the strata commissioner, as I said, will have all the resources and all the powers that are currently within Fair Trading. In terms of the technical, legal powers, I'm happy to ask the deputy secretary and Fair Trading Commissioner to answer those questions for you, Ms Faehrmann.

NATASHA MANN: Thank you for the question. There are two questions that you have raised. Maybe I'll take them in turn. The first question was around how will Mr Minns work with the resources of Fair Trading in doing his job. The answer to that — I can give you a practical example — is we have a policy team in Fair Trading that is currently supporting Mr Minns to work through some of the strata reforms. So he would draw on the Fair Trading policy people to assist him with that. If there is an issue in the sector — for example, underquoting — Mr Minns would draw down on our inspectorate in Fair Trading to help him with that issue. So that's the answer to your first question. In relation to your second one around powers, there's a raft of legislation that sits within Fair Trading, as you know. If you look at the Act, all the powers are vested in the secretary of the department, so the powers sit with her. Then what will happen is she will then delegate those powers as is appropriate. At the moment those powers are delegated to me as Fair Trading Commissioner, in the most part. John does have some powers that have been delegated to him under the Property and Stock Agents Act. He is able, under that legislation, to set professional development requirements for agents and also to set the supervision rules for agency

businesses. Down the track we will look at do other roles and responsibilities under that legislation need to be delegated from the secretary to Mr Minns.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So that's not in the current legislation, or regulation supporting that legislation, in terms of ensuring that that new position has those parameters now, Minister? I've got key stakeholders asking what are the terms of reference, what are the powers and what's the budget. It's potentially a communications issue, that people who are dealing with strata issues need to know this.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Certainly, working with the different industries will be an important part of the strata reforms we want to do.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The role of the strata commissioner will have, as I said, all the powers and resources of Fair Trading.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Is that outlined somewhere for people to see?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that one on notice. But I gather that, because it's a public service appointment, it will report to the Fair Trading Commissioner.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Maybe some advice. It would be worth doing if it's not already outlined.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Yes.

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Strata and Property Services Commissioner retains powers under the *Property and Stock Agents Act 2002* (the Act) delegated to him by the Commissioner for Fair Trading. These include setting annual continuing professional development requirements under section 20 of the Act, issuing guidelines as to the proper supervision of the business of a licensee under section 32 of the Act, and several other consumer education and formal notification requirements under other sections of the Act.

Principal regulatory authority for laws governing strata schemes and property agents remains with the NSW Commissioner for Fair Trading.

The Commissioner, as a member of the NSW Fair Trading executive has access to the resources of NSW Fair Trading and the teams within NSW Fair Trading to support the improved outcomes in the strata and property services sector.

QUESTION (p59)

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, how many potential breaches of ticket scalping laws have been investigated by Fair Trading since you became Minister?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Ticket scalping is just an awful way to fleece, and particularly young people or others who are actually going to a concert or an event.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, I am aware of what ticket scalping is and why it's bad.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Yes, so in terms of the specific —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That's why I'm asking how many have been investigated.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Okay, well, Fair Trading will always investigate any instances of ticket scalping —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But do you know how many —

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: — or any contravention of consumer laws.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: My question is —

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I am happy to take that on notice in terms of the specific number.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you very much, Minister. Could I please also ask that you take on notice —

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The Fair Trading Commissioner will always answer that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, could I please ask the next question, since you've said you'll take this on notice?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: That's fine.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, of these investigations, how many have resulted in compliance action and what actions were taken?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Fair Trading will always take the appropriate action for those who have —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: But will you take that on notice? It's a very specific question.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I think what I'm saying is that —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: How many have resulted in compliance action?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I think any instance of where people have broken consumer law will be properly investigated by Fair Trading.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Minister, I'm aware of that. That's why I'm asking the question about how many have actually occurred.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Of course. As I said, in terms of the specific numbers —

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Could you please take that on notice if you don't have the number?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: — the Fair Trading Commissioner is happy to answer that. I'm happy to pass over to the Fair Trading Commissioner.

ANSWER

I am advised:

New ticket reselling laws started on 1 June 2018. These laws specifically address the issue of ticket scalping.

Since the laws were introduced NSW Fair Trading has received 697 complaints and 424 enquiries about ticket scalping. A further breakdown of complaints and enquiries received is in the table below:

Year	Complaints	Enquiries
2018 (1/6/2018 to 31/12/18)	172	26
2019	222	320
2020	56	15
2021	72	20

2022	141	20
2023 (YTD 13/11/2023)	34	23

NSW Fair Trading has conducted 14 investigations into ticket scalping in 2023.

As part of NSW Fair Trading’s 2023 proactive program to address ticket scalping, the regulator has communicated with 16 online platforms such as eBay, Gumtree and others reminding the platforms of the regulatory requirements for businesses involved in ticket reselling in NSW and key events that require close monitoring for unlawful ticket resale. In addition to this, NSW Fair Trading actively monitors ticket reselling platforms in the lead up to high risk events for example, Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour.

QUESTION (p83)

The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: The Building Commissioner again, just on building capacity and capability – if we can go back to that. How many electricians will we need in New South Wales to meet the housing target that has been set by the Government, of 377,000?

DAVID CHANDLER: We will break that down when we come up with a plan in the new year. So I will take that on notice and make sure that I can specify a number. But we are certainly going to need many skills across a range of sectors, including management. Management's going to be a big piece of that. I just reference the fact that we have just finished probably one of the largest women in construction surveys, and we will be publishing that in December. But it does really create a very clear message to employers that if you want to attract women into this industry we are going to have to really lift our game and create a much better workplace. You will find that report of great interest. We had 1,800 women respond to that.

ANSWER

I am advised this mapping work is currently under way to ensure we can identify and then build the capability framework to meet the housing targets. This information and numbers will be available in the first half of 2024.

QUESTION (p66)

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Three secretaries, yes. Has a Minister or ministerial office to whom you report ever requested specific public servants to fill DLO positions in their office? To be clear, I'm asking about any Minister the secretary is responsible for, not just the Minister relevant for this budget estimates session. Do we want to start with you, Secretary?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: No, not to my knowledge.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Same, no.

EMMA HOGAN: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Not to your knowledge. Would you like to take it on notice, or are you 100 per cent sure?

EMMA HOGAN: I will double-check, but not to my knowledge.

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I have asked – no.

ANSWER

Emma Hogan: A request for specific DLOs has not been made to me. All DLOs placed in Ministerial offices are required to apply to DCS and go through a process to assess suitability.

Corrections

QUESTION (p8)

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Minister, how many people are currently employed at the GEO facility?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I recall it's just a bit over 300, but I might defer to the Commissioner of Corrections.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Minister, respectfully, I've got a lot of time in the afternoon. I'm just asking you.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm trying to answer the question.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: That's fine. You can take it on notice if you don't know.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that on notice, but I also think it's about 240.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: That's great. Take that on notice. Do you know how many of those people will be retained in their current roles, Minister? You can take that on notice.

Answer

- (a) I am advised as at 30 October 2023 there were 287.94 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) roles at Junee Correctional Centre. There were 370 people employed, including casuals, based on a state of 910 inmates.
- (b) I refer to page 10 of the transcript.

QUESTION (p8)

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR:

I am redirecting the question, Minister. Did you meet with Commissioner Kevin Corcoran regarding this matter? If so, when did this meeting occur and what advice was provided to the commissioner? If you're not sure, you can take it on notice.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I meet with the commissioner regularly to discuss —

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: I would expect that, but my question was very specific, Minister, and I can rephrase it for you: Did you meet with the commissioner regarding this matter? If so, when did the meeting occur — I am happy for you to take that on notice — and what advice was provided by the commissioner?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I meet with the commissioner regularly to talk about anything that concerns his operation.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: I know that, Minister, but did you meet with him particularly when you decided to shut this jail with no reason?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: No, we made a decision, which we believed for Junee will be in the best interests for the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Minister, take the question on notice. Have you discussed the closure with the community in Junee? I suppose it's hard when you haven't been there.

Answer

The Minister answered the question during this exchange. The Minister stated the advice provided is Cabinet-in-confidence on page 7 of the transcript.

Transcript Ref (p12)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I will follow up later. Long Bay Correctional Complex is made up of four jails, which I understand are metro special programs, Long Bay Hospital, forensic hospital and special programs centre.

What is the special programs centre and why is there no information on that part of the facility? Do you know what happens in there?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:

Can I take that one on notice? Or I am happy to ask the commissioner, if you would like.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You can take it on notice. We don't know what happens at the special programs centre. If you could take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised the Special Purpose Centre (SPC) is a particular facility where people who are under witness protection generally are housed, so that those individuals are not identified by their names in that facility.

Transcript Ref (p12)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I receive frequent and alarming reports of the denial of access to medical treatment, in particular psychological appointments being denied while in custody. Families have told me about inmates with diagnosed mental health disorders actually being denied psychologist appointments for months and months at a time. How many people are there in New South Wales Correctional centres with mental health disorders, or what proportion?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: That is quite a technical, specific question, Ms Higginson. I am happy to take that one on notice.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Have you got any idea, Minister?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: What I would —

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Can I remind you, before you do, that when we incarcerate somebody, we have taken their liberty and, as a State, we owe that individual a duty of care. Have you got any idea, out of all the people that you're responsible for, in terms of the custodial population, what proportion of them may be experiencing a mental health disorder of some sort?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Certainly, Corrections is very aware of the need to support our inmates during their health care.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Do you reckon it's half, do you reckon it's three-quarters or do you reckon it's not many?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The work of Justice Health is so important, given their experience and their clinical ability and access to NSW Health to ensure that inmates —

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: What are you actually doing? I know these are genuine claims. I test the veracity of these claims. What are you doing to improve access for somebody who is requiring psychological assistance?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:

If there are specific claims, I am happy to receive that correspondence, Ms Higginson. I can't talk about any specific claim but, in general, what I would say is that the health and wellbeing of everybody in our correctional facilities, whether it be the staff or the inmates and making sure they have access to a level of care and safety, is important to Corrections. That's why the work of Justice Health is so integral to the part of our correctional facilities.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: The specific claims are around denial of access to adequate care — or access at all — in the thousands. What is your approach? Do you understand that there are systemic problems? The staff are aware of this. You're the Minister now. What are you going to do in terms of actually improving? Are you arguing for more money or are you arguing for more people? What is your plan to improve access to basic essential health professionals?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Any organisation will always look for ways to improve. I have said that the health and the welfare and wellbeing of everybody in our correctional facilities is important to the department. We will continue to examine different programs and we will examine different ways. I am happy to ask the secretary on specific programs that the department is actually running in Corrections.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I can follow up on those.

Answer

I am advised this question should be directed to the Minister for Health.

QUESTION (p13)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Can I just ask you one final question? How many Corrective Services employees are currently off on sick leave or on some kind of workers compensation?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I will have to take that one on notice, given the very specific technical nature of that.

Answer

Workers compensation

I am advised, as at 30 September 2023:

- a. 16 COVID claims
 - i. 13 no current work capacity
 - ii: 3 fit for work but no suitable duties available
- b. 628 non COVID claims
 - i: 502 no current work capacity
 - ii: 126 fit for work but no suitable duties available

Sick leave

Data is not captured in such a way as to be able to provide advice on sick and other unplanned leave contemporaneously.

QUESTION (p25)

The CHAIR: I understand that the previous Government had a target of reducing adult re-offending following release from prison by 5 per cent by 2023. It seems that on the website this hasn't actually been updated since Labor was elected in March 2023. Can I ask what your targets or goals as the Minister for Corrections are over the next four years or if it's the same as the previous Government?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Can I just say in general, recidivism and reducing recidivism is so important and that's why having programs within our correctional facilities, the work of trying to upskill or provide skills and basic skills for inmates as they transition out—

The CHAIR: I just want to know what your target was, given the website still had the previous target on it.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Sure. I'm happy to take that one on notice, but I might just say, if I recall, we're trying to reduce it by about 8 per cent. Is that correct, Commissioner?

Answer

I am advised the current Corrective Services target for reducing reoffending is:

1. reduce adult reoffending by 8% by 2030
2. reduce adult reoffending for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by 10% by 2030.

This will be measured by the rate of return to Corrective Services within two years of release from custody or order commencement.

QUESTION (p27)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Unlike my colleagues here, I was quite pleased to hear the announcement around Junee changing hands and coming into the system.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: You don't know why yet.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Were the holders of the contract likely to not want to extend the contract?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The Government made the decision, Ms Higginson, based on what we believe will deliver a much better outcome for the —

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Have you received any indication that the contractor didn't want to renew the contract with the Government?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: No, the Government just made its decision given the contract was up for renewal. We looked at it from a much broader perspective. I think access to Justice Health —

The CHAIR:

Is that a no? You absolutely categorically had no information whatsoever about the possibility of not extending the contract from the other party?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I think the Government made a decision, Ms Higginson, to bring this back into Corrective Services ownership, and I think it's important —

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Absolutely it did, and I commend that decision. I think it's a fabulous decision.

I genuinely think it is in the public interest. Did you have any indication from the contract party that they weren't happy to extend the contract with the Government?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that one on notice, Ms Higginson. But I do know that the decision the Government's made in this space is a move in the right direction in terms of —

Answer

I am advised, no.

QUESTION (p28)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Just on that point, I think it is about 32 per cent of women in prison who are First Nations despite being 2 per cent of the population. Do you have specific programs or are you looking at introducing specific programs for those women?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:

Our justice system is very complex because it's not just a one-factor issue. We try to look at prevention, of course. We try to look at a number of social programs that I suppose stop people coming to the justice system in the first place. That's the preventative. But once they are in our facilities, we want to make sure that there are programs in place – as part of rehabilitation, as part of reskilling – to ensure that once their time in the service has been finalised they can go out to the community and actually not recommit and come back to our facilities. But in terms of a specific program, I'm happy to –

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Do you recognise that perhaps there is a problem within the system of women accessing programs? Have you been made aware of that?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Like I said, those specific programs, I'm happy to take them on notice, or you're welcome to ask the commissioner.

Answer

I am advised Corrective Services NSW delivers a number of specific programs and interventions that are designed to address the needs of women offenders. These include:

- Women's Diversionary Pathway Program: eligible women with young children may serve part of their sentence in an appropriate community based environment. After a comprehensive suitability and risk assessment, participants are granted external leave by the Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW under section 26(2)(l) of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*. Wrap around services are co-ordinated by a community based organisation funded by Corrective Services with a range of supervision and reporting mechanisms in place.
- Mothering at a Distance parenting program
- Mothers and Children's Program: mothers with very young children or babies can serve their sentence with their child at Parramatta Transitional Centre or Jacaranda Cottages at the Emu Plains Correctional Centre (this centre is temporarily closed as remedial work is undertaken). School aged children can stay with their mothers on weekends and school holidays
- Real Understanding of Self Help, a skills-based treatment program, which aims to address anti-social attitudes/beliefs, poor self-control, impulsivity, difficulties with self-management such as poor decision making, and interpersonal skills
- Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program for female inmates provides a specialised therapeutic approach to treat drug and alcohol dependence and offending behaviour.
- Three month programs for women with short sentences through the High Intensity Program Units
- Transitional Centres for female offenders: Bolwarra Transitional Centre is a community based residential pre-release alcohol and other drug program for women. Offenders receive intensive case management and participate in programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Residents also participate in counselling in the local community and access local services such as doctors, methadone clinic and other health services. Parramatta Transitional Centre is a community-based pre-release model/program centred on through care principles. Residents can access employment and service providers in the community.
- Programs to address trauma, such as Out of the Dark and the approved counselling services
- Women also have access to a range of education, traineeships and vocational training programs, and are also able to engage in custody based employment through Corrective Services Industries.
- The Corrections Co-located Caseworker project provides child protection caseworkers in correctional centres that hold women, as well as being available via referral to all centres that house women. The caseworker works with mothers who have open and active child protection cases and helps them foster and maintain a connection with their children (where appropriate).

These programs are in addition to the Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practice, Succeed (EQUIPS) suite of programs that address criminogenic factors to reduce reoffending.

QUESTION (p43)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: What do you say to the fact that inmates in remand have access to absolutely nothing – no education, no programs, no rehabilitation? They have access to nothing. Is that something you're looking at working out how to change?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: That's a very technical aspect of it. As I said, I'm open to any improvements in our Corrective Services system which deliver a better outcome for the broader community, for the staff and for the inmates. I'm happy to take that on notice, or you're welcome to ask the commissioner in the afternoon session.

Answer

I am advised the following programs are available to inmates on remand:

- Remand Addiction: a modified version of the EQUIPS Addiction program based on cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) principles and strategies.
- Remand Domestic Violence: an intervention focusing on assisting inmates to understand their legal circumstances specific to domestic violence and to provide them with knowledge and skills for healthier relationships.
- CONNECT is a stand-alone dialectical behaviour therapy-based resilience program to meet the needs of inmates in custody who are serving shorter sentences or in rapidly changing environments such as remand.
- Real Understanding of Self Help (RUSH), a skills-based treatment program, which aims to address anti-social attitudes/beliefs, poor self-control, impulsivity, difficulties with self-management such as poor decision making, and interpersonal skills.
- Inmates on remand undertake the Core Skills Assessment which assesses literacy and numeracy skills to determine the most appropriate educational or vocational training pathway.

QUESTION (p44)

The CHAIR: I'm sorry, Minister. I'm asking you if you've had any briefings on the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Have you been briefed?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'll take that one on notice, but I will say that I'm not aware – it's certainly not in my mind, but I'll have to take that one on notice.

Answer

Yes.

QUESTION (pg46)

The CHAIR: An evaluation of the New South Wales Domestic Violence Electronic Monitoring program published by BOCSAR in May 2023 found that it is associated with significant reductions in the probability that an offender re-offends or is imprisoned within a year of release. Given the success of this program, are there any plans to expand the program further or to make this option available in more cases?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that on notice, but I think any programs or any ideas that improve our Corrections, we are always open to.

Answer

Corrective Services will continue to focus on evidence-based programs that work to reduce domestic violence reoffending.

QUESTION (p56)

The CHAIR: Minister, given there's quite a few different programs with animals that are running through the jail system, I'm just wondering if anyone that is actually convicted of animal cruelty offences — obviously it's incredibly rare that somebody who's convicted of an animal cruelty offence is actually in a corrections centre, but I want to know if these programs are open to anyone that has been convicted of animal cruelty, or would those individuals be excluded?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to take that on notice, if that's okay.

The CHAIR: This might be another one for on notice, but I know that inmates are often part of a day work release program. A lot of those day work release programs include work inside slaughterhouses. Again, are there exclusions to ensure anyone convicted of animal cruelty offences is not involved in day work releases to slaughterhouses?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I'm happy to just take that on notice, thank you.

Answer

I advised the answer is no. The criminal history of inmates is reviewed when considering suitability for employment or programs.

QUESTION (p62)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Are you aware that inmates that leave Corrective Services are suffering a high rate of homelessness? Is that something that you're aware of?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Certainly as inmates leave our facilities there are a number of challenges they will face, and we want to make sure that as many programs as we have to support them as they transition into the community.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Do you have an exit scheme for making sure that people, when they leave a corrective institution, have somewhere to go?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: In terms of specific programs, I'm happy to take that on notice. But it's a multi-portfolio, multifaceted area of social policy and we want to make sure that we support –

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: But remember, Minister, you have a duty of care from the minute somebody enters your facility to the minute they leave. Do you accept that an inmate leaving a correctional facility – that it is part of the standard within the duty of care that you owe that you are assured that they have somewhere safe to go and sleep the night that they've left? Do you think that's part of your duty?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I think it's all part of our duty to make sure that inmates, when they come out, get the level of appropriate support to transition into the community. The whole aim is to reduce recidivism out in the community. Whatever programs we have, post and pre, will always be considered by the Government.

Answer

I am advised Corrective Services NSW works with offenders as their sentence progresses and they prepare for release from custody. Planning for release considers a range of issues including family and other support relationships, health and wellbeing, employment and accommodation on release. For offenders released to parole, CSNSW works with the offender to confirm suitable accommodation.

Corrective Services NSW works with the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Housing to support access to DCJ Housing services, including:

- Set To Go: a service that provides pre-booked crisis accommodation to people exiting custody.
- Inmate Early Assessment Scheme: allows parolees to apply for housing assistance up to three months prior to their release.
- Reintegration Housing Support Program: connects people leaving custody, or who have been released in the last month, and are at risk of homelessness, with specialist support workers to assist with securing access to suitable accommodation, as well as wrap around psychosocial support.

• CSNSW also funds some transitional accommodation through its Funded Partnership Initiative:

- Transitional Supported Accommodation: provides up to 12 weeks transitional post-release accommodation and casework support to medium/high and high-risk offenders upon release to the community, to reduce the risk of reoffending.

- Extended Reintegration Service: provides post-release accommodation and cross-agency casework support to medium/high and high-risk offenders in South-Western Sydney.
- CSNSW also manages a small number of residential and transitional centres as part of work to support reintegration back into the community for offenders.

QUESTION (p67)

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: I'm not sure if this is for the secretary or the commissioner, but what is the operating budget of the Junee prison?

KEVIN CORCORAN: That figure for Junee is commercial-in-confidence.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: It has been mentioned in the media.

KEVIN CORCORAN: A figure was mentioned in the media and it's not the correct figure.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Can you take that on notice? I mean, the Government said it's going to cost \$75 million to nationalise the Junee prison, and the situation is that — what's been said is that actually that current operating budget is much less than that.

KEVIN CORCORAN: The current operating budget is based on 910, as opposed to the full capacity of Junee. So that larger —

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Can you tell me what the current operating budget of Junee is?

Answer

I am advised the operating budgets of privately managed correctional centres are commercial-in-confidence.

QUESTION (p73)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: This may be a question for you, Commissioner Corcoran. Are you aware that in August this year inmates at Junee were enabled access to content from The Daily Telegraph on their tablets?

KEVIN CORCORAN: Yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And is that the case for other correctional facilities?

KEVIN CORCORAN: Yes, that was the case.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And is it your understanding that, as a result of that, there may have been an ability for inmates to look at other inmates' offences and now there has been a spate of violence and retribution?

KEVIN CORCORAN: Yes, I am aware of that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And is that just isolated to Junee or is the case more spread?

KEVIN CORCORAN: I think it might have happened elsewhere. We took action to suspend a number of news websites until we can upgrade the security on those websites.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Which other correctional facilities are in your mind's eye?

KEVIN CORCORAN: I'd have to take that on notice, sorry.

Answer

I am advised there is no data available that links specific acts of violence to the ability of inmates to access news sites on inmate tablets.

QUESTION (p80)

The CHAIR: Wonderful. I will move on now to animals in Corrections. I was speaking earlier today with the Minister about the animal programs that are currently in Corrective Services in New South Wales. I know that the Minister took on notice about whether people who have been convicted of animal cruelty would be involved, so I was wondering if you had any further information on that.

KEVIN CORCORAN: No further information, sorry.

Answer

See answer to question 12.

QUESTION (p81)

The CHAIR: You might need to take this one on notice, but I was wondering if you had any statistics around the number of horses that have actually come through that program and also how many have been successfully rehomed through the program.

KEVIN CORCORAN: I'd have to take that one on notice.

Answer

I am advised 21 horses have been rehomed since July 2022. Data since the commencement of the program is not available.

QUESTION (p84)

The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: It's about, I think, behaviour change and diversionary programs. Are you able to tell me how many are being supervised as a result of domestic and family violence offences?

KEVIN CORCORAN: I think we will have to take that one on notice, sorry.

Answer

I am advised 13,644.

QUESTION (p91)

The CHAIR: I've just got some further questions about animals in Corrections. We were talking before about the Greyhounds As Pets program. I want to know how that works in practice. Where do the greyhounds actually live? Do they live onsite or are they brought in?

KEVIN CORCORAN: They do live onsite. There are kennels on the site at Dillwynia. I'm not 100 per cent sure if they're still at Hunter. There was an incident there involving a greyhound biting someone.

The CHAIR: What happened in that incident?

KEVIN CORCORAN: A dog bit someone. I'm not sure about that program, whether we are still running it there or whether we just put it on hold for a little while. But there are certainly kennels inside both those facilities.

The CHAIR: Would you be able to find out for me what's happened with that program?

KEVIN CORCORAN: Sure.

The CHAIR: I know you said that the safety of everyone is under Racing NSW in these programs. Did Racing NSW have any kind of report or follow up from that incident?

KEVIN CORCORAN: Yes, we'll take that one on notice too.

Answer

I am advised this question should be referred to the Minister for Racing.

QUESTIONS (p91)

The CHAIR: In regard to research, earlier this year Corrective Services NSW called for expressions of interest regarding a prisoner accessible digital platform that's being established in New South Wales correctional centres with the ambition of transforming prisoner rehabilitation. Can you tell us a bit more about this work and what is hoped to be achieved through it?

KEVIN CORCORAN: I guess you're referring to the tablets that we have in the correctional centres?

The CHAIR: It was just called the accessible digital platform. I assume obviously it would have to do with the tablets, but I'm not sure if it was broader than that.

KEVIN CORCORAN: Do you know anything about that?

ANNE-MARIE MARTIN: No, I don't know that term.

KEVIN CORCORAN: I'm not familiar with the term, sorry.

The CHAIR: It was something that came out through Corrective Services NSW. There was an expression of interest that closed in June 2023. Maybe take that one on notice?

KEVIN CORCORAN: Yes, we'll have to take that one on notice. Sorry about that.

The CHAIR: That's alright. My question is can you let me know a little bit more about the work and what it is hoped it achieves? Also, has any further work been progressing on that project or any funding been distributed for the work?

KEVIN CORCORAN: Okay, we'll take that on notice.

Answer

There are now more than 11,000 inmate tablets available for inmate use across NSW correctional centres. This is a fundamental part of CSNSW's work to transform prisoner rehabilitation through digital technology. A key focus of the Corrective Services NSW Research and Evaluation Strategy is collaboration with the university sector and industry to develop knowledge and practice about rehabilitation using digital technologies.

CSNSW has committed to allocating \$50,000 in seed funding and \$100,000 in-kind funding to establish projects. Following an expression of interest process and assessment of applications, four research proposals have been shortlisted to work with CSNSW to progress research plans and grant funding proposals.

QUESTION (p92-93)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I know that there are organisations that have done really, really comprehensive and good audits of these using expertise. MindSpot has what might be referred to as passive resources – they're locked in and there aren't any dangers in terms of external access. When you say "into the future", what sort of timing are you looking at to assess whether something like that could be used and rolled out to tablets to individuals?

ANNE-MARIE MARTIN: I can't give you a specific time at this stage. I can say that, in terms of the passive responses or interactions that you've referred to, during COVID we did have information like that made available in cells through the tablets. That includes different physical exercises, relaxation, meditation – generally coping with anxiety from an educational point of view. But I'm not aware of a specific time line around bringing those in right now.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: If we had them during COVID, why can't we have them now, those more passive ones?

ANNE-MARIE MARTIN: I'm talking about not through the internet or beaming in a professional service. What I'm talking about is those education materials. They're still there on their tablets. What I'm talking about is the internet access – beaming in professional service delivery.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So at the moment there's no direction on you, as Corrections, to say, "Hey, by this date we should be looking at having this to deliver to inmates?" Is there any framework like that at the moment?

ANNE-MARIE MARTIN: There's a whole wealth of information available on the tablets and the scope of future services sits under Deputy Commissioner Luke Grant, who's not here today. I'm not personally aware of particular timelines, but we can take that on notice.

Answer

There are significant potential benefits to be realised from access to programs and services including suitable mental health apps, on inmate tablets. Corrective Services engagement with a supplier for the development of a Mental Health app concluded when the supplier was unable to meet Corrective Services' needs. Further planning to engage other suppliers is underway, leveraging procurement to undertake a market scan of the sector. There is currently no date identified for any rollout of a mental health related app on inmate tablets.

QUESTION (p94)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Which is good to know. Do you have any way of knowing now, as a snapshot, what it looks like in terms of people exiting? Is there a question asked, "Do you have somewhere to go? Do you have secure housing?" and what do those stats look like at the moment?

KEVIN CORCORAN: I couldn't give you those stats right — I don't have them here, but we're certainly very aware of people coming into custody and whether they're going to be homeless when they leave custody because of their situation. We're also engaged in a project to provide digital IDs to inmates as well, which has been something we've been working on for many years, but it's only just starting come to come to fruition now with Customer Service and Transport being our main allies in that very difficult space about getting ID for people coming out of prison. Almost 50 per cent of people are leaving prison without an ID in their property so it makes it very difficult to access any services. We recognise that and we're actively trying to make sure that we can upgrade the number of people leaving custody with ID.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So you collect all that data, obviously. What does that look like in terms of — I'm really interested in how many people whose position we need to improve on leaving, in terms of where we're at now. Do you know how many people, say, over the past two years, have left a correctional facility and will be homeless? How many of those who left without an ID, for example?

Answer

Corrective Services data shows that 29,936 inmates were released without photo identification between 1 November 2021 to 31 October 2023.

Corrective Services NSW works with inmates as they prepare for release, this includes providing assistance with emergency and other accommodation upon exit however CSNSW does not collect data specific data on this.

QUESTION (p94)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm going to run out in one second. An inmate from Lithgow asked to put my office phone number on their thing, and they were denied. Is that something that would surprise you?

KEVIN CORCORAN: I don't know of any policy issue that would deny them. Are you aware of that, Anne-Marie?

ANNE-MARIE MARTIN: I am aware of that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm sorry for all the letters, by the way – no, I'm not sorry, actually.

ANNE-MARIE MARTIN:

No, I am aware of that. There were some concerns around the broader implication, should that be moved across the system, in terms of being able to appropriately respond and give information to deal with concerns that might be raised – happy to further review that.

Answer

No.

QUESTION (p101)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: What is the current stat of the number of officers upon inmate assaults complaints at the moment?

KEVIN CORCORAN: So that's assaults on – ?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Inmates.

KEVIN CORCORAN: Staff on inmate, are you saying?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Officer upon inmate assault, and then vice versa.

KEVIN CORCORAN: Apologies, I don't have that here. It's on RoGS. We will get back to you with the data.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you, and, honestly, I don't think anybody expects you to always have all the data we ask for. It's such a random thing sometimes, and we apologise for that, at the outset. It is a strange process. But if it is possible to take on notice –

Answer

Open complaints as at 20 November 2023: 49

Open complaints as at 20 November 2022: 23

QUESTION (102)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Before, when you were talking about the programs – and there's a suite of programs – they are clearly not available to everybody, so how many people do you think access programs? What percentage of the entire prison population that wants to access a program gets to access a program, compared to those that there isn't a program available to?

ANNE-MARIE MARTIN: Firstly, it's not really about wanting to do a program because we know from the research that for lower-risk individuals, if you put them into intensive programs, it can actually cause more harm than good. So it is really based on the level of assessed risk, and there is an element of judgment around that. I will need to take that on notice, in terms of the actual numbers, in terms of demand and supply around the question that's been asked.

Answer

For the 2022-23 financial year, at any one time, approximately 52% of people sentenced to custodial periods were eligible for a criminogenic program.

Of the persons identified as eligible and found suitable for programs, approximately 54% accessed programs. The remaining 46% remain eligible however were not considered suitable due to a range of factors such as classification, outstanding court matters, management status, placement issues and time remaining until earliest release dates. This cohort continue to be case managed to monitor most appropriate program pathways.

Program eligibility is determined according to the Intervention Pathways model that targets resources to those persons considered to be a higher risk of re-offending. A person deemed eligible for programs must then meet the suitability criteria for any specific program. All CSNSW programs are voluntary.