

# **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022-2023**

## **Initial hearings**

### **Questions taken on notice Portfolio Committee No. 5. Regional NSW and Stronger Communities**

#### **Minister Coure**

**Hearing: Thursday 1 September 2022**

**Answers due: Wednesday 28 September 2022**

**Minister Coure – Budget Estimates 2022-2023 – Answers to questions taken on notice**

**Question 1**

**Transcript page 9**

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Right. Has Sam Elmir ever campaigned to get you elected to Parliament?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Sam Elmir?

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Yes. Sam Elmir.

**Mr MARK COURE:** He might have been on a polling booth, or he might have done pre-poll. He might have.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** You have known him for 20 years, Minister. I'm sure you would know whether he might have, or he has, or he hasn't.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can look into it for you.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Look into what, Minister? Did he—

**Mr MARK COURE:** To answer your question.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** The question is has Sam Elmir ever campaigned to get you elected to Parliament? Has he ever helped you during your campaign to get elected for the seat of Oatley?

**Mr MARK COURE:** He might have, so the answer is yes. I don't recall him ever being a booth captain or on pre-poll.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I did not ask about that. I was just asking about whether he has ever campaigned to get you elected to Parliament.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'll take it on notice, if that's okay.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Minister, as a friend of yours for the last 20 years—I know my friends would jump in helping me get elected. I'm sure—

**Mr MARK COURE:** I also have friends that wouldn't.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** That wouldn't? Is he one of those?

**Mr MARK COURE:** If I can take that on notice?

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Is he one of those who would have supported your election to Parliament?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Yes, possibly. Yes.

**Answer**

I refer to the answer provided during the hearing.

## Question 2

### Transcript pages 9 - 10

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Is he currently?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Yes, he is.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** You can see where my questions are going, Minister, in terms of the appointment of Sam Elmir—a Liberal Party operative, a councillor in the Liberal Party, a close friend, a confidant of yours, being chosen for the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board, and criticism when questions have been asked. Why is Multicultural NSW being stacked with Liberal Party members? What is your response to that, Minister?

**Mr MARK COURE:** My understanding is the appointment of Sam Elmir was appointed by the previous Minister.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** With no consultation with you, you are saying?

**Mr MARK COURE:** That's my advice. He was appointed on—I can double-check the date, but it was certainly December of last year. I was appointed as Minister at the tail end of last year.

## Answer

I refer to the answer I provided during the hearing.

### Question 3

#### Transcript page 10

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Good morning. There was a process that was run. We went out with open expressions of interest. Off the top of my head, I can't remember if it was this round or the previous round—I'm happy to take the specifics on notice. But there was either 154 applications/expressions of interest or, I think, in this round, there was about 70 to 80 expressions of interest. We ran through a process with those candidates in terms of the different credentials that we were looking for. I now know those things that you are talking about but, at the time, when I was looking at the potential candidates and my CFO was running through the list, I didn't know any of those things that you alluded to now. We just stacked up each of the candidates. We went through a merit-based selection process based off a matrix. It was determined that there were six people who were short-listed for interview—six, maybe eight. I think it was six, and I'm happy to provide the specifics on notice. We then went through a process in terms of that short-listing process, ranking them with a series of questions, and a recommendation went up to the Minister. The Minister then progressed that recommendation, made the final determination, took it to Cabinet and the Governor signed it off. In fairness to Minister Coure, I think it was the first document that the Minister signed. He had no ministerial stewardship over it, because it's an ExCo appointment made by the Governor.

#### Answer

I am advised:

Ten candidates were short listed for interviews. Of those, five were recommended as suitable for appointment.

#### Question 4

##### Transcript page 11

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Mr La Posta, you mentioned that there was a number of applicants and there was a short list. Can we get a copy of that short list, or the applicants, so that we can have a look at the other applicants that were put forward?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I have no reason to withhold that information from you, Mr Moselmane, unless there is something that legally precludes me. Unless there's something in terms of confidentiality that I can't, happy to share that.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I understand that. If there's confidentiality, I understand that.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I take it on notice.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Thank you so much. Minister, you just signed off on Sam Elmir's appointment?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Can I take that on notice? I understand it was appointed by the previous Minister, approved through ExCo already. But I will provide a response, if I can, at a later date. I'll take that on notice.

#### Answer

I am advised:

Five applicants were short listed as suitable including Mr Sam Elmir, Ms Sally Betts, and Mr Ramneek Singh. The names of the other applicants are unable to be disclosed as the information they provided to Multicultural NSW as part of their application to join the Advisory Board was not intended to be used for this purpose.

Mr Sam Elmir was appointed to the Advisory Board of Multicultural NSW on 15 December 2021.

## Question 5

### Transcript page 12

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Did you sign off on the second appointment, of Sally Betts, as well?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I believe it went through ExCo, before my time. I think the appointment was made—

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** The process was before your time, but did you sign off, as you did for Sam Elmir, on the final appointment of Sally Betts?

**Mr MARK COURE:** If I can take that on notice and report back, if that's okay.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** When was this appointment? In June? When were the appointments, Mr La Posta?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I think the Minister said he's taking it on notice.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** No, I'm asking again. I'm asking you now, Mr La Posta. When were the appointments made? Was it in June, July or August?

**Mr MARK COURE:** The term of his appointment?

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** The official announcement for the appointment of—

**Mr MARK COURE:** I made the official announcement.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** So it wouldn't be too hard to remember, Minister, if you signed off on it three months ago.

## Answer

I refer to the answer I provided during the hearing.

## Question 6

### Transcript page 17

**MELINDA NORTON:** Apologies, I'll need to hear that question again.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Certainly. In regards to the matter of elder abuse, what are, if you're able to answer—and if not, take it on notice—the six categories that are used now to, in fact, consider the types of elder abuse? What are the six categories we use in Australia?

**MELINDA NORTON:** I'd need to take that on notice,

### Answer

I am advised:

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) references five categories of elder abuse:

- psychological abuse
- neglect
- financial abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse

Further information regarding the study is available on the AIFS website. The Ageing and Disability Commission, as the lead agency for elder abuse in NSW, also lists these five categories on their website.

## Question 7

### Transcript pages 17 - 18

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I'll move on from this now, but I just want to make this point to emphasise this: The report that was released last year, which nobody has thought important enough to brief the Minister for Seniors on, identified that one in six older Australians—that's around 15 per cent—reported experiencing elder abuse in the 12-month period that was surveyed between February and May 2020. There were 7,000 people surveyed all up, and approximately a third of those came from New South Wales. What I'm emphasising is that the issue of elder abuse has not only got red flags up everywhere; it's got sirens going off. It's got flashing lights, and I could go on and on. I just find it extraordinary that there seems to be a poverty of knowledge in front of us.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Mr Donnelly, if I may assist the Committee, I am recently appointed. I, at the time of that report being released, was chief executive of the Law Council of Australia, and I know that similar piece of the report well. I have been very closely working with the Law Council, and in a previous role with the Law Society, in seeking to develop legal definitions of elder abuse. I acknowledge that this is, due to demographic changes as well as growing awareness, a massive challenge for the community. What I will do is take it on notice. I would be reluctant in my evidence to the Committee today to say that the department has done no work with that report, because I do not know. I acknowledge that it was a very significant piece of work. I acknowledge that it did make reflections on a number of jurisdictions, including New South Wales, but I'll confirm to the Committee whether the department has done any work in relation to it.

## Answer

I am advised:

Prevalence data is regularly highlighted by the ADC and Commissioner in discussions and presentations, and has been discussed with the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. Key data in the national report is consistent with ADC data, including the predominance of psychological abuse, followed by financial abuse. The ADC provides quarterly data to the Minister for Seniors and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, and makes the data publicly available on its website.

The work of the ADC reflects key findings of the national prevalence report, including (among other things) proactive work to engage with service providers and community members in relation to elder abuse to strengthen responses when older people raise concerns. The ADC is continuing to work with the Commonwealth and States/Territories on the national plan (in which the prevalence study was a key action), including further data and research opportunities.



## Questions 8 - 13

### Transcript page 20-23

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** As I said, they're publicly available so that we can ask you about them, which is what I'm doing. If you're not wanting to answer, that's a problem. If you don't have it here, will you take on notice what other contributions to travel were in relation to the trip to Fujian in 2015?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** This is a similar issue, where you went with Xinfeng Group, Fengnan district leaders and government leaders to—I can't read my own writing. I think it was in 2016. Can you provide information on what contribution to travel was made there?

**Mr MARK COURE:** As I said, all my trips have been declared for many, many years as a member of Parliament, and have been disclosed.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes. That's not what I'm asking you. I appreciate that. Exactly the point of declarations is to then actually be examined on those, and that's what I'm asking. If you don't have the details here today, are you able to take that on notice and provide information to the Committee in relation to those?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** As I said, I'm seeking clarity on who paid for the trips and what other contributions were made in relation to that because it's not clear on two of those declarations. You'll take that on notice and provide that to the Committee?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Will you also be able to provide information on who else went on those trips with you?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can do my level best to ensure that every single person who has gone on those trips will be—I can take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What would be ideal is if you could actually provide the itineraries for those trips. Will you be willing to provide those to the Committee?

**Mr MARK COURE:** If they're available, yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You think they might not be available?

**Mr MARK COURE:** They were many years ago, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, that's fine..

...

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many times have you travelled with Con Hindi to China?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I understand I attended a trip to China and Con Hindi was present. But, again, all my trips in my capacity as a member of Parliament have been disclosed and declared.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When was that?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Again, you can't tell us?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you able to confirm whether it was the 2015 or 2016 trip?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So you don't know—just to confirm, was it in 2015 or 2016?

**Mr MARK COURE:** As I mentioned before in my previous answer, I'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When you came back from your trip in 2016, which was with the Xinfeng Group—they sponsored your trip—you declared them as the sponsor. Is that correct?

**Mr MARK COURE:** As I said, all my trips are declared, as a member of Parliament, and have been disclosed for many, many years.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to confirm that you are going to provide to the Committee what the extent of the sponsorship was—that is, was it travel, was it accommodation?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'll take that on notice if that's all right.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Was Mr Hindi on that trip?

**Mr MARK COURE:** As I mentioned before in my previous answer, I'll take that question on notice—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is it that you're not sure or that you don't want to tell us?

**Mr MARK COURE:** —so that I can get you a correct answer.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is it that you're not sure or you can't remember or you just don't want to tell us?

**Mr MARK COURE:** No, I will take it on notice and provide you with an answer.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** An answer? Are you committing to providing an answer that will detail the questions that I'm asking?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Yes, I will provide you with an answer to every single question.

...

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many meetings have you had with Yuqing Liu or Xinfeng employees?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I don't recall meeting those individuals but, again, I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Can you tell us also if it was as an MP, or break it down as an MP or as a Minister?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I don't recall those names, but I will take it on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But you obviously met with Xinfeng employees, but you're just not sure which ones. Is that correct?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Again, I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You've declared a trip that was sponsored by this organisation.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I don't know these individuals you mentioned.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, but I'm not asking now about just the individuals; I'm asking about the company itself. Clearly you met with their employees.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Again, I will take that on notice.

....

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, I raised one individual, which was Yuqing Liu, and then, more broadly, your trip, as I understand it, was taken with the Xinfeng Group in 2016. What does the Xinfeng Group do?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Again, I'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You don't know? They sponsored your travel, but you don't know?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'm not familiar with that individual.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, it's not an individual. My understanding is it's the name of the organisation.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'm not familiar with—obviously it was six years ago, so I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You'll let us know. Thank you. I find it a little bit unusual that an organisation that clearly contributed to your travel—you can't tell us anything about what they do. You're not going to tell us. You genuinely can't remember? Or are you just taking it on notice because you don't want to answer?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I will take it on notice and provide you with an answer.

....

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, have you ever made representations to an MP or Minister on behalf of Xinfeng?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Not that I'm aware of. No.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Can you take it on notice whether you have? Will you check?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can check. Certainly can, yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When I say "representations", I also mean to local councils or to a Federal government agency.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can check. Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to be clear, you don't know what Xinfeng does as an organisation.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'm not aware, but I can take that on notice for you and provide you a detailed—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Have their representatives ever spoken to you about their business?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Again, I can take that on notice and report back to the Committee.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, just to be clear, my understanding is this group has a range of different businesses that they're involved in, which is not unusual. One of them is development, and one of them is development in your local area. You're saying that you're unaware of who they are or what they do?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can take that on notice and provide this Committee—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, Minister. You're not answering the question. Surely, you can tell us whether you're aware of the work that's undertaken by this organisation.

**Mr MARK COURE:** No. No, I'm not. I can take this on notice and provide a detailed response for the Committee.

....

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Can I just go back just quickly to Xinfeng. I'm quite perplexed by this, Minister. How is it that you have taken sponsored travel with this organisation, perhaps with Mr Hindi—we're not sure about that—but you're unable to tell me anything about what they do? What were you looking at on that trip?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I will provide you with a detailed response. It was six years ago.

### **Answer to Questions 8 -13**

The trip I undertook in June 2016 with Mr Hindi—which has nothing to do with my ministerial portfolios—has been appropriately disclosed for many years.

During the trip, I met with local government and business leaders, and was shown elements of the local waste industry. I have never made any representations for Xinfeng as an MP or Minister.

## Question 14

### Transcript page 24

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:** As curious as I am, I won't carry on with that line of questioning, but I would remind you that you are under oath and that you can only take things on notice to the extent you genuinely can't remember them. In any event, let's turn to something different. I understand that my colleague the Hon. Greg Donnelly was asking you some questions in relation to the Ageing and Disability commissioner. I just wanted to pick up on a couple of those. Were you involved in putting forward to the Treasurer the budget submission that the ADC get additional funding?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Funding decisions are Cabinet-in-confidence. I'll have the secretary, who will be able to add to the response as well—I understand he wrote directly to the Treasurer and to the secretary. But I will check that if that's possible.

### Answer

I am advised:

Funding for the Ageing and Disability Commission is appropriated through DCJ by Treasury NSW and paid in the form of grants.

Both the Secretary and I meet with the Commissioner regularly to discuss a range of matters.

## **Question 15**

### **Transcript page 25**

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:** Opt out or not opt in, however we want to say it. Every other State, except for South Australia—no, South Australia has now committed to minimum accessibility standards, so it is only New South Wales and Western Australia that are refusing to apply the National Construction Code minimum accessibility standards. Did you speak with the building Minister about that before the meeting he went to last Friday?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I didn't speak personally to him, but if it's okay with you I will take that on notice and provide you with a response.

### **Answer**

I regularly speak to all my colleagues on a range of matters.

## Question 16 - 17

### Transcript page 26 - 27

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Thank you. Minister, I'm almost done on this line of questioning, but I do want to ask you a couple of questions because I am quite surprised that you were able to give me a very specific month about when you last saw Con Hindi, but you couldn't tell us about when you travelled with him to China. Do you not remember when you travelled to China with him?

**Mr MARK COURE:** As I said, I will take that question on notice and provide this Committee with a response.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** And you don't recall anything about the trip?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Again, I will take that question on notice and report back to this Committee.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** And the trip, just to confirm, was in 2016?

**Mr MARK COURE:** There were five trips in total, as I mentioned before.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes. This is the last and most recent one.

**Mr MARK COURE:** Sorry, repeat the question?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** This was the last and most recent one. I mean you're taking it on notice, but I just think you're refusing to answer; I don't think you're actually providing information to the Committee.

**Mr MARK COURE:** All my trips in my capacity as a member of Parliament have been disclosed.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, we went through that in the last round, but, as I said, this is within your portfolio and it's reasonable for us to ask these questions. I am just wanting to understand why you had a very specific recollection of seeing Mr Hindi in February at a function, undisclosed, but you can't give us any more information about the trip that you took with him, which I believe was in 2016?

**Mr MARK COURE:** Yes. As I said before, all my trips have been declared as a member of Parliament and I will provide this Committee and you personally with a response to that question.

...

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm trying to understand it because it's actually not clear. You've listed it as travel, which is good. It's what you're supposed to do, but you've provided no information about what the contribution to travel was and you've provided no information about who was on the trip or who you met with while you were there. I'm just seeking an elucidation of that declaration.

**Mr MARK COURE:** As I said, all the trips have been declared and have been for many, many years now.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to be clear, you're not going to provide that information?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I've already said that I'll take that on notice and provide you with an answer.

**Answer to Questions 16 - 17**

I refer to my answer to questions 8-13.



## Question 18 - 20

### Transcript page 30 - 31

**Mr MARK COURE:** As I mentioned, I have taken this up personally with the police Minister, who is the Deputy Premier. I met with him, wrote to him, and wrote to the police commissioner. Obviously, it's an operational matter and it's something that the police commissioner is responsible for delivery of. But I have raised this with the police Minister already. This is an important issue. It's an important issue for me. It's something that I have inherited. But, as Minister for Seniors, I will do everything I can to ensure that this is rectified.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Minister, can I ask you this: When you wrote to the Minister, what was the response from the Minister or Ministers or whoever you engaged with through your communication on this matter?

**Mr MARK COURE:** If I could take that question on notice and report back?

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** May I ask if there's anyone else at the table who might be able to respond to that question? I mean, it's not a matter that has not been vigorously prosecuted, as you might expect, by the Opposition and other parties at budget estimates over a period of time. Can I just say, with the greatest respect, you must have seen this one coming at you like a freight train. This was prosecuted in detail back in March.

**Mr MARK COURE:** That is a question I will take on notice. But I just want to—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** You'll take on notice—

...

**Mr MARK COURE:** I can report, as I have many times before, that I met personally, since the last budget estimates, with the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Police, on this matter. It's an issue that I take very seriously, and it's an issue that I want to see rectified.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** If you met with them, what is your recollection of what they said to you in response?

**Mr MARK COURE:** There is, no doubt, formal correspondence as well. I will take that on—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I'm not interested in the formal correspondence. You're a Minister because you're a smart guy and you've got some memory. You would remember, essentially, the exchange that took place when you spoke to those two individuals. What's your recollection of what they said?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I understand the New South Wales Police Force is looking into the matter. It is an issue that I will continue to raise with the appropriate people, including the Minister for Police and, of course, the police commissioner, and report back to this Committee or to you personally.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** It doesn't need to come back to me personally. This is a budget estimates hearing; it goes back to the Committee.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'm more than happy for it to be reported back to you.

...

**Mr MARK COURE:** It's incorrect. I have already said that I met personally with the police Minister on this issue and informed him of the importance of these police officers being rolled out across New South Wales. I also believe, as I have said three

times already, that it is important for all New South Wales police officers, not just ACPOs, for example, to have the ability to manage those issues relating to senior people and elder abuse.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** There's no contest over that. I didn't mean to be disrespectful or reflect on you. I accept that you have met, but I'm talking about—and you have correspondence, obviously. You have said that.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I will table that. I don't have that in front of me.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** You've taken that on notice. But there is nothing to report in terms of progress in regards to the matter. That's the point that I'm emphasising.

### **Answer to Questions 18 – 20**

I have and will continue to advocate for the ongoing roll out of the Aged Crime Prevention Officers across NSW.

I am advised that this project is ongoing. ACPOs are members of statewide Crime Prevention Units. All officers attached to this unit are trained in the needs of all members of the community, regardless of the category of crime.

Further questions regarding Aged Crime Prevention Officers should be directed to the Minister for Police.

## Question 21

### Transcript page 36

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Are we doing anything to address racism towards Asian Australians?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I am aware of a number of other reports that raise concerns about anti-Asian or anti-Chinese sentiment.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** But what are you doing about it?

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I think the issue is really well known and, more to the point, Minister, the issue is really deeply felt by one in three Chinese Australians. What are you doing, tangibly?

**Mr MARK COURE:** I'm going to flick this to the agency, Multicultural NSW.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** We don't want any flicking of your answers.

### Answer

This was not a question taken on notice, however, I provide the following answer.

Any kind of racism is unacceptable and does not reflect the community we want to be and show to the world. That is why the NSW Government has undertaken a range of measures to identify and address concerns about racism and hate, including anti-Asian sentiment. NSW Government agencies are working together to address racism and hate and promote social cohesion. Some of the measures taken to address this include:

#### **NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan (COMPLAN)**

Established under the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*, the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan (COMPLAN) draws together NSW agency capabilities and details a coordinated, whole-of government approach to identifying, assessing, and addressing risks to community harmony, including risks arising from racism and racist incidents.

COMPLAN facilitates coordination of information and insights identified by NSW agencies through incident reporting, community engagement networks and advisory structures, community sentiment analysis, social media monitoring, environmental scanning, social cohesion mapping and other NSW agency capabilities. Member agencies also participate in a range of engagement forums to raise community awareness of reporting and redress mechanisms and support services.

COMPLAN arrangements are available to support state emergency management arrangements if there is a risk that an emergency may impact community harmony. For example, the COMPLAN Committee has convened throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to identify, monitor, and share information and resources relating to experiences and perceptions of racism, racist scapegoating, racist conspiracies and disinformation, including anti-Asian sentiment. 13 COMPLAN Committee meetings were held through 2020 and 2021 for this purpose.

NSW agencies on the COMPLAN Committee participated in a number of engagement forums to raise community awareness of reporting and redress mechanisms and support services. For example:

- In February 2020, the NSW Chief Health Officer delivered a video message about COVID-19 and community support, reinforcing that racism does not have place in our society.
- Also in February 2020, the CEO of my agency Multicultural NSW issued a statement condemning racism related to COVID-19 and encouraging community to follow factual advice from NSW Health.
- In May 2020, the NSW Government launched the “Stop Public Threats” campaign to raise community awareness of Section 93z - the Crimes Amendment (Publicly Threatening and Inciting Violence) Act 2018. The law creates a criminal offence of threatening or inciting violence on the ground of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex or HIV/AIDS status. The Department of Communities and Justice worked in partnership with Legal Aid NSW, Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW, NSW Police Force, Multicultural NSW and community stakeholders in developing the campaign.
- In July 2020, Multicultural NSW worked with the Chinese Australian Forum to organise the “Reporting Racism: Know Your Rights” online forum. Multicultural NSW, Anti-Discrimination NSW, NSW Police Force, Office of Community Safety and Cohesion from the Department of Communities and Justice, Legal Aid NSW and the Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner participated in the online forum for Chinese community members.
- In July 2020, the Department of Communities and Justice in collaboration with Multicultural NSW hosted a community webinar on “Building Community Resilience in an Uncertain World” that addressed current threats to cohesion posed by extremists and racist conspiracy theorists exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar also promoted grant funding opportunities to address these problems through the Multicultural NSW COMPACT Program.
- In October 2020, NSW Police Force and Multicultural NSW co-hosted a workshop with the Police Commissioner’s Multicultural Advisory Council (PMAC) on current threats to social cohesion and strategies for enhancing social cohesion in NSW both during and after the pandemic.
- In December 2020, Multicultural NSW organised another online forum with Chinese community leaders to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the community.
- Multicultural NSW increased the promotion of the Remove Hate From The Debate online campaign to empower young people with the tools and resources to speak out against online hate and promote community harmony. So far, the social media campaign has reached more than one million people.
- In August 2021, Multicultural NSW activated the COMPACT Alliance through a series of action groups focussed on addressing the social cohesion impacts of the Delta outbreak of COVID-19.
- Multicultural NSW partnered with the Department of Communities and Justice to deliver workshops on Safeguarding Social Cohesion during COVID-19. 35 online workshops were delivered from September to December 2021 to almost 500 participants from more than 95 organisations including local government, faith and cultural groups, peak bodies, and NSW Government agencies.

- In November 2021, the NSW Government announced a special \$1 million round of Multicultural NSW COMPACT grants for six-month projects with a focus on supporting community-led initiatives that strengthen community connectedness and togetherness as a core component of community resilience and recovery in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. 19 new COMPACT Social Cohesion and Community Resilience projects were funded under this round. These projects are in addition to the 24 multi-year COMPACT Partnership Projects funded between 2021 and 2024 that aim to inspire and empower young people to stand up and stand united against racism, hate, and division.

### **NSW Government submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on its proposed National Anti-Racism Framework**

The NSW Government submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on its proposed National Anti-Racism Framework submission was coordinated by Multicultural NSW through the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan (COMPLAN) Committee in December 2021 and lodged by the Minister for Multiculturalism on 3 February 2022.

The NSW Government submission provided an overview of the NSW Government's commitment to addressing racism and racial inequality, as demonstrated through a wide range of legal protections, policies, frameworks, workforce development and training programs, community awareness campaigns, community partnerships and Indigenous reconciliation and reparation strategies.

The submission highlighted examples of these NSW commitments to help inform the work of the AHRC on its proposed framework. It was not intended to be an exhaustive account of the many genuine efforts being made to address racism and racial inequality at an individual NSW agency level.

## Question 22

### Transcript page 39

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Thank you, Chair. If I may elaborate on my earlier evidence in response to a question asked by Mr Donnelly in respect of the Australian Institute of Family Studies' National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, it is the case that—and I apologise for this, Mr Donnelly—I was unaware of the MOU that existed with the Department of Justice, now the Department of Communities and Justice, which was executed at the time when that study commenced. The department provided \$200,000 of funding to contribute to that study. I've briefly read the MOU during the morning tea break, and I think part of it was very much focused on jurisdictional input. I will certainly follow up and be able to expand on what participation took place as well as any briefing processes which were initiated.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Thank you, Minister.

### Answer

I am advised:

In 2017, the NSW Government provided funding of \$192,600 to the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, with the then Department of Family and Community Services entering a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department in relation to a national prevalence study into elder abuse. The *National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study: Final Report* was published in December 2021. Details of the study can be found at <https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/national-elder-abuse-prevalence-study-final-report>.

## Question 23

### Transcript page 43

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Right, so where does the Premier then come in? According to the Act, the Premier and the Minister for Multiculturalism are equally responsible for Multicultural NSW, or something to that effect. I can look at the Act; I did have it here somewhere.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** My recollection of the Act, which I read recently, is that the employment relationship—and we can clarify it for you in case I am wrong, but section 7 has the reporting relationship of the CEO to the Minister. That's my memory of it.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Okay. If you could just take it on notice—

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I am happy to take it on notice.

### Answer

The responsible Minister on page 1 of the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000 No 7* is recorded as the Premier jointly with the Minister for Multiculturalism. This is consistent with *the Allocation of the Administration of Acts (2001 SI 338)*.

## Question 24

### Transcript page 49

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Ms Higginson, I actually could go through the data now. I have it, if you want it, or I can provide it to the Committee.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** If you're happy to provide it on notice, because I know I'm taking their time, I would be very grateful.

### Answer

I am advised:

I refer you to the 2021 Workforce Profile Report.



## Question 25

### Transcript page 50

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Thank you, Mr La Posta. While the Minister has obviously put in, or the Government has put in, \$500,000 to support Muslims against vilification, the anti-discrimination religious vilification bill was voted down by the Government. It's not your domain, but do you know whether there is progress on that particular piece of legislation that might be coming through before the end of this year? Are you aware?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Any bills in Parliament are probably best directed to the Attorney General and a matter for the Attorney General. What I would say around the Islamophobia report, and you touched on it before, is we don't fund the report; we fund the advocacy and victim support that sits around that to help in navigating the difficult issue. But in terms of the bill in Parliament, that's not best directed for my portfolio.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I know. The Minister is not here to ask him, but are you aware that may be coming up between now and the end of the year?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I don't think there is anything further I can add, Mr Moselmane. That's probably best directed to the Minister.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** Okay, but can you take it on notice?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I can, Mr Moselmane, but again it's well outside my remit at Multicultural NSW.

### Answer

I refer to the answer provided by Mr Joseph La Posta during the hearing.

## Question 26

### Transcript page 51

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I know it was just passed, but are there plans for educational initiatives? That's the core of my question.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Can I take the specifics of that on notice, only because it's a cross-agency responsibility so it doesn't rest with one agency. There'll be parts that will rest with other members of the Stronger Communities cluster, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and others. So if I can take the specifics on notice and come back to you, that will probably be the best.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** If I may just say as a matter of general principle when it comes to legislative reform—speaking more as the secretary of DCJ and with the proximity to legislative reform—any new legislation, particularly those with criminal provisions, needs to be sorted by awareness and education campaigns. That is a given, provided at both institutional and broader community levels. So that is understood. It is a guiding principle with all of these statutes, as they pass, we should. We'll provide you, the Committee, with the information.

**The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE:** I appreciate that. That concludes my questions.

### Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Government will work with stakeholders to ensure a broad understanding of the Bill.

## Question 27

### Transcript page 54

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** I appreciate the importance and the sensitivity of the matters which you have highlighted. In a strict sense—and this is not my answer, but in a strict sense—I gather that there is a working group being chaired by Kerry Chant in NSW Health and that that has a number of work streams. I'm not briefed on the detail of that. But what I might suggest, if it is of assistance to the Committee, is that Mr Fitzgerald and I will confer. One of the things that I take quite seriously in my role is that of being a bridge between different parts of Government, stressing that it is in a strict sense a matter being run, I believe, by the department of Health. But I'm certainly happy to facilitate, and perhaps we jointly can come back to the Committee.

### Answer

I am advised:

The Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice will facilitate a meeting with the Ageing and Disability Commissioner regarding this issue.

## Question 28

### Transcript page 54

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Thank you all for coming back after the break. I was wondering if I could now move on to some questions particularly around the issue of budget. I am talking more broadly about the parameters around determining what the budget is for seniors in New South Wales with some specificity. I note from looking at Budget Paper No. 5 on page 6, under Stronger Communities, it has an item down the bottom "Cluster grants and other adjustments", just over \$9 million. From looking at media releases from the Minister for Seniors, Mark Coure, particularly the one on 21 June, it notes, quoting directly from the media release:

Minister for Seniors Mark Coure said \$8 million in the Budget had been secured so events, support programs and cost-of-living measures could continue.

It specifically says "events, support programs and cost-of-living measures could continue". We've got that amount of \$8 million and we've got the operation of the commission, which we had some discussion on earlier this afternoon. We can see those two very clearly. But in addition to those two clear items that we can identify and see, what else makes up the totality of the budget for seniors in New South Wales? Can I just say this is not an ambush. If you need more detail that's not before you, that's fine. You can take some of these on notice so you can move through them. I'm not looking to say, "I gotcha". Some of these might be complex to explain. It is up to you.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** I will do my best, and I'll tell you all I know. . Where I don't, I'll take it on notice.

### Answer

I am advised:

This answer was provided by the Secretary during the hearing.

## Question 29

### Transcript pages 54 - 55

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** A pleasure. NSW Seniors Festival—and correct me—NSW Seniors Festival, 1.8; Tech Savvy Seniors, 0.5 million; Seniors Card, 1.1; advocacy peak, 1.4; reducing social isolation for seniors, 0.6 million; legal aid diaries, 230,000; the MACA, Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, 0.95 million; national Elder Abuse Strategy, 0.03 million; the Ageing & Disability Commission, 0.75 million, DCJ projects, Art of Ageing, and there are a number of these Art of Ageing, 0.02 million; 0.020 million for Global Access Partners on productive ageing, 0.050 million on the MACA media awards; the seniors gala concerts, 1.25 million; the Ageing Strategy, 0.2 million; and the remainder are employee costs. What I will do is I'll set that out. I'll reduce that to writing for you.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** That would be good, thank you for that. If we look at those and please elucidate—

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** There's a very important element to this, Mr Donnelly. Those figures do not include staff costs.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** That's an important clarification, so thank you. If we've got the totality of those items, we've got, obviously, the recurring costs of the commission. We can establish, essentially, looking at last year's financial report, at least what that figure approximately is and what it may be for the next financial year. With respect to staff costs, when you're providing your response, could you please itemise that as a total number?

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** What I would do, if I may, because I think this would be more indicative to the Committee is that, in my view, should have three costs, notwithstanding the commission, which are separate but can be set out: core staffing costs for the core function, i.e., the work that you and your team do; secondly, the Seniors Card team; and a third aspect, which is important, the communications staff.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Yes. If you could provide that, I'd be grateful. I'm always ambitious with my questioning, so could I invite you to also replicate those figures for—you'll do it for the last financial year, the 2021-22?

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Yes.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Could you please do 2020-21 and 2019-20—the last three financial years?

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Just to be clear, you want the current year, last year and the year before.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** The current year is budgeted, isn't it? We're in the current year now. I'm talking about the immediate past financial year and the two before that.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Got it.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I'd be grateful for that.

### Answer

I am advised:

I refer you the 2021 Workforce Profile Report.

## Question 30

### Transcript page 55

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I'd be grateful for that. Can I move on now with some specific questions—once again, if it's required to be taken on notice, so be it—around the matter of rebates and the promotion of the availability of rebate benefits to seniors in this State. Quite self-evidently, I think, it's fair to say that, if rebates are available, they're generally a good thing. I suppose most people would take the view that the larger the rebate, the better, in terms of what might be available to them. With respect to rebates, with respect to seniors, there are various rebates which are actively, on an ongoing basis, promoted by the Government through the Minister and others. You may not have it with you, but are you able to, if you don't have it with you, provide a list of what are the rebates promoted by the Minister for Seniors out to the seniors of this State so they can take advantage of them, the list of possible rebates? If you've got them now, that's fine.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** I'll refer to my colleague, if I may.

**MELINDA NORTON:** There's a number available. These are delivered in conjunction with Service NSW. I'll list a couple of them for you, but there are 53 rebates available, and self-funded retirees are eligible for 42 of those. They include things such as free driving tests for pensioners, free mobility parking scheme for pensioners, free writing skills for pensioners, pensioner concessions on vehicle registrations, pensioner free New South Wales driving licence renewal, pensioner water rebate, seniors energy rebate, the pensioner concession Opal card, pensioner travel vouchers, the regional seniors travel card—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Without being rude and cutting you off—if there's that many, which is good, would you mind having them listed on notice so we could get that completely.

**MELINDA NORTON:** Yes.....

### Answer

I am advised:

This information can be found at

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/services/concessions-rebates-and-assistance>.

## Question 31

### Transcript page 56

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** That was going to be my next question. You probably are aware that there has been some publicity earlier this year and, in fact, before, in previous years, about what is reported as large numbers of seniors—many tens of thousands of seniors—missing out on accessing rebates for one reason or another. The general sentiment around this, why they are missing out, is that they just don't know about the availability of these rebates. There was some publicity back in June this year—I'm just reading from the material that came out at the time reporting on it. In this particular example, up to 70,000 seniors have missed out on a major New South Wales Government cost-of-living help scheme, some saying they had no idea the saving was on offer. This is the \$200 Seniors Energy Rebate.

What work has been done—if it has not been done, I would like to know why—to systematically analyse and understand the knowledge that our seniors have in this State, first of all, about the rebates by the State Government, what they are and how they can take advantage of them? What do we know objectively about the knowledge of our seniors with respect to the rebate program?

**MELINDA NORTON:** I think we will probably provide some additional information on notice, having had some discussions with Service NSW on that. But we do work with Service NSW, and I know they're in the process of developing some targeted, customised communications for seniors around the types of rebates. Our Seniors Card database—which, as I mentioned, is quite significant—we use that as a communication tool to share information with that group about both the available website information in terms of the savings finders but also the appointments that they can go to at Service NSW to find out what rebates they're eligible for themselves, and also through our peak organisations. We fund four peaks in this space, and we work with them as well as part of their processes to communicate with people that they connect with to include things like rebates.

### Answer

I am advised:

The \$200 Seniors Energy Rebate is one of over 70 rebates and vouchers that the citizens of NSW can access through the Service NSW savings finder. Seniors can book a one hour appointment at a local Service Centre with a Savings Specialist who can assist with applying for rebates and vouchers.

Any further questions about rebates and vouchers should be directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government.

## Question 32

### Transcript page 56

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Given what I said earlier today that there are more seniors in New South Wales than there are South Australians living in South Australia, what percentage of our seniors are signed up to the card? Do we have some knowledge on that?

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Can I just say, I hear where your question is coming from. We will need to take that on notice. I have no knowledge of it, but I understand it's not the actual who we are reaching there. Your question is about the analytics and the basis upon which we, based on that knowledge, promote and target and what the yield is on that in terms of that approach. Have I understood?

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Yes, yes. I mean, that's essentially what I'm getting at. But we only know what we know, so to speak. If it's not being looked at and analysed carefully, we may have—what may be being done, it may be considered a great benefit to those who are currently receiving it, but if that is just a small subset of this huge population—

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** I will need to take on notice, but I think I understand what you're asking.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** That's what I'm getting at—a breakdown of that so we can see, with greater specificity, what is the actual sub-population of seniors out of the total population of seniors who have an awareness, understanding and are taking advantage of these rebates, as best the information is that is at your disposal. Particularly in the area of energy, be it electricity and gas, are there any particular comments that you would like to make about work being done to see how there can be an enhancement or a refinement of rebates associated with both those two key cost drivers for seniors, given that they are on fixed incomes?

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** The straight answer is I really do not know, and I will revert—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Take it on notice.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Thanks.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** If you take that on notice, that would be good. Can I move on to a separate but related issue of council rates? I've got a cheat sheet here. If you don't mind, I will refer to my cheat sheet now:

Under the Local Government Act 1993, eligible pensioners are provided concessions on their ordinary rates and domestic waste management services charge. The cost of providing these concessions is shared between the State Government (55%) and local councils (45%).

We've got what the concessional amounts are. I won't read them all but the first one is:

- \$250.00 on ordinary rates and charges for domestic waste management services;
- \$87.50 off their annual water rates and charges (where service is provided by council);
- \$87.50 off their annual sewerage rates and charges (where service is provided by council).

And then some eligibility criteria being met—these, of course, are fixed dollar rebate figures that've been made available, or perhaps better described as concessional discount amounts. But, of course, rates tend to increase on a percentage basis. We have a situation that, in real terms over a period of time, we're actually having quite



an erosion down of the value of what these would be vis-a-vis what are the rates that seniors are paying.

The Minister's not here with us this afternoon. I won't read this fully onto the record but it's a piece of correspondence that he's received and I'm happy to pass it up to the secretary. It's from a Ms Cynthia Coppock, who wrote to the Minister laying out with some detail what I've just been discussing and describing. Herself and people in like position are going backwards with the fact that these rebates are fixed amounts. Perhaps I'll pass that up through the secretariat. It's just a copy of the letter. It may help you reference—

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** And I will. I understand the issue. It's the erosion of dollar value relative to if it was proportionate. I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Yes. I have to say, with individuals who are on fixed incomes and modest ones at that—self-funded retirees in that classification as well—every dollar counts. I know that's trite to say but it's definitely the case. Can I move on to—I'm moving through these quickly and I appreciate this—the matter of cost of housing and accommodation, which is obviously a pressing issue not just for seniors but all people in the State, particularly in the larger metropolitan areas. I would like to know, if you could provide the answer now or on notice, what the department is doing, or has done and is doing and continues to plan to do, to provide advice, assistance, information to seniors about how to navigate as best as they can dealing with the rising costs associated with housing and accommodation.

I say that because there are other organisations very active in this area. For example, the Tenants' Union of NSW is very focused on trying to provide information about how best one can go about dealing with this very significant cost pressure. Given the number of seniors who are caught by this, I'd be very keen to find out what has been done, is being done and plans to be done.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** I understand and I will take that on notice as well, if I may.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** With respect to the seniors regional travel card, I'm wondering, if you have the information available to us, are you able to give us some clarity about whether it has moved beyond a trial stage—which it certainly was for a period of time—and is now essentially, if it is, a settled matter in terms of what it's going to provide for? This is specifically the seniors regional travel card and matters pertaining to that.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** I think we can provide you with some information. If we don't get to the pointy end, we'll be very happy to take it on notice.

## **Answer**

I am advised:

As at the last census, conducted in August 2021, the total population of people over 60 in NSW was 1,895,769. At this time, the NSW Seniors Card program had 1,865,591 total members (both Seniors Card and Senior Savers Card). This represents 98.4% of people over 60 in NSW.

Note: the Seniors Card program has been in operation for 30 years and despite the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) regularly cleansing member data with Births, Deaths and Marriages, some data inconsistencies may still exist, leading to slightly higher figures than in actuality. The transition to a digital Seniors Card will

improve data quality as identity information will be more easily verified across government.

Seniors who are eligible for social housing assistance are able to access medium-term housing assistance support available through the Rent Choice program, private rental assistance that helps households experiencing or at risk of homelessness to access and sustain housing in the private rental market. It provides a rental subsidy for up to three years, and includes brokerage to assist clients with household establishment items, education, or training and employment related costs, to enable their transition to financial independence.

Tenancy Facilitation is offered and provides information and practical assistance for clients searching for and apply for housing in the private rental market. Access to other products for which they may be eligible, for example, Bond Extra or Rentstart products is also provided. Assistance may be provided over a three-month period, and is based on the individual needs of the client.

A Private Rental Brokerage Service is also available to assist people with complex needs, who have support arrangements in place, to find and sustain accommodation in the private rental market. People who have a physical or mental illness, drug or alcohol problems, a physical or intellectual disability or other complex needs may be eligible for this service.

Further questions regarding housing affordability should be directed to the Minister for Homes.

Questions regarding concessions should be directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government.

Questions regarding the Regional Seniors Transport Card trial should be directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

### Question 33

#### Transcript page 57

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Is this in the context that we're still trialling this or it has moved beyond that and this is now talking about what is the—

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Mr Donnelly, I'm advised it's still a trial. I will need to confirm that.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Thank you. We understand it's in its third year of trial. We thought that the trial was going to be in the first instance over a two-year period.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Just on that point, there's \$246 million allocated to extend the regional seniors travel card for an additional two years, those years being 2022 and 2023.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** But as part of what is an extension of a trial?

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** Correct, on the advice I have. I will confirm that.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** On notice, if you'd be good enough to consider explaining why we haven't moved beyond that point of the trial being settled to a firm position and we do not have an ongoing seniors' regional travel card arrangement. Because within the trial itself, there are some, dare I say, anomaly situations of people living in certain areas and some getting it and some not. I won't take the Committee's time up by reading through this. I'll put this in my questions on notice, explaining what some of the anomalies are and that might help assist you in answering the questions in that regard.

**MICHAEL TIDBALL:** It may also be helpful to the Committee if I set out the eligibility criteria.

#### Answer

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.