

<b>QUESTION (page 3)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> I have limited time so I'll just move to my next question. Were you given any guidelines in relation to the grants or the projects you were able to choose?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Mr Tudehope, I understand that the relevant Minister will be up tomorrow, and you can ask a whole range of questions.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> But did you receive any guidelines?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I'll have to take that—</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Okay. That's fine.</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I'll have to take that but, just to point out, my understanding is that these were part of a whole-of-electorates process and there is a process that's being undertaken, and individual commitments are currently going through an independent probity process. I just wanted to let you know, and the Committee, that I have really important non-government organisations that do really important work</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>\$400,000 was committed across the Canterbury electorate to various organisations in the lead up to the March 2023 NSW State Election. I am advised that all commitments are now subject to assessment in accordance with the Grants Administration Guide.</p> <p>I am advised that details of successful grants will be made publicly available on the NSW Grants and Funding website. (<a href="https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/lasca">https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/lasca</a>)</p> <p>I am advised that election commitments were submitted to the Parliamentary Budget Office.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 3-4)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Thank you, Chair. Minister, did you attend any meetings with Minister Burke in relation to the recent industrial relations legislation that has been introduced into the Federal Parliament, which is the third tranche of amendments and is colloquially known as the loopholes legislation?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Are you asking me whether I attended an industrial relations Ministers meeting?</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Correct.</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I did.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> When was that?</p>	

<p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I'll have to get the date for you but it was a couple of months ago. This was all States and Territories. I'm sure that you attended when you were the employee relations Minister and I'm sure that you attended a number of meetings with Minister Burke.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Thank you, Minister. In respect of that meeting, were you provided draft of the proposed legislation?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Mr Tudehope, I understand that the proceedings within those meetings—there is a communique that comes out after those meetings. In terms of the information I was provided, I'll get back to you on that. With respect to the loopholes bill, that's currently being assessed through the processes in the Federal Parliament. If I can help you—I'm not sure what you're seeking.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>My meetings and meeting dates are publicly disclosed in accordance with Ministerial diary disclosure rules.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 5)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Do you understand there are construction guidelines in respect of procurement?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Right.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Did you put those guidelines on hold?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I'll have to get back to you on that. I'll take that on notice.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>The guidelines are not on hold.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 5)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Minister, you have now had an opportunity of refreshing your memory in relation to those guidelines. Is it true that you, in fact, have put those guidelines on hold?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I will get the exact information for you before the end of the hearing.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p>	

The guidelines are not on hold.
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<b>QUESTION (page 5-6)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Do you have any concerns about the CFMEU's efforts to enforce a "no ticket, no start" approach on construction sites in New South Wales?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I'm not aware—as the Minister for Industrial Relations, to the best of my knowledge, this matter has not been brought to my attention. I'm happy to take—</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> The Master Builders Association has not put that issue in front of you?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I've had—through my diaries as you can see, I'm sure—many meetings. I've had many meetings with industry, with families, with injured workers and with a whole range of people.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Did the Master Builders Association put that issue to you?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> They put to me a whole range of issues that I take into consideration.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Was that one of them?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Thank you, Chair. Mr Tudehope, I meet with many stakeholders from industry, from families—</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Can I just redirect you, Minister? I asked you a specific question about the Master Builders Association.</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Mr Tudehope, there are many issues, as you know. You were a Minister seven months ago, and you know every single day a whole range of issues are brought to your attention. I will take what you're saying on board and I will come back to you, but a whole range of issues are brought to me as a Minister. I want to make sure that I provide the correct and considered advice.</p>	
<b>ANSWER:</b>	
My meetings, including meeting date and purpose, are publicly disclosed in accordance with Ministerial diary disclosure rules.	

<b>QUESTION (page 11-12)</b>	
<b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> I will ask Ms Campbell. Ms Campbell, has any modelling been done in relation to the industrial relations reforms, on the New South Wales economy?	

<p><b>SONYA CAMPBELL:</b> I'm not in a position to answer that question, Mr Tudehope.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> But you were in budget estimates with the Treasurer. Do you recall me asking the same question of the Treasury officials: Has any modelling been done?</p> <p><b>SONYA CAMPBELL:</b> And I believe we took that question on notice, Mr Tudehope.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>Please refer to the Treasurer's answers to Questions on Notice.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 21)</b></p>	
<p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> Just in the interests of time, have you met with Caesarstone or their lobbyist in the last three months?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Can I get back to you? I'll take that on notice, but my understanding is that my office, not myself, but let me get back to you on that. I'll get back to you on that before we finish.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>My meetings, including meeting date and purpose, are publicly disclosed in accordance with Ministerial diary disclosure rules.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 23)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Recent changes to the Crown Employees (Fire and Rescue NSW Firefighting Staff Death and Disability) Award have replaced health checks by a qualified independent occupational physician with health checks by a medical practitioner chosen by the firefighter. Did you have any involvement in that change?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> With respect to the firefighters?</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Yes.</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I understand that our agency, as you know, has been providing advice and assistance, and I'm happy to take that on notice.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>Public Sector Industrial Relations has provided advice to Fire and Rescue in relation to the Crown Employees (Fire and Rescue NSW Firefighting Staff Death and Disability) Award.</p>	

I am regularly updated and consulted on a range of industrial matters.
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QUESTION (page 28-29)	
<p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Before I go to The Greens, I just want to ask one or two questions on this issue. Minister, if I go to my workplace and one of my colleagues at work hits me in the head deliberately, do you think that that would be described as a safe workplace?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> No.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> What if they grab me and throw me to the ground and cause me to be concussed? Does that sound like a safe workplace?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> That's assault. That should go to the criminal jurisdiction.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> What if I'm playing AFL? What if my workplace is that of a professional athlete?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Right.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Does that sound like a safe workplace?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I'm happy to refer that to Mr Curtin, but if you're talking about sport and the sporting codes, I know that Minister Kamper was here a couple of weeks ago. I'm not sure if those matters were raised with him, but I'll refer you to Mr Curtin.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> I'll raise them with Mr Curtin later, but the situation is that athletes, professional athletes, have a workplace, do they not?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> My understanding is that they have contractual obligations and they play a part of the code—</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> But they're employed as contractors, they're employees or they're contractors, but they have a workplace and that workplace should be safe, should it not?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> All workplaces should be safe.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Are you sure that, especially now with modern football codes, hockey and combat sports, those workplaces are safe when it comes to chronic brain injuries and CTE?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> My preference is that I take this on notice and I provide further information and seek further advice. I'm not a medical expert. I know that there's a lot of work that's going on in this area and I will take that on notice, and I'm happy to refer to Mr Curtin.</p> <p>...</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Do you think you should be—that, considering the profile of the CTE issue, the terrible outcomes for those people in their workplaces, it should be an issue that the New South Wales Government pays some attention to?</p>	

<p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Of course, and if you have a delegation of representatives that want to come and see me about this matter, I'm happy to talk to them and happy to have the experts—yes, I'm happy to take that.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>Professional sporting organisations have the same work health and safety duties and obligations as any other employer in NSW, including the duty to reduce risk as far as reasonably practicable for professional athletes. The Government has been encouraged by protocols introduced in recent years to protect athletes against concussion and other head injuries, but the Government also acknowledges there is commentary in the health community that more needs to be done.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 30)</b></p>	
<p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I want to thank you for your question, Ms Boyd. You know that for 18 months, when Mr McDougall conducted the icare review, one of the recommendations was that the Minister responsible conduct a review into SafeWork. It took us 18 months to get the former Government—and we pushed very hard, through the media, SMH, through a whole of range of campaigns, and I know that you were a very strong advocate that we needed to get this review. Mr McDougall was appointed by the former Minister in October of last year. He's currently conducting his work and the report will be provided to us very soon on the terms of reference, going through all of those issues, and I think that we'll take the lead on his findings and the recommendations that he makes. I hear what you're saying. It was brought to my attention when I was in opposition. We're a new government now. My expectation is that, as an independent regulator, there is the Work Health and Safety Act and inspectors have very important rules that they are obliged to follow. But also, in terms of issuing notices, they make their decisions based on what the rules are in the Act. I want to acknowledge our inspectors, who do really important work. I have been out with them. I have done toolbox talks with them down at Batemans Bay. They do really important work.</p> <p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> It's about that structural issue?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I hear what you're saying. Yes. Mr Curtin will take that on board and, in the afternoon, respond to you about some of those changes.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>Please refer to transcript.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 32)</b>	
<p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> As you know, through legislation we've established a silica register, but with respect to the—what did you raise? Licensing?</p> <p><b>The Hon. CHRIS RATH:</b> Yes, the licensing scheme.</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> I'm happy to come back to you with respect to that because, as I said, we need to speak to our State colleagues and the Feds through a nationally consistent approach. With respect to licensing and other matters, I'm happy to take that on notice.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>Work Health and Safety Ministers are meeting in mid-December 2023, and it is important that NSW works with other jurisdictions as part of the national process to achieve a harmonised approach to this issue.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 33)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. CHRIS RATH:</b> Are you concerned about the risk to workers' safety at the port?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Am I concerned? That hasn't been raised with me. If you've got people who are concerned, I'm happy to take that—</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>Please refer to transcript.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 34)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. CHRIS RATH:</b> I also just want to turn to the regulations that commenced on 1 January regarding compliance operations for food delivery, in particular, hi-vis PPE and induction training—the suite of measures that have been rolled out. How many infringements have been detected? I know you might need to take that on notice.</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Yes, I'll take that on notice. You might be able to get that—Mr Curtin can answer it, very quickly.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p>	

Please refer to transcript.
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<b>QUESTION (page 36)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK:</b> How many actual case managers would you have employed amongst the claims management companies that you have?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> I will have to come back to you on that, on notice. If it's all right with you, I'll give you a round number of around 1,700.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>There are approximately 1,900 front line claims professionals who interact with injured workers in the management of their claims. This includes just over 1,500 case managers across the Nominal Insurer and Treasury Managed Fund, who are supported by approximately 420 injury management specialists, team leaders and technical specialists in the delivery of treatment and return to work outcomes for injured workers.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 38)</b>	
<p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> I'll come back to that in the afternoon. I know that Labor made a commitment in the election to reverse the onus of proof for icare PTSD claims for firefighters. What's the status of that reform? Is that going to happen this year?</p> <p><b>Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:</b> Can I take that on notice, and if we have something for you in the afternoon—</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>The Government made a commitment in the election to examine how PTSD claims operation in relation to firefighters. This work has begun.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 39 - 40)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> I will start with the employee relations or industrial relations team, as you now are, perhaps to you, Mr Heuston. How many applications are there currently before the industrial commission, involving the New South Wales Government?</p>	



**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** I don't have that number at hand. But I understand that there are normally about 300-odd disputes before the Industrial Relations Commission over a period of a year, the bulk of which I would expect to be public sector related.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I would expect that, too, I must say. In relation to those, how many of them involve applications in respect of proposed industrial action?

**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** I'll have to take that on notice, Mr Tudehope.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** In respect of actions previously taken, you'd be aware, of course, that there were circumstances where there have been fines which have been imposed upon industrial organisations or unions in connection with action which they have taken?

**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** Yes. The commission has capacity to make orders to stop industrial action. If those orders are breached, there are avenues available to impose penalties for breaches of those orders.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** And there are circumstances where penalties have been imposed, are there not?

**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** Yes. That's correct.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Last year, of course, there were fines imposed against the Teachers Federation? Is that right?

**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** I would have to take that on notice. But there have been several in recent years.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** And the Nurses and Midwives?

**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** I would have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** In respect of any fines which have been imposed, what is the current position in relation to collection of those fines?

**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** The collection of those fines is not a matter that falls to the responsibility of Industrial Relations. My understanding is that the recovery of fines is a matter that's managed through, I think, Revenue NSW. But I'll have to confirm that.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Would you be able to provide me with figures in relation to fines which are outstanding and the status of those fines?

**CHARLIE HEUSTON:** We don't have that information. But I can take that on notice and refer it to the appropriate government agency who does have that responsibility.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised:

As at 29 November 2023, there were 174 open matters before the IRC. Currently there is only one application that involves proposed industrial action.

Fines have previously been imposed by the Industrial Relations Commission against the Teachers Federation and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association.

The enforcement of fines is a matter for Revenue NSW.

#### QUESTION (page 41)

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Just enlighten us in respect of the wages policies. My understanding is that SOWAC's chief task is to ensure that agencies are complying with the Government's wages policy. In relation to the bargaining parameters which are approved by SOWAC, they take into account, I assume, the Government's current wages budgeting bill or wages budgeting position.

**SAMARA DOBBINS:** The current Government's wages policy is a little different to the former Government's. The wages policy at the moment is the 4 per cent plus superannuation, and SOWAC certainly takes that into consideration. Over the forward estimates and the future, the Industrial Relations Taskforce is going to provide a report to government about what the bargaining system and approach will be in the future. There's not a wages policy in the same sense that there was in the past. SOWAC's consideration is in relation to that existing announced policy of 4 per cent plus superannuation.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Does it take into account issues like productivity outcomes?

**SAMARA DOBBINS:** For the first 12 months, that preliminary offer that was made by government, it is as described in the Government's media release. What it will be in the future, I don't know yet.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Is there a guideline document as to what the Government considers to be a productivity enhancement?

**SAMARA DOBBINS:** There is advice that we have worked with Treasury to develop and provided to agencies. I don't think I've got a copy with me but, yes, there is some guidance to agencies in relation to—

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** Are you able to provide us with a copy of that on notice?

**SAMARA DOBBINS:** Yes. I'll take that on notice.

#### ANSWER:

Public sector productivity is the quantity and quality of public services or outcomes delivered for a given amount of public resources (labour, equipment/technology, natural resources).

When people think about public sector productivity they often think about financial costs and use the phrase “productivity gain” interchangeably with the word “savings”. However, public sector productivity is not a financial concept. It is based on real inputs (like labour time) and real outputs (like public services).

QUESTION (page 42)	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> How many awards are there which affect the public sector?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> Mr Heuston, do you have that number in front of you?</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> I do. I think it's—</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> The last time I looked, it was about 111. Would that be about right?</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> One hundred and fourteen.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> One hundred and fourteen different awards. In relation to the negotiation or the updating of those awards, how many are there that are expired which still remain to be concluded?</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> We have 19 that are currently expired. When I use the number of 114, they're the instruments which provide pay increases, so there will be other instruments which might apply to an employee that don't provide a pay increase. You might have a condition-specific type of award. The actual number that applies across the sector is a larger number, but the ones that we track is the 114.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> And each of those contains agreements relating to potential pay increases?</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> Yes. There are some cohorts that are included in that group that might be management-type roles or people covered by SOORT. They're still employee groups within the sector but not—</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> On notice, can you provide me with a list of the 19 which still remain to be negotiated?</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> Yes.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Ms Dobbins, are you able to provide on notice a list of where those negotiations are up to?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> Yes, Mr Tudehope.</p>	

**ANSWER:**

I am advised:

As at 7 November 2023 there were 19 instruments still to be negotiated:

- Crown Employees (Australian Music Examinations Board (NSW) Examiners, Assessors and Chief Examiners) Award 2020
- Crown Employees (New South Wales Education Standards Authority - Education Officers) Salaries and Conditions Award 2020
- Higher School Certificate Marking and Related Casual Employees Rates of Pay and Conditions Award 2021
- TAFE Commission of NSW Administrative, Support and Related Employees Enterprise Agreement 2022
- Paramedics and Control Centre Officers (State) Award 2022
- Sydney Water Enterprise Agreement 2021
- Border Fence Maintenance Employees Enterprise Agreement 2021
- Sydney Water Common Law Contracts
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Flight Operations Enterprise Agreement 2022
- Forestry Corporation Common Law Contracts (Senior management Team) 2022
- Port Authority of New South Wales - Port Kembla Marine Pilots Agreement 2018-2022
- Port Authority of New South Wales Sydney Marine Pilots Enterprise Agreement 2019 - 2023
- Port Authority of New South Wales Marine Pilots Agreement - Newcastle - 2019-2023
- Newcastle Port Corporation Enterprise Agreement 2019 -2023
- Port Authority of New South Wales - Port Kembla Enterprise Agreement 2022-2023
- Port Authority Senior Management Team Executive Common Law Contracts (Port Kembla, Newcastle, Sydney Ports)
- Port Authority of NSW - Non Executive Common Law Contracts
- Roads and Maritime Services (Traffic Signals Staff) Award 2019
- State Super Enterprise Agreement 2020 - 2022

Three instruments have since concluded negotiations, leaving 16 instruments still to be negotiated as at 24 November 2023. The three instruments finalised since 7 November 2023 are:

- Crown Employees (Australian Music Examinations Board (NSW) Examiners, Assessors and Chief Examiners) Award 2020
- Crown Employees (New South Wales Education Standards Authority - Education Officers) Salaries and Conditions Award 2020
- Forestry Corporation Common Law Contracts (Senior Management Team) 2022

<b>QUESTION (page 42)</b>	
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<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Did SOWAC sign off on the 10 per cent award for the Teachers Federation?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> I can't recall. I'll have to take that on notice.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> In relation to each of the awards which have been reached, has SOWAC signed off on each of them?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> I'll need to take that on notice also.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>Bargaining parameters have been approved by Expenditure Review Committee for the instruments expiring in 2023-24 and the Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 43)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> The team which you supervise which looks after long service leave, how many are part of that team?</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> It's about 24.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Conducting the audits?</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> No. There are a couple of areas. The 24 include those that provide support to complaints about noncompliance, but also educational activities. The inspectorate function is about 24.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> And the case which you mentioned in relation to Mosaic, is that the only case where you are currently conducting any litigation in respect of—</p> <p><b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> The litigation has concluded for that matter. There may be still some other ones on foot, but I can provide details on notice, if that would assist.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>The NSW IR Inspectorate does not currently have any active prosecution matters.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 44)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> How many new local public holidays have been approved in the last 12 months?</p>	

<b>CHARLIE HEUSTON:</b> I'll have to take that on notice.	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>Between November 2022 to November 2023, 20 local public holidays across regional NSW have been approved following applications from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walcha Council</li> <li>• Shoalhaven City Council</li> <li>• Albury City Council</li> <li>• Muswellbrook Shier Council</li> <li>• Clarence Valley Council</li> <li>• Cabonne Council</li> <li>• Upper Hunter Shire Council</li> <li>• Bogan Shire Council</li> <li>• Coonamble Shire Council</li> <li>• Parkes Shire Council</li> <li>• Bland Shire Council</li> </ul>	

<b>QUESTION (page 44)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Ms Dobbins, you'd be aware—or you may not be—that the Premier's memorandum M2022-05, the NSW Public Sector Wages Policy, is still showing on the website of the Cabinet Office as being active. Is that not the case?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> Yes, Mr Tudehope. As you raised with me at the Premier's hearing, I looked into that, and you are quite correct. That memorandum is still live.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Given that the wage cap no longer exists because of the lapsing of the regulation, I take it it's the case that the other provisions of the memorandum are in force, are they not?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> That's correct. We took a decision not to retire that memorandum because, as you know, it contains the governance arrangements for how the Government considers policy aspects and, until the taskforce finishes its work and the Government responds to that report, we can't issue new governance and we felt that it was necessary to have information for agencies about how to go through the process of getting government approvals for bargaining approaches.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Mr Tudehope, in the absence of any crossbench members—and I don't have questions— you are free to continue on.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> We might get an early mark, Chair.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> We might. Just be mindful of that. We're in your hands.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> That memorandum provides at</p>	

<p>clause 2.5 that no offers may be made in relation to an increase in employee-related costs until bargaining parameters have been approved in accordance with the policy, which is as you have just outlined. So there is a process for approving those offers. Is Treasury still responsible for an analysis of the financial impacts of proposals? Do they provide advice on financial and economic matters as required to assist your determinations?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> Yes, they do.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Who, in Treasury, is responsible for that?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> I'm afraid you've got me. I can't remember the name of the branch.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> On notice, can you provide me with that?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> Yes, I can.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>The Policy and Budget Group is responsible for providing the relevant advice.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 45)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. CHRIS RATH:</b> The \$6 million over three years to the Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute—are you aware of that funding commitment?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> No, I'm not across the details of that. I know the Lung Foundation has also been doing some work on behalf of the Federal Government.</p> <p><b>The Hon. CHRIS RATH:</b> Would you be able to take on notice an update for us on where that is at?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> Yes, we can take that on notice.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>This is an election commitment, and its delivery is underway.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 45 - 46)</b></p>	
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**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** Thank you. What does tracking workers involve with health screening?

**TRENT CURTIN:** At this stage we're using the NSW Dust Disease Register to have workers nominate into that scheme or to be registered with that scheme where a diagnosis occurs, and the health monitoring arrangements are probably more with Mr Harding and his team in terms of making contact with workers and helping with the health screening process.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** Is it compulsory to be on that register, or can someone opt out from being on that?

**TRENT CURTIN:** My understanding is that workers will opt in to that and we'd be seeking for them to opt in to that. There are some mechanisms for workers to be registered if they're picked up by GPs, on my understanding. I can take that on notice.

**RICHARD HARDING:** Perhaps I can help, Mr Rath? It is compulsory for doctors or screening facilities, if they identify silica, to notify or put someone on the register. That triggers for us awareness that that person has been identified, and we can then track them and encourage them for continued scanning so that we can determine their eligibility for the scheme, for support.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** Obviously, the uncontrolled dry cutting is currently banned, but have SafeWork checks indicated compliance with this ban?

**TRENT CURTIN:** Since 2018 through to September this year, we've undertaken some 2,443 inspections in relation to silica. Some 1,218 of those related to engineered stone businesses; 1,023 were construction sites; and 202 were other industries. What we've found is that there has been an increase in compliance with a range of measures that are required to improve safety around exposure to silica. In our final round, which we undertook over the last few months during 2023, we did target those businesses that had had repeat notices in rounds one and two. We did target those that had previously been issued both penalty and prohibition notices, and those businesses that had the highest exposure monitoring results, and also those with the highest diagnoses of silicosis. We have seen increased compliance across the industry, but we are still seeing some noncompliance, particularly with smaller businesses, that is of concern.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** So compliance is up. Are inspections also up? Or are the number of inspections down over the last 12 months?

**TRENT CURTIN:** I don't have, in front of me, the number of inspections over the years. I can get those for you and take those on notice. But the third round of inspections we did was more targeted to those businesses that had noncompliances and those factors that I just read out in relation to round one and two. So they were very



specific and very targeted to those areas of industry that we were more concerned about.	
<b>ANSWER:</b>	
I am advised:	
Total proactive inspections 2019-20: 118	
Total proactive inspections 2022-23: 152	

<b>QUESTION (page 46)</b>	
<p><b>The Hon. CHRIS RATH:</b> I did see that. Has there been any compliance action taken with the new requirements for managing and controlling psychological hazards and risks?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> There are compliance activities undertaken. I am aware of a couple of matters that are currently with our investigation team and that, potentially, could lead to prosecution. But, for specific information, I would have to take that on notice.</p>	
<b>ANSWER:</b>	
I am advised:	
<p>Since the new psychosocial clauses of the WHS Regulation came into effect on 1 October 2022, SafeWork NSW has responded to a total of 1,182 Requests for Service and 41 Notifiable Incidents which relate to Psychosocial Hazards. For these matters, a total of 135 Improvement Notices were issued and one Penalty Notice for non-compliance with an Improvement Notice.</p> <p>In June 2023, SafeWork NSW Inspectors completed a targeted compliance visit program.</p> <p>As at 13 November 2023, SafeWork NSW has seven psychosocial matters under full investigation, and an additional four matters where charges have been laid and the matters are before the courts.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 48)</b>	
<p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> I might just try and clarify your question, Chair. When you say, "opted in"— I think we were talking earlier about the screening program, which is about tracking people, versus people who are now eligible for the scheme and actually have been receiving benefits, which are two different things.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Yes. Okay, the first one, or we'll deal with both.</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> Both? Righto. We have been increasing the amount of screening, as you'd know, and we've done now 3,433</p>	

<p>throughout the 2022-23 year, of which—that led to 55 new scheme entrants, so 55 people with diagnosed silicosis that enabled them to join the scheme. I'd highlight, though, that of the people who are screened—</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Sorry, Mr Harding. That was this last financial year?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> That was 2022-23, yes. And if you'd like a current figure up to 30 September, we've done 1,008 this year, of which 33 new participants have entered the scheme. What I was going to highlight—</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Sorry to interrupt again, Mr Harding. How many in total have been screened over the entirety of the scheme and are in the scheme now?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> I don't have that number, believe it or not, on hand. I can bring that back for you.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Thank you. If you could take that on notice, that would be good.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>In the last five years, a total of 13,396 screenings have been undertaken by icare for silica-related diseases across all screening mechanisms.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 48)</b></p>	
<p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> Yes. One of the things that I think is perhaps relevant to the question you're asking—the majority of people who are screened have no symptoms and very low impairment levels, what we would classify as less than 1 per cent impairment, which means they don't qualify to be part of the scheme. We do track those people and we encourage them to come back for annual screens or to use their medical professional to help them with further screening on a regular annual basis so we can make sure that, as the disease might develop or if they continue to get exposure through their work or other avenues, we can track them and ensure that they're getting support if and when they do start to qualify for the scheme. So it's not just the individuals who come in but we're tracking now these people with what we call less than 1 per cent exposure so we can keep track of those. But I'll come back to you on notice with the total number you're asking for. The scheme's been going since, like, 1947, so I assume you don't want the whole history. You just want the last five years or the last three years?</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Do you differentiate between quarry workers, tunnellers—</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> We can.</p>	

<p><b>The CHAIR:</b> You can? You do?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> We can, if that's what you're after.</p> <p><b>The CHAIR:</b> Yes, if you could provide those figures. Do you have an estimate of how many people there are working in the engineered stone work space in New South Wales?</p>																																																																			
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised of the following:</p> <p><b>Employer Health Monitoring program screenings for silica dust exposure - by broad industry type, by financial year</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Industry</th> <th colspan="4">Total screenings</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2019-20</th> <th>2020-21</th> <th>2021-22</th> <th>2022-23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Councils</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>1,022</td> <td>511</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brick manufacture (incl. quarrying)</td> <td>274</td> <td>7</td> <td>97</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concrete industry</td> <td>11</td> <td>86</td> <td>18</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Construction/demolition</td> <td>8</td> <td>301</td> <td>31</td> <td>172</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manufactured &amp; natural stone</td> <td>238</td> <td>368</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>241</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manufactured stone</td> <td>102</td> <td>83</td> <td>339</td> <td>246</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Natural stone</td> <td>49</td> <td>60</td> <td>53</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stone processing/stonemason</td> <td>11</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tunnelling</td> <td>337</td> <td>960</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>456</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>1,030</b></td> <td><b>2,887</b></td> <td><b>1,049</b></td> <td><b>1,137</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Total awarded claims identified through Employer Health Monitoring screenings for silica dust exposure - by broad industry type, by financial year</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Industry</th> <th>Total awarded claims</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Industry	Total screenings				2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Councils	N/A	1,022	511	N/A	Brick manufacture (incl. quarrying)	274	7	97	2	Concrete industry	11	86	18	18	Construction/demolition	8	301	31	172	Manufactured & natural stone	238	368	N/A	241	Manufactured stone	102	83	339	246	Natural stone	49	60	53	N/A	Stone processing/stonemason	11	N/A	N/A	2	Tunnelling	337	960	N/A	456	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>2,887</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>1,137</b>	Industry	Total awarded claims		
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## Minister Cotsis – Questions taken on Notice

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>Councils</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Brick manufacture (incl. quarrying)</b>	1	0	0	2
<b>Concrete industry</b>	1	0	0	1
<b>Construction/demolition</b>	2	0	12	1
<b>Manufactured &amp; natural stone</b>	27	4	0	9
<b>Manufactured stone</b>	41	1	12	16
<b>Natural stone</b>	2	1	0	0
<b>Stone processing/stonemason</b>	3	0	0	1
<b>Tunnelling</b>	3	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>

QUESTION (page 50)	
<p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> Let's start with how many inspections there have been of construction sites where there may be silica exposure. Do you have that sort of data?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> I don't have that with me. I'd have to take that on notice.</p> <p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> When we're looking at the silicosis issue, banning the manufactured stone used for kitchen benches and things is the obvious one, and the low-hanging fruit, which is why I'm continually annoyed that it has not just been banned, but it's much harder when we're then talking about all of the construction in tunnels et cetera. What I'm hearing from workers is that SafeWork are simply not inspecting those sites. Do you have evidence to the contrary?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> Yes, I've got some numbers. We ran through some numbers just before but, in terms of silica inspections from 2018 to 30 September this year, we have conducted 2,443 inspections.</p>	

<p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> Does that involve air monitoring?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> Air monitoring is one of the components that's inspected as part of that, if it's relevant to the organisation. I can give you some numbers on specific tunnel inspections that have been taken this year and in previous years. So in—</p> <p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> Sorry, that was total inspections, was it?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> It was 2,443 total inspections across engineered stone—</p> <p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> Across engineered stone?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> —construction workplaces and other, yes. And specifically in tunnelling we have done 32 visits this year so far.</p> <p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> How many unannounced?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> I don't have that with me. I'd have to find that for you.</p> <p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> And would each of those visits have involved air monitoring?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> I'd have to confirm that for you—maybe take that one on notice.</p>	
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<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>Silica reporting is published on the NSW Government Silica dashboard at:  <a href="https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/customer-service/publications-and-reports/silica-dashboard">https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/customer-service/publications-and-reports/silica-dashboard</a>.</p> <p>The current silica in construction compliance campaign commenced in October 2023 and will run for 6 months. Results will be available on the published dashboard.</p> <p>Air monitoring reports are available on most of these sites and displayed on site notice boards or available by request of the regulator.</p> <p>Regular proactive (unannounced) tunnel inspections also occur to monitor high risk activities and controls including the management of Respirable Crystalline Silica during the tunnelling stage of major government infrastructure projects.</p>
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<p><b>QUESTION (page 51)</b></p>	
<p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> What about ensuring that workers in those tunnelling situations are given adequate information and access to screening afterwards for silicosis? Is that the same program as is applying for engineered stone workers or is there something different? Do you know?</p>	

<b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> They are captured in the same way, it is my understanding, in the NSW Dust Disease Register. But I can take it on notice to come back to you on that.	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>Businesses must provide and pay for health monitoring of all workers who are exposed to Respirable Crystalline Silica at levels that present a significant risk to their health. Health monitoring should be provided before a worker starts work to establish a baseline from which changes can be detected. The worker's health should then be monitored annually from the initial health monitoring date or as recommended by the registered medical practitioner supervising the health monitoring.</p> <p>This same requirement applies to all industries, including engineered stone and tunnelling.</p> <p>Details of diagnosed silicosis cases are recorded in the NSW Dust Disease Register. All medical practitioners must notify NSW Health when they diagnose a case of silicosis in NSW. This information is then provided to SafeWork NSW for recording in the Register. The Register records notifications of cases of occupational dust diseases silicosis, asbestosis and mesothelioma in a single place to monitor and analyse the incidence of notifiable occupational dust diseases in NSW.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 51)</b>	
<p><b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> The website for the congress indicates that there are currently only three major sponsors, one of which is icare. Do you know how much the congress has raised through sponsorships?</p> <p><b>TRENT CURTIN:</b> I don't have that with me. There are a number of sponsors. I can take on notice to come back to you on the sponsorships that have been offered so far.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>As at 14 November 2023, \$3,423,604 revenue has been raised from sponsors, exhibitors and delegates.</p>	

<b>QUESTION (page 51)</b>	
<b>Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:</b> Mr Harding, do you know if icare has been paid money for that sponsorship of the WHS world congress.	

<p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> We agreed to support a mental health program that's being run during the session. I'm talking off the top of my head, so maybe I can get it for you on notice, but I think it's around about \$40,000.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>icare was a sponsor of the Expert Showcase stage at the 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work. The sponsorship cost was \$57,300 (excluding GST).</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 52)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Mr Heuston or Ms Dobbins, in relation to the Federal Government's Fair Work Amendment legislation—the loophole legislation—when was the meeting of industrial relations Ministers for the purposes of considering that legislation?</p> <p><b>SAMARA DOBBINS:</b> I don't think we've got that exact date in front of us, Mr Tudehope, but happy to take it on notice.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>Refer to earlier answer.</p>	

<p><b>QUESTION (page 54)</b></p>	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Have you made projections for next year? Not that you are a weather forecaster or an earthquake forecaster, but on the base of those quantifiable risks that you've identified as part of that—whether it's sexual abuse claims or mental health claims—have you made projections as to what that figure might potentially be next year?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> The answer is yes. We do, in our budget, forecast our expectations. But, as you say, we don't budget particularly for weather impacts, so it's not a particularly robust outcome. That number, I think, has been included and released by the Treasurer in one of his statements over the forward estimates. I don't have it in my head so, if you'd like it, I can get it for you on notice.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p>	



## Minister Cotsis – Questions taken on Notice

	Natural catastrophes	TMF workers compensation claims costs	TMF General Lines claims costs (excl. natural catastrophes)
FY2023-24	\$74m	\$2,058m	\$1,297m

QUESTION (page 54)	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Mr Harding, have you done any modelling about wage increases in respect of potential impact on either the Nominal Insurer or the TMF in terms of claims?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> Yes, in the liability evaluation work that happens every six months, the actuarial providers that we use will regularly forecast average weekly earnings growth—or, actually, wage price inflation is probably more relevant—and, similarly, in general inflation and in interest rates. Those are forecast out over 10 years. It generally uses a market rate in the sense of the 3 per cent or 4 per cent numbers that are more commonly known. The Hon.</p> <p><b>DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> What is the figure you are using currently for wage increases?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> We might have to get you that on notice, Mr Tudehope, I'm sorry. It'll be a different rate each year, so I'll provide you with the pattern that we forecast out of this.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>As per the NSW Wage Price Index increase, 3.5% per annum for 2023-24.</p>	

QUESTION (page 54-55)	
<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Mr Harding, the Treasury is conducting an operational review into icare. Have you seen the terms of reference for that review?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> We received a letter from the Minister outlining her intent. We haven't done any work with our Treasury colleagues to lock in the terms of reference, no.</p> <p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Ms Campbell, have terms of reference for that review been prepared?</p> <p><b>SONYA CAMPBELL:</b> No, we haven't provided anything beyond the letter that the Minister has sent to icare.</p>	



<p><b>The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:</b> Can you provide on notice a copy of the letter that has been sent to icare?</p> <p><b>RICHARD HARDING:</b> Certainly, yes.</p>	
<p><b>ANSWER:</b></p> <p>Please see attachment.</p>	

Mr John Robertson  
Chair  
icare  
321 Kent Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

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**Re: icare operational expense and cost review**

Dear Mr Robertson

As set out in the 2023-24 NSW Budget, the Treasurer and Minister for Finance have completed the first stage of a Comprehensive Expenditure Review to help with budget repair and achieve a sustainable operating and debt position.

As the NSW Government's social insurer, icare plays a key role in creating strong social and economic outcomes across our community. In this context, it is vital that both government and the wider community can have confidence in the efficiency and effectiveness of icare's business operations, and that value for money is being achieved in the performance of its functions, and the delivery of services across icare's different insurance and care schemes.

In 2023-24, icare's expenses are budgeted at \$1.2 billion. These costs are borne by individuals and businesses across New South Wales, as well as taxpayers, through the premiums paid to icare's insurance and care schemes. I am keen to understand:

- how icare is managing its cost base and drivers, and achieving efficiencies in its business performance to help moderate upward price pressure on premiums, and
- how icare's growing investment in its people and systems is leading to better outcomes.

**Review objectives and scope**

I have requested Treasury to work in collaboration with your team to conduct a review with the following objectives to:

- examine the relationship, including historical and forecast trends, between icare's operational expenditure and claims management performance (including return to work performance and claims costs) and whether expected benefits have been realised
- undertake relevant cross-jurisdictional and industry comparative analysis to benchmark icare's operational expenses to assess whether value for money outcomes are being achieved
- review icare's organisational structure, resourcing, and remuneration to ensure resources are appropriately allocated and reflects business priorities (this may include consideration of contingency workers and their future role)
- what further opportunities may exist for icare to realise economies of scope and/or scale
- review the robustness of business planning and forecasting against actual performance, including those opportunities which may exist to improve forecasting reliability

- analyse the different expense ratios for each insurance and care scheme, including management expenses drawn from the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund and other scheme funds.

It is not the intention of the Treasury-led review to duplicate the work of the NSW Audit Office, currently underway, to assess the effectiveness and economy of icare's management of workers compensation claims, or that of State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA), also currently underway, to undertake an integrated compliance audit and performance review of Treasury Managed Fund Government agencies' workers compensation claims. However, Treasury may draw on findings from these reviews as needed.

### **Review outcomes, timeframes and savings plan**

The review is intended to assist in the identification and adoption of operational improvements and efficiencies across icare to achieve a five per cent permanent reduction in icare's net cost of service (excluding contracted claims service provider fees).

These savings are to be permanently embedded in icare's core, business-as-usual budgets from 1 July 2024 onwards. The savings plan should be reflected in icare's 2024-25 Statement of Business Intent and business plan, with icare's 2022-23 financial year results serving as a baseline.

icare is requested to provide a board-endorsed savings plan to me by 1 March 2024.

I have asked Treasury to report to me in February 2024, but it will be the board's responsibility, under your leadership, to take forward the outcomes from this review and deliver these savings.

I encourage icare to work in close cooperation with the Treasury team and provide every assistance. I am keen for the review's findings to be of value to the icare board, and can usefully inform the development of icare's savings plan, and that savings measures proposed in this plan are well-targeted and measurable.

Further, I trust that these savings measures will be implemented in a pragmatic manner that does not detract from the levels of service and care currently delivered by icare or its improvement program.

I consider that this work is an important step to better align icare's strategic direction with the Government's priorities while maintaining icare's independence of operations in a commercial manner. Looking ahead to the following year, I expect to see this greater alignment reflected in icare's Statement of Business Intent for 2024-25 and related business planning processes into the future.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important work.

Sincerely

**Sophie Cotsis MP**  
Minister for Industrial Relations  
Minister for Work Health and Safety

Date: 3. 11. 23