

NSW Legislative Council

Portfolio Committees

Upper House Committees

Budget Estimates Guide

July 2026



2026-2027

Portfolio Committees

Budget Estimates Guide 2026-2027

Contact the Budget Estimates secretariat

Email

BudgetEstimates@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Telephone

Julianna Taahi, Principal Council Officer, 9230 2581

Kevin Cen, Principal Council Officer, 9230 2569

Alex Stedman, Director, 9230 2253

Laura Ismay, Director, 9230 2282

Gareth Perkins, Council Officer

Philip Kolotas, Administration Officer

Location

Budget Estimates Secretariat
Room 812K
Level 8
Legislative Council
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Website

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/parliamentary-business/committees/budget-estimates>

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Chapter 1 Budget Estimates resolution

The agreement of the House establishing the annual inquiry into Budget Estimates is known as the Budget Estimates resolution. It sets out the key rules for how the inquiry will be conducted.

Referral by the House

- 1.1 On 24 June 2026, the Legislative Council referred the Budget Estimates for the 2026-2027 financial year to the portfolio committees for inquiry and report.¹ The House resolved that initial hearings for Budget Estimates 2026-2027 be held over 12 days from 18 August to 21 August 2026, 24 August to 28 August 2026 and 1 September to 2 September 2026 and that supplementary hearings be scheduled from 26 October to 30 October 2026.²
- 1.2 Transcripts, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions will be published on the Budget Estimates webpage.

Budget Estimates resolution

Initial and supplementary hearings

- 1.3 The Budget Estimates resolution and schedule for the initial hearings was agreed to by the House on 24 June 2026, referring the Budget Estimates and related papers for 2026-2027 to the Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report. The resolution is reproduced as follows and in **Appendix 4**.

Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2026-2027

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (1) That the Budget Estimates and related papers for the financial year 2026-2027 presenting the amounts to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund be referred to the Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report.
- (2) That, further to the resolution of the House of 21 October 2025 adopting the 2026 sitting calendar,³ the 2026-2027 initial budget estimates hearings be scheduled as follows:

¹ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3994.

² Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3994.

³ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 22 October 2025, item 3.

Day One:	Tuesday 18 August 2026
PC 7	Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage
PC 8	Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice
Day Two:	Wednesday 19 August 2026
PC 3	Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney
PC 2	Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth
Day Three:	Thursday 20 August 2026
PC 1	Premier
PC 4	Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs and Tourism
Day Four:	Friday 21 August 2026
PC 1	Treasurer
PC 6	Roads, Regional Transport
Day Five:	Monday 24 August 2026
PC 7	Planning and Public Spaces
PC 8	Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections
Day Six:	Tuesday 25 August 2026
PC 5	Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion
PC 1	The Legislature
Day Seven:	Wednesday 26 August 2026
PC 1	Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research
PC 3	Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education
Day Eight:	Thursday 27 August 2026
PC 2	Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast
PC 5	Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Day Nine:	Friday 28 August 2026
PC 5	Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter
PC 8	Small Business, Recovery, North Coast
Day Ten:	Monday 31 August 2026
PC 6	Special Minister of State, Transport, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy
PC 5	Attorney-General

Day Eleven: Tuesday 1 September 2026

PC 4	Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales
PC 1	Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety

Day Twelve: Wednesday 2 September 2026

PC 8	Local Government
PC 1	Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources

(3) That for the purposes of the 2026-2027 initial budget estimates hearings:

- (a) each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, and, if required, by Government members only from 10.45 am to 11.00 am, 12.45 pm to 1.00 pm, and 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm, and
- (b) the portfolio of The Legislature be examined by Opposition, Crossbench and Government members from 9.15 am to 11.00 am, and from 11.15 am to 1.00 pm.

(4) That, unless the committee decides otherwise:

- (a) the sequence of questions to be asked at the hearings for the following portfolios alternate between opposition and crossbench members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each:
 - (i) Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage,
 - (ii) Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney,
 - (iii) Premier,
 - (iv) Treasurer,
 - (v) Planning and Public Spaces,
 - (vi) Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion,
 - (vii) Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research,
 - (viii) Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast,
 - (ix) Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter,
 - (x) Special Minister of State, Transport, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy,
 - (xi) Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales,
 - (xii) Local Government, and
- (b) the sequence of questions to be asked at the hearings for the following portfolios alternate between crossbench and opposition members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each:
 - (i) Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice,
 - (ii) Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth,

- (iii) Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs and Tourism,
- (iv) Roads, Regional Transport,
- (v) Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections,
- (vi) The Legislature,
- (vii) Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education,
- (viii) Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault,
- (ix) Small Business, Recovery, North Coast,
- (x) Attorney-General,
- (xi) Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety,
- (xii) Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources.

(5) That for the purposes of the 2026-2027 initial budget estimates hearings:

- (a) the committees must hear evidence in public,
- (b) the committees may ask for explanations from ministers, parliamentary secretaries or officers of departments, statutory bodies or corporations, relating to the items of proposed expenditure,
- (c) ministers be invited to appear for the morning sessions only unless requested by committees to appear also for the afternoon session,
- (d) witnesses, including ministers, may not make an opening statement before a committee commences questions,
- (e) members may lodge supplementary questions with the committee clerk by 5.00 pm within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript, and
- (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, except those answers for which confidentiality is requested, after they have been circulated to committee members.

(6) That, as per the resolution of the House on 21 October 2025 adopting the 2026 sitting calendar, the 2026-2027 supplementary budget estimates hearings are to be held from 26 October to 30 October 2026, and are to be conducted under the same terms as the initial hearings, unless the committee decides otherwise.

(7) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, a meeting is not required to be convened for a budget estimates draft report to be considered, and instead, the committees may consider and agree to reports by email, unless at least three members call for a meeting to adopt such reports.

(8) That the committees report by 24 December 2026.⁴

⁴ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, item 28.

Chapter 2 Committee membership

2.1 Each of the eight portfolio committees has seven members, comprising:

- three government members
- two opposition members
- two cross bench members.⁵

2.2 The membership of each committee is listed at **Appendix 1**.

Substitute members

2.3 Under the standing orders members may substitute for other members, whether for a particular meeting or for a whole inquiry. A substitute member has the same rights as a substantive member and may question witnesses, vote and be counted for the purposes of a quorum or division.

2.4 Nominations for substitute government or opposition members may be made by the Leader of the Government or Leader of the Opposition, or Government or Opposition Whips or Deputy Whips, as applicable. Nominations for substitute crossbench members are to be made by the substantive member or another crossbench member.⁶

2.5 Nominations for substitute members should be submitted by email to the [Budget Estimates](#) secretariat prior to the commencement of the hearing or meeting.

Participating members

2.6 Unless a committee decides otherwise, a member of the House who is not a member of the relevant committee may take part in the public or private proceedings of a committee, question witnesses and, once they have formally communicated their intention to participate in the inquiry, have access to all committee evidence and documents but may not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purpose of any quorum or division.⁷ Chapter 3 provides further information about the allocation of questioning time to participating members.

2.7 Members wishing to participate in a meeting should advise the committee by email to the [Budget Estimates](#) secretariat prior to the commencement of the meeting.

⁵ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 10 May 2023, p 66.

⁶ Standing Order 223 Substitute members.

⁷ Standing Order 225(1) Participation by members of the House and others.

Quorum

2.8 The quorum of a portfolio committee is three members.⁸

⁸ Standing Order 221(1) Quorum.

Chapter 3 Hearings

The Budget Estimates initial hearings are to be held over 12 days from 18 August to 21 August 2026, 24 August to 28 August 2026 and 1 September to 2 September 2026. Any supplementary hearings will be held between 26 October to 30 October 2026.

The schedule of hearings is shown by date in **Appendix 2** and by committee in **Appendix 3**.

Attendance of ministers, parliamentary secretaries and public servants

- 3.1 The Budget Estimates resolution provides that committees may ask for explanations relating to the items of proposed expenditure from ministers and parliamentary secretaries, as well as officers of departments, statutory bodies or corporations.⁹
- 3.2 It is standard practice for ministers of both Houses to appear during the initial round of hearings, although a Council committee cannot compel current ministers to appear before it. Ministers are also often invited to attend supplementary hearings, along with departmental witnesses. There is precedent for Ministers attending supplementary hearings, including Minister Moriarty in 2023-24 and Minister Hazzard in 2022-23 and 2017-2018.
- 3.3 Ministers who are members of the Legislative Assembly should follow the procedures established by the committee. If a minister does not wish to comply with these procedures, they may decide to leave the hearing at any time.¹⁰
- 3.4 Committees will write to each minister with a list of witnesses, including department officers, they wish to appear before the committee to answer questions relating to each portfolio.
- 3.5 For any session that the minister is not required to attend, it is within the power of the committee to resolve whether to accept or decline any request from a minister or parliamentary secretary to also be in attendance during the session. Where the committee declines such a request, the minister would not be prevented from viewing proceedings from the advisers' table or the public gallery.
- 3.6 While public servants are normally invited by the committee and appear voluntarily, there is no restriction on committees summoning public servants as witnesses.

⁹ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3994.

¹⁰ NSW Legislative Council, Clerk's Advice, *Advice to General Purpose Standing Committees in relation to Budget Estimates hearings*, September 1999, reproduced in [Budget Estimates Guide 2001-2002](#), Appendix D.

Hearing procedures

Role of the Chair

- 3.7** The role of the committee Chair is analogous to that of the President in the House, having powers necessary to conduct the Committee's proceedings in an orderly and expeditious manner.¹¹ The Chair is responsible for guiding the inquiry process and presiding over meetings, including conducting votes. During hearings, the Chair is responsible for maintaining order and ruling on the admissibility of questions and points of order. The Chair also has a role in ensuring [procedural fairness](#) is provided to witnesses, including that they are treated with courtesy.¹² The Chair is also able to ask questions of witnesses in the same way as other committee members.
- 3.8** Where the resolution appointing a committee and the standing orders are silent on a matter, the procedures of the House should be used for guidance. For example, the rules of debate under Standing Order 96 in relation to offensive words, reflecting on a resolution of the House and making personal reflections on members or officers should be used to guide committee proceedings. Where remarks are considered to be offensive, the Chair may request that the offensive remark be withdrawn.
- 3.9** The Deputy Chair acts as Chair when the Chair is absent from a meeting. In the absence of both the Chair and Deputy Chair, a member of the committee is elected by the members present to act as Chair for that meeting.¹³
- 3.10** The Chair, Deputy Chair or other member acting as Chair at a meeting of a committee has a deliberative vote, and in the event of an equality of votes, a casting vote.¹⁴

Swearing in witnesses

- 3.11** All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations are sworn prior to giving evidence. This occurs regardless of whether the witness has already appeared before the same committee during Budget Estimates.
- 3.12** Ministers and parliamentary secretaries do not need to be sworn because members of Parliament have previously sworn an oath to that office.

¹¹ Standing Order 218(2) Chair and Deputy Chair.

¹² *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 25 October 2018, pp 3244-3246.

¹³ Standing Order 218(3) and (4) Chair and Deputy Chair.

¹⁴ Standing Order 218(7) Chair and Deputy Chair.

Chair's opening statement

- 3.13** At the start of a hearing the Chair normally makes a short statement. The Chair will then declare the proposed expenditure open for examination.

No opening statement by witnesses, including a Minister

- 3.14** The Budget Estimates resolution stipulates that witnesses, including ministers, may **not** make an opening statement before the committee commences questions.¹⁵ This differs from the standard practice in other inquiries where witnesses are usually invited to make an opening statement.

Sequencing of questions / allocation of time¹⁶

- 3.15** The Budget Estimates resolution provides that, unless the committee decides otherwise:
- the sequence of questions to be asked at the hearings for the following portfolios alternate between **opposition and crossbench members**, in that order, with equal time allocated to each:
 - Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage
 - Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney
 - Premier
 - Treasurer
 - Planning and Public Spaces
 - Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion
 - Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research
 - Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast
 - Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter
 - Special Minister of State, Transport, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy
 - Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales
 - Local Government
 - the sequence of questions to be asked at the hearings for the following portfolios alternate between **crossbench and opposition members**, in that order, with equal time allocated to each:
 - Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice

¹⁵ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3996.

¹⁶ Note, paragraphs 3.16-3.20 are based on the Advice of the Clerk of Legislative Council to Portfolio Committee Chairs, 'Guidance Concerning Allocation of Crossbench Question Time in Budget Estimates,' circulated 29 August 2024.

- Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth
- Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs and Tourism
- Roads, Regional Transport
- Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections
- The Legislature
- Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education
- Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault,
- Small Business, Recovery, North Coast
- Attorney-General
- Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety
- Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources.¹⁷

- 3.16** This means that question time is to be allocated equally between the substantive (or substituting) opposition and crossbench members of the committee. For some portfolios, the opposition will start the sequence of questions, and for others, the crossbench will start.
- 3.17** For all portfolios other than The Legislature, the resolution specifies the structure of the hearing in terms of time, and notes 15 minute blocks in which there is time reserved for government questions (although the government may choose not to use this time).
- 3.18** Under the resolution appointing the portfolio committees, each portfolio committee has two crossbench members. In practice, where more than one crossbench party or independent is represented on the committee and present at a hearing, crossbench time is allocated equally between the two, or otherwise divided by agreement between the two crossbench members.
- 3.19** By longstanding convention, the allocation of question time to participating crossbench members should be facilitated as far as possible, and is best dealt with through negotiation and consensus by members. If, however, participating cross bench members have been unable to negotiate the use of substantive cross bench members' time, the allocation of questioning time to those participating cross bench members is left in the hands of the Chair.
- 3.20** Whilst formal notice is not required, it is encouraged and common practice for participating members to advise the Chair of their intention to participate (either verbally or in writing). Notice will assist the Chair and other members in thinking about potential allocation of time before a hearing, even though a member is not required to give notice of participation in order to be allocated question time.
- 3.21** Substantive (or substituting) cross bench members can also cede their question time to the opposition, as long as no other substantive cross bench members

¹⁷ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3995.

wishes to use that time. If not all members are in agreement, then this should be formalised by a resolution.

Tendered documents

- 3.22** Witnesses may tender documents during a hearing. The committee will decide whether to accept and publish such documents.
- 3.23** A witness seeking to tender a document should identify the document and state clearly why the document is being provided. It is not desirable for documents that are publicly available to be tendered as part of a committee inquiry. However, a witness may request that such documents be circulated to members for their information.
- 3.24** Committee members are able to table documents during Budget Estimates hearings, for example if a member wants to question the witnesses on a matter referred to in a document. If the document identifies an individual, the committee should confirm that the member has the consent of that individual to table the document.
- 3.25** Committee members seeking to table Cabinet documents from current and former governments should consider the Privileges Committee report on the Examination, publication and use of cabinet documents by Legislative Council committees.¹⁸ In determining whether to publish and use such a document, the committee will consider whether it is in the public interest to do so.¹⁹
- 3.26** Witnesses and committee members tendering or tabling documents are encouraged to provide individual copies of the document for all committee members and relevant witnesses. Where a member tables a document, they may question the witness about the document if the witness has a copy of the document and all committee members have access to the document.

Documents in the possession of witnesses

- 3.27** In previous Budget Estimates inquiries an issue has arisen as to whether a committee can compel witnesses to immediately provide material in their possession, such as briefing folders.
- 3.28** Witnesses appear voluntarily at Budget Estimates hearings, and therefore by convention, witnesses should only be requested to produce documents voluntarily during a hearing.

¹⁸ Privileges Committee, NSW Legislative Council, *Examination, publication and use of cabinet documents by Legislative Council committees* (2022).

¹⁹ Privileges Committee, *Examination, publication and use of cabinet documents by Legislative Council committees*, pp viii-ix.

- 3.29** If a witness declines to produce a document during a hearing, the committee should ask the witness to state their reasons. Unless the committee determines immediately that the request should not be pressed, the committee should consider in private whether to order the production of the document.

Orders for the production of documents

- 3.30** Consistent with established practice, committees are encouraged to request documents be provided voluntarily in the first instance. However, in the event that a request is declined, a second request should be made for the documents to be provided voluntarily, often noting the powers of the committee to order the documents. If the second request is declined, a committee may seek to order the documents.
- 3.31** Guidance on the administrative arrangements for an order is to be taken from those that apply under Standing Order 52 for orders made by the House. For example, the terms of an order agreed to by a committee should specify the inquiry to which the order relates and the date by which the documents are to be returned.

Private (*in camera*) evidence

- 3.32** The Budget Estimates resolution requires Budget Estimates hearings to be held in public. This prevents the committees from hearing evidence in private (*in camera*).²⁰

Broadcast of proceedings

- 3.33** The Budget Estimates hearings are streamed live on the Parliament's website and are open to the media, in accordance with the [Broadcast of Proceedings Resolution of the House](#).²¹
- 3.34** The Broadcast of Proceedings Resolution states that unless the committee resolves otherwise, the House authorises the filming, broadcasting and photography of members and witnesses in committee proceedings by representatives of media organisations, including from around the committee meeting table, and by any member of the public, from the position of the audience.²² Representatives or members of the public do not need to be accredited with the press gallery at Parliament.

²⁰ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3995.

²¹ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 19 October 2022, pp 3747-3749.

²² Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 19 October 2022, p 3749.

- 3.35** A committee may adopt conditions in relation to the filming, broadcasting, rebroadcasting and photography of committee proceedings. A committee may also order that part of its proceedings not be filmed, broadcast or photographed.²³

Committee disorder

- 3.36** Under the sessional order on disorderly conduct during committee proceedings (not including a deliberative meeting), a member can be called to order three times for disorderly conduct. Such conduct could include the use of offensive words which are not withdrawn, rudeness towards a witness or disruptive behaviour like repeated interjections.
- 3.37** On the third call to order, the committee must privately deliberate to consider the member's disorderly conduct. If the disorder is not resolved informally, a member (not including the Chair) may move a motion that the member called to order be removed from the meeting for a period of time as the committee may decide, but not beyond the termination of the meeting.²⁴
- 3.38** If a member is removed from the hearing, a Special Report must be tabled in the House.

Dissent from a ruling of the Chair

- 3.39** A member may move dissent from a ruling of the Chair by moving a motion 'That the committee dissent from the ruling of the Chair'. In this case, the Chair requests that witnesses, members of the public and the media leave the room, and the committee considers the matter in private.
- 3.40** Once the room has been cleared, the dissenting member must state the objection in writing, in accordance with the pro-forma available from the committee clerk. The Chair will inform the committee of the member's grounds for dissent, and debate may ensue. The question on the motion will be put and the committee decides whether to uphold the dissent. If resolved in the affirmative, the ruling of the Chair is overturned. If resolved in the negative, the ruling stands.
- 3.41** Once the matter has been decided witnesses, members of the public and media will be readmitted. Where appropriate, the Chair may advise the audience of the outcome of the dissent motion.

Questions on notice

- 3.42** There are two ways in which questions may be placed on notice.

²³ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 19 October 2022, p 3749.

²⁴ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 15 August 2024, p 1443.

- During a hearing: if a witness is unable to answer a question, the witness may undertake to provide the written answer at a later time. It is important for the Chair to confirm if a witness has agreed to take a question on notice.
- After a hearing: members may lodge supplementary questions with the committee clerk by 5.00 pm within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript. Supplementary questions can be lodged by any member of the Legislative Council.²⁵

3.43 On receipt of the transcript of evidence, the Budget Estimates secretariat will highlight the questions taken on notice during the hearing and email the transcript to the witnesses through the relevant minister's office, together with any supplementary questions received from committee members. It is the responsibility of the relevant minister to distribute the highlighted transcript and ensure that all answers to questions taken on notice and supplementary questions are provided by the due date. A copy of the transcript with highlighted questions taken on notice will be published on the Budget Estimates webpage once the documents have been distributed to the minister's office.

3.44 All answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions must be provided within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness, or as otherwise determined by the committee.²⁶ If the due date falls on a weekend or public holiday, the answers must be provided by the next business day.

3.45 All answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, except those answers for which confidentiality is requested.²⁷ Any request for confidentiality should outline reasons, as this will assist the committee in its consideration of the issue.

3.46 Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be coordinated by the minister's office for the minister and departmental witnesses. They are to be provided to the secretariat as a bundle – answers to questions on notice in one PDF document and answers to supplementary questions in another PDF document.

Transcripts of evidence

3.47 The uncorrected transcript of evidence will be published on the committee's website as soon as it is available. The video from the hearing will also be uploaded to the Parliament's YouTube Channel, although this may take a day or two to arrange.

²⁵ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3996.

²⁶ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 10 May 2023, p 67.

²⁷ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3996.

- 3.48** The uncorrected transcript, with highlighted questions taken on notice, will be provided to each Minister's office to distribute to witnesses. Witnesses are thereby given the opportunity to correct transcription errors, for example, misspellings or duplicated words. However, the transcript is an official record of what was said during the hearing. Witnesses cannot change or improve the words actually said during the hearing, nor the grammar.
- 3.49** If a witness wishes to clarify or amend any evidence given during the hearing they can do so by writing to the committee. Usually, a committee will consider publishing correspondence outlining an amendment or clarification, with a footnote placed in the transcript to link to that amending/clarifying correspondence.

Chapter 4 Questions to witnesses

Rules governing questions

- 4.1 Budget Estimates is a broad-ranging inquiry and wide latitude is allowed in the asking of questions, subject to the following guidance.

Questions must be relevant

- 4.2 Questions must be relevant to the matter that has been referred to a committee for inquiry and report.²⁸ In the case of the Budget Estimates inquiry, this refers to the estimates of expenditure from the Consolidated Fund and other matters covered by the budget papers.
- 4.3 The budget papers and related documents not only contain information about the estimates of expenditure but also refer to the activities of government agencies and the implementation of policy. Information from a number of other sources can also relate to expenditure from the Consolidated Fund and therefore be relevant to the Budget Estimates inquiry, such as policy announcements by ministers or other government officials, and reports by the Audit Office.²⁹
- 4.4 In addition, an answer must be directly relevant to a question.³⁰

Questions relating to current committee inquiries

- 4.5 The Budget Estimates inquiry is usually one of several current committee inquiries. There may be a degree of overlap with other inquiries.
- 4.6 Questions asked during the Budget Estimates hearings should not attempt to debate the unreported proceedings of other current committee inquiries. However, this does not prevent members from asking questions that deal with the subject matter of other inquiries.³¹

²⁸ For further discussion see Evans H and Laing R (ed), *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice*, 14th ed, Canberra, Department of the Senate, 2016, p 482.

²⁹ Legislative Council, Clerk's Advice, *Advice regarding questioning in Budget Estimates with respect to Committee's other terms of reference and the content of questions*, June 2001, reproduced in *Budget Estimates Guide 2002-2003*, Appendix E.

³⁰ Standing Order 229(2) Evidence.

³¹ Legislative Council, Clerk's Advice, *Advice regarding questioning in Budget Estimates with respect to Committee's other terms of reference and the content of questions*, June 2001, reproduced in *Budget Estimates Guide 2002-2003*, Appendix E.

Questions to public servants

- 4.7** Public servants should not be asked to express an opinion on the merits of a government policy. By convention, committees should direct such questions to the responsible minister. This is because public servants should not be held accountable for the actions or policy decisions of ministers.
- 4.8** Public servants may, however, be asked to explain government policy, to describe how it has been formulated and how it differs from past policies.
- 4.9** A member can direct a question to a specific witness, including a minister. This often occurs in the morning session of hearing, given this is typically when the minister appears.
- 4.10** If a minister wishes for a departmental representative to answer a question, they can indicate this during the hearing and seek to proceed in that way. Sometimes a committee will prefer to focus on questions the minister can answer in the morning, leaving questions for departmental witnesses to the afternoon session.

Answers to questions

- 4.11** Generally speaking, a witness can answer a question as they see fit. Members should be aware of the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House, including the requirement that witnesses be treated with courtesy.³²

Answers must be directly relevant

- 4.12** Under standing order 229(2) an answer must be directly relevant to a question. If a point of order is raised in relation to an answer not being directly relevant to a question, it is up to the Chair to make a ruling as to whether the answer being provided by the witness complies with the requirement in the standing orders.

Time limits for witnesses to answer questions

- 4.13** A committee has the power to limit the time taken by a witness to answer a question. However, any time limits should be applied flexibly, and the committee should allow the witness to apply for an extension of time if required.³³

³² Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 25 October 2018, p 3244.

³³ NSW Legislative Council, Clerk's Advice, *Advice to General Purpose Standing Committees in relation to Budget Estimates hearings*, September 1999, reproduced in *Budget Estimates Guide 2001-2002*, Appendix D.

Redirecting a witness

- 4.14** There is nothing in the standing orders or from past committee practice that authorises a member to 'redirect' a question, but it has been a practice used by members at times when questioning witnesses.
- 4.15** Members should be mindful of the requirement under the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House to ensure witnesses are treated with courtesy.³⁴ In the past, some Chairs have upheld points of order on the basis that continual interruptions of a witness who is trying to answer a question has contravened the requirement to be courteous to witnesses.

Objections to questioning

- 4.16** Under the *Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901*, the Council and its committees have extensive powers to compel a witness to answer a 'lawful question'. Generally speaking, a question of fact, as opposed to an opinion, relevant to the committee's terms of reference, would be a lawful question.
- 4.17** Where witnesses object to answering a question, they should be invited to state the grounds for their objection. If a member seeks to press the question, the committee should consider whether to insist on an answer, having regard to:
- the grounds for the objection
 - the relevance of the question to the inquiry terms of reference
 - the necessity to the inquiry of the information sought.
- 4.18** If the committee decides that it requires an answer, it should inform the witness of the reasons why.
- 4.19** In the past, witnesses have raised objections to answering questions or providing documents on a number of grounds:
- the question asks for an opinion from a departmental officer on a matter of government policy
 - the question or request for papers raises issues of commercial-in-confidence
 - the question breaches the *sub judice* convention
 - the question seeks adverse reflection on another person
 - the question is not relevant to the inquiry terms of reference
 - the disclosure of information required by the question would be prejudicial to the privacy or rights of others

³⁴ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 25 October 2018, p 3244.

- the question or request for papers raises issues relating to public interest immunity (previously known as Crown privilege)
- the question or request for papers raises issues relating to legal professional privilege
- the witness claims privilege against self-incrimination.

Chapter 5 Role of committee members

Attendance at deliberative meetings

Prior to the Budget Estimates inquiry

- 5.1 Each committee should meet in the lead-up to the Budget Estimates inquiry to consider the list of witnesses from the previous year, and any requests for specific witnesses by members, including parliamentary secretaries.

Before the hearing

- 5.2 A short deliberative meeting will be held at the start of each day to deal with procedural matters, including any advice of substitute and participating members. Meetings will be scheduled 15 minutes prior to the advertised commencement time for the hearing.

Supplementary questions

Lodging supplementary questions

- 5.3 The Budget Estimates resolutions provide for supplementary questions to be lodged by members with the committee clerk by 5.00 pm within two business days following receipt of the hearing transcript.³⁵ Members will be reminded by email of the deadline for lodging supplementary questions for each hearing.
- 5.4 Supplementary questions will not be accepted after the deadline. Late questions may be lodged on the Questions and Answers paper in the House in the usual manner.
- 5.5 Supplementary questions must be emailed to BudgetEstimates@parliament.nsw.gov.au. The subject line should specify the committee number, the hearing date, and the portfolio, e.g.: 'PC 5 - 22 August - Attorney General'.
- 5.6 Members should proofread questions prior to lodgement. Unlike questions lodged through the House, questions will not be checked for typographical or grammatical errors before they are forwarded to the relevant minister.
- 5.7 Unless there is a clear request for confidentiality, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions will be published on the committee's website after

³⁵ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3996.

they have been circulated to members.³⁶ Any requests for confidentiality are to be considered by the committee.

Format for supplementary questions

- 5.1 Supplementary questions should follow the format of questions lodged on the Questions and Answers paper, as shown in the example below.

Money contributed by parents to public schools

- (1) (a) Does the Department of Education keep any records of the unit of money that parents contribute to public schools, such as:
- (i) Nominal school fees?
 - (ii) Additional school fees for special purposes, for example specialist teachers for music, sport, languages?
 - (iii) Library fund contributions?
 - (iv) Fundraising monies for school asset acquisition?
- (b) If so, can details of those figures be provided?
- (c) If not, is any such information provided to the department by individual public schools that could be collected?
- (d) Has this ever been considered in the past?
- (e) If so, when and by whom?

³⁶ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3996.

Chapter 6 Role of ministerial contact officers

Responsibilities before the hearing

- 6.1** Each ministerial office nominates a contact officer to co-ordinate matters between the minister, parliamentary secretaries, the agency or agencies under their direction and the Budget Estimates secretariat.
- 6.2** Ministerial contact officers liaise with, and ensure the attendance of, witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations.
- 6.3** Before each hearing, the ministerial contact officer is responsible for:
- advising of any requests by witnesses in relation to the time of their appearance (for example, a witness request to leave the hearing early to attend another engagement)
 - advising of any witness who requires a holy book other than the Bible for taking the oath.
- 6.4** Requests regarding witnesses should be emailed to BudgetEstimates@parliament.nsw.gov.au.
- 6.5** If a witness proposes to tender any documents during the hearing, the ministerial contact officer should ensure that there are 10 copies of each document.

Responsibilities after the hearing

Return of answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions

- 6.6** As soon as possible after a hearing, the ministerial contact officer will be emailed a proof copy of the transcript. The questions taken on notice will be highlighted in the transcript. A list of supplementary questions submitted by members will also be attached.
- 6.7** Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are due 21 calendar days from the date when the questions are sent to the ministerial contact officer, unless the committee decides on another timeframe.³⁷
- 6.8** Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be coordinated by the minister's office for ministers and departmental witnesses. They are to be provided to the secretariat as a bundle – answers to questions on notice in one PDF document and answers to questions on notice in another PDF document. Both documents should be sent by email and in hard copy, to:

³⁷ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 10 May 2023, p 67.

- Email – BudgetEstimates@parliament.nsw.gov.au
- Hard copy – delivered to the Budget Estimates secretariat in Room 812K, Level 8, Parliament House.

6.9 Answers must be accompanied by a cover letter signed by the relevant minister. There is no need for the minister to sign every page of the answers. It is acceptable for the minister to provide an electronic signature.

Requests for answers to be kept confidential

6.10 Answers will be automatically published on the committee's website, unless there is a clear request that a particular answer be kept confidential.³⁸ If there is a request for confidentiality, it is the decision of the committee whether to agree to the request.

6.11 Any request for confidentiality should be noted on the cover letter enclosing the answers. Confidential material should be clearly identified and separated from material to be made public.

Transcripts of evidence

6.12 Ministerial contact officers should distribute proof Hansard transcripts to the minister and other witnesses who appeared at the hearings so they can make any necessary corrections. The usual rules regarding corrections to Hansard transcripts apply. Alterations should only be made if they are necessary to correct a transcription error, not to improve style or sentence construction. Substantive amendments to or clarifications of evidence may be requested in writing through a separate letter to the committee.

6.13 Transcript corrections, amendments and clarifications are due at the same time as the answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions. The minister's office is to coordinate them and provide all of them to the secretariat in the one bundle along with the answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions (see above). Individual witnesses should not submit any transcript corrections, amendments or clarifications direct to the secretariat.

6.14 Uncorrected transcripts will be published on the committee's website shortly after the hearing is held.

³⁸ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, p 3996.

Appendix 1 Committee Membership

Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance

Hon Jeremy Buckingham MLC	Legalise Cannabis Party	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Robert Borsak MLC	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Scott Farlow MLC	Liberal Party	
Hon Dr Sarah Kaine MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Stephen Lawrence MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Bob Nanva MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Chris Rath MLC	Liberal Party	

Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health

Dr Amanda Cohn MLC	The Greens	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Susan Carter MLC	Liberal Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Greg Donnelly MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC	The Greens	
Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC*	The Nationals	
Hon Emily Suvaal MLC	Australian Labor Party	

Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	The Greens	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Rachel Merton MLC	Liberal Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Ms Tania Mihailuk MLC	Independent	
Hon Emily Suvaal MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Natalie Ward MLC*	Liberal Party	

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Hon Mark Banasiak MLC	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Emma Hurst MLC	Animal Justice Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Scott Barrett MLC	The Nationals	
Hon Greg Donnelly MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC	The Nationals	
Hon Cameron Murphy MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Peter Primrose MLC	Australian Labor Party	

Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Justice and Communities

Hon Robert Borsak MLC	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	<i>Chair</i>
Ms Sue Higginson MLC	The Greens	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Greg Donnelly MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Stephen Lawrence MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC	Liberal Party	
Hon Cameron Murphy MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Damien Tudehope MLC*	Liberal Party	

Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts

Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC	The Greens	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Mark Banasiak MLC	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Dr Sarah Kaine MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Bob Nanva MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Nichole Overall MLC	The Nationals	
Hon Natalie Ward MLC	Liberal Party	

Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment

Ms Sue Higginson MLC	The Greens	<i>Chair</i>
Hon John Ruddick MLC	Libertarian Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Anthony D'Adam MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Jacqui Munro MLC	Liberal Party	
Hon Peter Primrose MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Chris Rath MLC	Liberal Party	

Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service

Hon Emma Hurst MLC	Animal Justice Party	<i>Chair</i>
Dr Amanda Cohn MLC	The Greens	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Wes Fang MLC*	The Nationals	
Hon Aileen MacDonald MLC	Liberal Party	
Hon Peter Primrose MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Emily Suvaal MLC	Australian Labor Party	

Appendix 2 Schedule: Hearings – by date

Initial hearings 2026-2027

Day One: Tuesday 18 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage (Sharpe)	7	Macquarie
Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice (Dib)	8	Jubilee

Day Two: Wednesday 19 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney (Car)	3	Macquarie
Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth (Jackson)	2	Jubilee

Day Three: Thursday 20 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Premier (Minns)	1	Macquarie
Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs and Tourism (Kamper)	4	Jubilee

Day Four: Friday 21 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Roads, Regional Transport (Aitchison)	6	Macquarie
Treasurer (Mookhey)	1	Jubilee

Day Five: Monday 24 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Planning and Public Spaces (Scully)	7	Macquarie
Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections (Chanthivong)	8	Jubilee

Day Six: Tuesday 25 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion (Washington)	5	Macquarie
The Legislature (Franklin)	1	Jubilee

Day Seven: Wednesday 26 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Skills, TAFE, Tertiary Education (Whan)	3	Macquarie
Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research (Harris)	1	Jubilee

Day Eight: Thursday 27 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast (Park)	2	Macquarie
Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Harrison)	5	Jubilee

Day Nine: Friday 28 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter (Catley)	5	Macquarie
Small Business, Recovery, North Coast (Saffin)	8	Jubilee

Day Ten: Monday 31 August 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Special Minister of State, Transport, the Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy (Graham)	6	Macquarie
Attorney-General (Daley)	5	Jubilee

Day Eleven: Tuesday 1 September 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety (Cotsis)	1	Macquarie
Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales (Moriarty)	4	Jubilee

Day Twelve: Wednesday 2 September 2026

Portfolio	PC	Room
Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources (Houssos)	1	Macquarie
Local Government (Hoenig)	8	Jubilee

Appendix 3 Schedule: Hearings – by committee

Initial hearings 2026 -2027

Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance

Date	Portfolio	Room
Thursday 20 August 2026	Premier (Minns)	Macquarie
Friday 21 August 2026	Treasurer (Mookhey)	Jubilee
Tuesday 25 August 2026	The Legislature (Franklin)	Jubilee
Wednesday 26 August 2026	Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research (Harris)	Jubilee
Tuesday 1 September 2026	Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety (Cotsis)	Macquarie
Wednesday 2 September 2026	Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources (Houssos)	Macquarie

Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health

Date	Portfolio	Room
Wednesday 19 August 2026	Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth (Jackson)	Jubilee
Thursday 27 August 2026	Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast (Park)	Macquarie

Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education

Date	Portfolio	Room
Wednesday 19 August 2026	Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney (Car)	Macquarie
Wednesday 26 August 2026	Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education (Whan)	Macquarie

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Date	Portfolio	Room
Thursday 20 August 2026	Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs and Tourism (Kamper)	Jubilee
Tuesday 1 September 2026	Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales (Moriarty)	Jubilee

Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Justice and Communities

Date	Portfolio	Room
Tuesday 25 August 2026	Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion (Washington)	Macquarie
Thursday 27 August 2026	Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Harrison)	Jubilee
Friday 28 August 2026	Police and Counter-Terrorism, the Hunter (Catley)	Macquarie
Monday 31 August 2026	Attorney-General (Daley)	Jubilee

Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts

Date	Portfolio	Room
Friday 21 August 2026	Roads, Regional Transport (Aitchison)	Macquarie
Monday 31 August 2026	Special Minister of State, Transport, the Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy (Graham)	Macquarie

Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment

Date	Portfolio	Room
Tuesday 18 August 2026	Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage (Sharpe)	Macquarie
Monday 24 August 2026	Planning and Public Spaces (Scully)	Macquarie

Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service

Date	Portfolio	Room
Tuesday 18 August 2026	Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice (Dib)	Jubilee
Monday 24 August 2026	Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections (Chanthivong)	Jubilee
Friday 28 August 2026	Small Business, Recovery, North Coast (Saffin)	Jubilee
Wednesday 2 September 2026	Local Government (Hoenig)	Jubilee

Appendix 4 Budget Estimates Resolution

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2026-2027

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (9) That the Budget Estimates and related papers for the financial year 2026-2027 presenting the amounts to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund be referred to the Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report.
- (10) That, further to the resolution of the House of 21 October 2025 adopting the 2026 sitting calendar,³⁹ the 2026-2027 initial budget estimates hearings be scheduled as follows:

Day One:	Tuesday 18 August 2026
PC 7	Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage
PC 8	Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice
Day Two:	Wednesday 19 August 2026
PC 3	Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney
PC 2	Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth
Day Three:	Thursday 20 August 2026
PC 1	Premier
PC 4	Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs and Tourism
Day Four:	Friday 21 August 2026
PC 1	Treasurer
PC 6	Roads, Regional Transport
Day Five:	Monday 24 August 2026
PC 7	Planning and Public Spaces
PC 8	Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections
Day Six:	Tuesday 25 August 2026
PC 5	Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion
PC 1	The Legislature
Day Seven:	Wednesday 26 August 2026
PC 1	Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing,

³⁹ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 22 October 2025, item 3.

PC 3 Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

Day Eight: Thursday 27 August 2026

PC 2 Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast

PC 5 Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Day Nine: Friday 28 August 2026

PC 5 Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter

PC 8 Small Business, Recovery, North Coast

Day Ten: Monday 31 August 2026

PC 6 Special Minister of State, Transport, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy

PC 5 Attorney-General

Day Eleven: Tuesday 1 September 2026

PC 4 Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

PC 1 Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety

Day Twelve: Wednesday 2 September 2026

PC 8 Local Government

PC 1 Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources

(11) That for the purposes of the 2026-2027 initial budget estimates hearings:

- (a) each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, and, if required, by Government members only from 10.45 am to 11.00 am, 12.45 pm to 1.00 pm, and 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm, and
- (b) the portfolio of The Legislature be examined by Opposition, Crossbench and Government members from 9.15 am to 11.00 am, and from 11.15 am to 1.00 pm.

(12) That, unless the committee decides otherwise:

- (a) the sequence of questions to be asked at the hearings for the following portfolios alternate between opposition and crossbench members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each:
 - (i) Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage,
 - (ii) Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney,
 - (iii) Premier,
 - (iv) Treasurer,

- (v) Planning and Public Spaces,
 - (vi) Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion,
 - (vii) Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research,
 - (viii) Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast,
 - (ix) Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter,
 - (x) Special Minister of State, Transport, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy,
 - (xi) Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales,
 - (xii) Local Government, and
- (b) the sequence of questions to be asked at the hearings for the following portfolios alternate between crossbench and opposition members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each:
- (i) Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice,
 - (ii) Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth,
 - (iii) Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, Jobs and Tourism,
 - (iv) Roads, Regional Transport,
 - (v) Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections,
 - (vi) The Legislature,
 - (vii) Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education,
 - (viii) Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault,
 - (ix) Small Business, Recovery, North Coast,
 - (x) Attorney-General,
 - (xi) Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety,
 - (xii) Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources.

(13) That for the purposes of the 2026-2027 initial budget estimates hearings:

- (a) the committees must hear evidence in public,
- (b) the committees may ask for explanations from ministers, parliamentary secretaries or officers of departments, statutory bodies or corporations, relating to the items of proposed expenditure,
- (c) ministers be invited to appear for the morning sessions only unless requested by committees to appear also for the afternoon session,
- (d) witnesses, including ministers, may not make an opening statement before a committee commences questions,
- (e) members may lodge supplementary questions with the committee clerk by 5.00 pm within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript, and

- (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, except those answers for which confidentiality is requested, after they have been circulated to committee members.
- (14) That, as per the resolution of the House on 21 October 2025 adopting the 2026 sitting calendar, the 2026-2027 supplementary budget estimates hearings are to be held from 26 October to 30 October 2026, and are to be conducted under the same terms as the initial hearings, unless the committee decides otherwise.
- (15) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, a meeting is not required to be convened for a budget estimates draft report to be considered, and instead, the committees may consider and agree to reports by email, unless at least three members call for a meeting to adopt such reports.
- (16) That the committees report by 24 December 2026.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Minutes, NSW Legislative Council, 24 June 2026, item 28.

