

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 1 (Transcript p. 3)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Minister, you have indicated that you have spoken to the parents of Braxton. Can you let the Committee know how you got the contact details for the father?

Ms PRU GOWARD: My office obtained the contact details.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Do you know where they got that number from?

Ms PRU GOWARD: My office. I will ask Mr Coutts-Trotter if he can advise you.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am sorry, I do not know. I am happy to take it on notice though

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You are not able to say how you got Mr Slager's mobile number?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You are aware that there was someone that the family allocated as a contact point in relation to this matter?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I will have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

The Department provided the number to my office. I felt that it was appropriate to convey my condolences to Braxton's family.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 2 (Transcript p. 3)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: There has been a concern that the family were approached by someone purporting to be a journalist on 29 August to obtain the private phone number of Mr Slager. Are you aware of that?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I am not aware of that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Are you able to guarantee that that was not someone from either the department or your office?

Ms PRU GOWARD: Obviously, I will have to take that on notice. This is the first time I have heard an allegation of that kind.

ANSWER:

I refer you to Question 1.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 3 (Transcript p. 3)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Obviously, there are serious privacy issues here and some concerns. I understand that the media reported that you had spoken to the family. Did your office tell the media that you had spoken to the family?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I am not aware of the details of that. I will have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I refer you to Question 1.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 4 (Transcript p. 6)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am just trying to be clear about the money. There was a proposal for a child protection academy but that has not been supported. I hear you that there are currently two pilots in the Central Coast and the Hunter. Can you confirm whether they are being done from existing resources, given that the child protection academy was not funded in the budget?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: No, there are additional resources that were made available in the 2017-18 budget. I am happy to take the detail of that on notice and respond to the Committee.

ANSWER:

I am advised that \$1.6 million of funding has been allocated to the Child Protection Academy.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 5 (Transcript p. 9-10)

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, sorry, but could you answer my question and let me know how many new refuges have been constructed or acquired under this Government?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: In 2014 there was 76 refuges—13 owned by non-government organisations and 63 properties owned by government. Of course, all were operated by non-government organisations. In 2017 there are 65 properties owned by government and operated by non-government organisations and a further—

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: That is two more.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: There are two more government-owned properties and 16 nongovernment owned and operated outlets. There were 76 in 2014 and 81 in 2017. I am happy to provide a more detailed answer on notice that shows the changes over that period of time.

ANSWER:

I am advised that information regarding the number of women's refuges is available online. http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0007/418381/NSW_FACS_Help_for_Homeless_Women_and_Children_260617.pdf/ recache

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 6 (Transcript p. 10)

Ms PRU GOWARD: Yes, that is one. But we have also, of course, expanded Start Safely so that people get a private rental subsidy. We have now ensured that that is open to people who are earning moderate incomes; not just people on benefits. We are trialling that through Specialist Homelessness Services, so it can directly allocate the money itself. We have invested more money in Specialist Homelessness Services. We have spent a record amount of money on those initiatives.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Maybe you could take that on notice, Mr Coutts-Trotter? How much did the New South Wales Government allocate last year to refurbishing women's refuges? You can take that on notice if you like.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to take that on notice.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Sure. I would also like to know how many refuges were refurbished, if that is okay.

ANSWER:

I am advised that 46 women's refuges had work undertaken in the last financial year. Work was undertaken in response to requests made by providers who manage refuges.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 7 (Transcript p. 11)

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I am talking about the Going Home Staying Home Monitoring and Evaluation Advisory Group.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: No, the group still exists under the chair, Eileen Baldry. I am happy to check to see if we can release minutes.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How often do they meet?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to check that for you. They recently met in either May or June to deal with the early review of the specialist homeless system reforms that were conducted by the University of New South Wales and the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute. As I understand it, that report is now published.

Ms PRU GOWARD: And there is a 35 per cent increase.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am happy to find out about the regularity of meetings to see whether minutes of those discussions can be released.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the Monitoring and Evaluation Advisory group (MEAG) last met on 31 August 2017. The frequency of MEAG meetings is scheduled around key milestones and activities. Over the past 12 months, the key focus of the MEAG has been the Early Review of the SHS Program. MEAG members provided significant input into the design of the Early Review, as well as input and advice into the drafting process for the Report.

The report is available online

http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0006/428127/Early_Review_of_SHS_Program.pdf

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 8 (Transcript p. 14)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you provide an assessment publicly of that rapid health check conducted by Ernst and Young?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to take advice from a probity perspective, but if there are no probity concerns about it we would be happy to provide it to the Committee.

ANSWER:

FACS will not be publically releasing information about the Rapid Health Check as it is subject to a procurement process.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 9 (Transcript p. 14)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am not asking about short-listing. I would also like the figures on how many did not submit a tender at all. You can take it on notice; it is not supposed to be a test.

Ms MULKERIN: I can have a look at my notes. We are likely to be able to answer that before the end of the session.

ANSWER:

I am advised that two existing residential care providers advised that they would not participate in the tender for Intensive Therapeutic Care.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 10 (Transcript p. 16)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you guarantee that kids who are in this transition as a result of your tendering process are not being put into motels?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I will ask Michael Coutts-Trotter to answer you.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would need to take that on notice to confirm the placement details of each of those children. I want to be accurate about that.

ANSWER:

I am advised that all of these children have now transitioned to their placements.

The Minister has made it clear that the decade's long practice of utilising motels and serviced apartments needs to end. It is unacceptable for children. The Minister has instructed the Department to look at, and present her, with alternative solutions.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 11 (Transcript p. 16)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: What sorts of targets have you set for foster care recruitment in the coming 12 months?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: From memory, based on our assessments, we need about 600 carers.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Given how difficult it is, is that your target?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I will double check but that is my recollection.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the introduction of the Permanency Support Program in October 2017 will require a range of people to support children. There is a need for up to 660 people who can provide a home for children whilst parents get help so their children can return home, prospective guardians and adoptive parents and respite support.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 12 (Transcript p. 17)

Ms PRU GOWARD: The Specialist Homelessness Services Practice Guideline, funded by the department, requires providers to accommodate family pets or to assist clients to find a safe alternative for them if they are at risk of or experiencing homelessness, and they are required by law to accommodate companion animals. Increasingly, we are attempting to improve the capacity to accommodate pets. If unable to accommodate a family pet, refuge services may work with local veterinary services such as the RSPCA Pets in Need, Living Ruff and Safe Beds for Pets to temporarily house pets when people are at risk of experiencing homelessness. Safe Beds for Pets has been specifically designed for people experiencing domestic violence.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: How long has that been in place?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I will see if I have that advice.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: You can take it on notice

ANSWER:

I am advised that requirements for providers to accommodate family pets or to connect clients with appropriate services for their pets has been part of the Specialist Homelessness Service Practice Guideline since 2014.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 13 (Transcript p. 17)

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: Are FACS staff trained to recognise and report the state or condition of animals—whether they have been harmed—as part of their overall assessment?

Ms PRU GOWARD: For child abuse reports?

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: Child abuse and domestic violence.

Ms PRU GOWARD: I will ask Mr Coutts-Trotter to answer but I just reiterate that there are training packages out there.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Perhaps my colleague Simone Walker can respond.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: Because this is something that police are taking far more seriously.

Ms WALKER: Looking at the reports that come across my desk, it is a regular feature of what is commented on when our caseworkers go into houses—the nature of the animals in the house, how they are kept, whether the houses are clean and tidy in relation to the animals as well, and whether that puts children at additional risk. I would probably have to take on notice specific training about the welfare of animals.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: And asking particular questions?

Ms WALKER: Absolutely.

ANSWER:

I am advised that case worker training does not currently incorporate specific animal welfare training. However, as part of the safety and risk assessment that caseworkers complete when assessing the safety of a child, the condition of the home (including animal hygiene, appropriateness of sleeping arrangements for animals and humans in the home) is considered and assessed.

There are services available such as Safe Beds for Pets (coordinated by the RSPCA), that provide temporary housing for animals that are involved in a domestic violence situations. Services such as this are used by FACS where animals require care until family situations are stabilised.

The welfare and understanding of family pets are also considered when foster or relative kinship placements are assessed for suitability for the placement of a child or young person.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 14 (Transcript p. 19-20)

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, are you aware of any statistics that point to an increase in ADVOs being brought by police on behalf of men against women?

Ms PRU GOWARD: Anecdotally I do hear that, but I will ask the department if they have any statistical information.

Ms MULKERIN: No, I am not aware. We need to take that on notice.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: That would be good because I have received reports, like you might have, that in cases of mutual conflict police are often opting to favour the first caller rather than considering other factors including physical and financial power imbalances between the parties. I am just wondering if you have that on your radar, and what can be done about it from your perspective?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I do have it on my radar and it is something that, obviously, the police and justice authorities and ourselves need to be satisfied about to make sure that the process—it might start with a charge but where it ends up is very much about how it is managed by the police and ourselves. I would like to take it on notice, but I agree with you.

ANSWER:

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

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 15 (Transcript p. 20)

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I read an article in April this year in the Macarthur Chronicle that the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services were looking at setting up a refuge in Camden or Wollondilly by next year. Is this something that the New South Wales Government is involved in at all, providing support to, because I guess the rate of domestic violence is high? They are thinking of setting up a refuge. Is the Government involved in that project?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Neither Deidre nor I are aware of it, but it does not mean that our local leadership may not be; so we will check that and confirm for you on those.

ANSWER:

I am advised the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) is aware of Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (MWDVCAS, provided by Macarthur Legal Centre) wanting to establish a refuge for women experiencing domestic and family violence in Camden or Wollondilly.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 16 (Transcript p. 20)

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Minister, you highlighted the program with the RSPCA NSW. Has that started?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I would have to take advice.

Ms MULKERIN: As the Minister outlined, last year there was the first round of the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund and this particular initiative was shortlisted to be funded and they are standing up around now—the funding has begun for this financial year.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: So there are now places in refuges for pets?

Ms MULKERIN: I think the program is just beginning to stand up. We could take on notice the

specific details about when that will start operating.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How much funding from the Innovation Fund has been provided to that program?

Ms MULKERIN: I would have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

Refer to Ms Mulkerin's comments (page 26 of the Transcript), where the funding amount was provided.

Women NSW through the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund has provided funding to the RSPCA for its Safe Families project. The project supports a refuge to accommodate victims of domestic and family violence together with their pets.

The package includes: pet enclosures, food veterinary support, and training for refuge staff in basic pet care.

By supporting refuges to accommodate victims and their pets together, Safe Families removes a barrier faced by victims with pets in accessing safe accommodation and improves the capacity of the domestic and family violence system to respond to the needs of victims with pets.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

The project is being implemented in partnership with the RSPCA and Dignity Ltd from 1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018. According to the project proposal residents with pets are scheduled to be accepted in October 2017.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 17 (Transcript p. 21)

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My last question: Do you know waiting list times for the Staying Home Leaving Violence program in different areas? Do you calculate and keep track of people on the waiting list to access that program?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: To be honest, I do not know. Perhaps Ms Mulkerin does?

Ms MULKERIN: No.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We will find out what data we have got about it in the sense of unmet demand for the support

ANSWER:

I am advised that information about Staying Home Leaving Violence is available online <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/for-agencies-that-work-with-us/our-funding-programs/staying-home-leaving-violence>

I am also advised that the Staying Home Leaving Violence Evaluation is available online http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0005/335786/staying_home_leaving_violence_evaluation_report.pdf

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 18 (Transcript p. 21-22)

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Even good people make mistakes. We have not sold 4,000 social housing properties in that period.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: How many have you sold then?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I can give the Committee that answer on notice but we were previously selling—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Did you not think we would ask today?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: —around 800 or 900 properties a year. That has fallen to, I think, in the

last year, 290 or so. Is that right, Ms Skewes?

Ms SKEWES: It is 282.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I think what Mr Newman's figures might do is include, for example,

properties that were funded under the Commonwealth stimulus project which began to be delivered in New South Wales in 2010, 2011 and 2012 and under the agreement with the Commonwealth were always going to be transferred to community housing providers. So we were not aware of the 4,000 figure until yesterday. We are struggling to work out how Mr Newman, good person that he is, came up with that figure.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Can you just clarify that 4,000 properties also does not necessarily

mean individual units? There are properties on one title, for example, that might have eight units on it?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: What I can confirm is we have not sold 4,000 social housing units.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Will you provide to the Committee the list and can you also clarify

whether if it is one title how many units of housing? If it is a block of six studios, I want to know that it is six studios that have gone, not just one.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes, we can give you that. Over the same time period that Mr Newman was referencing?

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

ANSWER:

The Department of Family and Community Services continually reviews the suitability of the properties it owns to ensure they meet the needs of the social housing system.

I am advised that between 2011/12 and 2015/16, LAHC sold 2,567 properties. In this same period, LAHC completed 3,716 social housing properties.

The list of property types sold includes:

- Cottages
- Terraces
- Townhouses
- Units
- Villas

Further information regarding social housing dwellings is available in FACS Annual Reports.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 19 (Transcript p. 22)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, and I would also like to know how many units have been built.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am happy to do that. I should also stress that one thing that Mr Newman got bang to rights was that every cent we get from asset sales we reinvest in social housing.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Six years in, how much social housing has been built?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am happy to do that but I have the figure from 2016-17 to hand:

2,016 social housing dwellings were either completed, were underway or were committed to by developers as part of the Ivanhoe—

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I want to know how many have been completed with people living in them. Can you provide that?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I am happy to do that.

ANSWER:

I refer you to Question 18.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 20 (Transcript p. 23)

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: How many rugby league clubs participated in the Tackling

Violence program in 2014? While you are looking for those figures, I am also interested in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Ms MULKERIN: I do not have that level of detail with me, I will take it on notice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do you have the figures for 2016 and 2017?

Ms MULKERIN: I will take it all on notice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: The information provided to me states there has been a decrease in the number of clubs participating in 2017 from 2016?

Ms MULKERIN: I do not think that is correct, but I do not want to mislead the Committee. I will take it on notice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, are you aware of any decrease in the number of clubs participating in this program?

Ms PRU GOWARD: I will defer to the department's advice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: You are not aware of any decrease in the participation by clubs?

Ms PRU GOWARD: No, that is why I am waiting on advice from the department.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Which National Rugby League [NRL] players are currently involved in the program? [Tackling Violence]

Ms MULKERIN: I will need to take that on notice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: What research has been done about which communities to take it to? [Tackling Violence]

Ms PRU GOWARD: I do not think we have that level of detail here. We will take it on notice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Have the young Aboriginal women workshops been delivered to schools and have they been delivered to all of the clubs that are supposed to be participating in the program? [Tackling Violence]

Ms MULKERIN: We will take all that on notice.

ANSWER:

Information about sponsored clubs is available on the Women NSW Website at https://www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence_prevention/tackling-violence

The program began in 2009 with six clubs and has 30 clubs in 2017.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Participating clubs are selected based on:

- demonstrated willingness and commitment to tackle the issue of domestic and family violence within their communities
- proportion of Indigenous players in the club, or in the community
- communities with high, or escalating rates of domestic and family violence
- communities where local rugby league clubs have significant influence in their communities.

David Peachey, a former NRL player, is the current Tackling Violence Ambassador.

Tackling Violence will return to contracted clubs for delivery sessions in five schools following the 2017 season, as well as three Young Aboriginal Women's Groups, two Aboriginal Women's Groups, three Aboriginal Boys Groups, two Aboriginal Men's Groups, and one Aboriginal Women's DFV Camp.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 21 (Transcript p. 26)

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many children is your department currently placing in the statutory out-of-home care of Life Without Barriers?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I will confirm the exact number, but Life Without Barriers provides care to around 1,000 children in New South Wales, I think.

ANSWER:

I am advised that Life Without Barriers is contracted to deliver 1,158 places across foster and residential care. As at 31 July 2017, Life Without Barriers had 1,119 children and young people in their care.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 22 (Transcript p. 27)

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Mulkerin, after the Joint Child Death Review found so many egregious failures by Life Without Barriers how many children were removed from that organisation's care?

Ms MULKERIN: I would need to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

Any decision to change a placement for a child is made in the best interest of the child's safety and wellbeing. I am advised that no children or young people have been removed from the organisation following the Joint Child Death Review.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 23 (Transcript p. 28)

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is Life Without Barriers on a performance improvement plan?

Ms MULKERIN: There have been times when Life Without Barriers has been on a performance improvement plan.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are they currently on one? Were they put on one as a result of the joint Child Death Review?

Ms MULKERIN: A performance improvement plan related to Life Without Barriers and its

compliance concerning swimming pools.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can you provide a copy of that performance compliance program to the Committee?

Ms MULKERIN: We would have to seek legal advice about whether there are any impediments to that. If there is not, then of course.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Absolutely.

ANSWER:

I am advised that Life Without Barriers (LWB) have an action plan in place for service provision related to residential care services on the Mid North Coast. A procurement process for Intensive Residential Care is currently underway.

A Performance Improvement Plan was put in place in March 2016. As at March 2017, LWB have addressed all elements of an action plan to improve performance and are no longer on this plan.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 24 (Transcript p. 29)

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Can you elaborate on the adoption transformation program?

Ms PRU GOWARD: The adoption transformation program has many aspects to it. I will ask Ms

Walker to answer.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I will get you to take that question on notice.

Ms WALKER: Sure. There is quite a bit of detail about the transformation.

ANSWER:

The NSW Government is investing \$24 million over four years to support the Adoption Transformation Program.

By investing in adoption transformation FACS has four key points of focus:

- Improving service delivery in support of adoption. In short, effective and timely management of adoption applications and a reduced application backlog.
- Increasing access by removing barriers to participation. In short, more carers seeking to adopt.
- In July 2017 a new means-tested Adoption Allowance was introduced.
- Ensuring that adoption has its proper place in decision-making regarding children's permanency. This will mean more children in care who have adoption as the permanency goal.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 25 (Transcript p. 30)

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Could you briefly explain the Social Housing Management Transfer Program?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I would be happy to, and for detail I will pass to my colleague Paul

Vevers. We are in the process of transferring not the ownership but the management of around 14,000 social housing dwellings in a number of areas of New South Wales to the management of community housing providers. They will manage the properties and also support the residents and other household members. This is really the outworking of longstanding policy agreement between the Commonwealth and the States that allows

States to transfer up to 35 per cent of our social housing portfolio to the community housing sector.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Can you take the rest of the question on notice?

ANSWER:

The Social Housing Management Transfers program is one of a number of strategic initiatives that contributes towards the achievement of the strategic priorities of the Future Directions strategy for social housing in NSW:

- More opportunities, support and incentives to avoid and/or leave social housing (by driving provision of enhanced tenant support services by CHPs)
- A better social housing experience.

The program also achieves the following objectives outlined in the Future Directions strategy:

- Improving outcomes and experiences for people living in social housing
- Leveraging extra funding arising from Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) to support improved client outcomes
- Improving the financial sustainability of the social housing system
- Enhancing service delivery through local community presence and support networks.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

The SHMT Program will see responsibility for management of approximately 14,000 LAHC owned social housing properties across nine Service Packages transfer to community housing providers through a Request for Tender (RFT) process.

The 9 Service Packages are:

- Hunter New England-Service Package 1: Maitland and Port Stephens LGAs
- Hunter-New England Service Package 2: Singleton, Cessnock, Dungog, Mid-Coast and Muswellbrook LGAs
- Hunter-New England Service Package 3: Gunnedah, Tamworth, Walcha, Liverpool Plains, Armidale-Dumaresq, Glen Innes, Gwydir, Guyra, Inverell, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tenterfield and Uralla LGAs
- Shoalhaven Service Package 4: Shoalhaven LGA
- Mid-North Coast Service Package 5: Coffs Harbour and Bellingen LGAs
- Mid North Coast Service Package 6: Nambucca, Kempsey, and Port Macquarie-Hastings LGAs
- North Sydney Service Package 7: Ryde, Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai LGAs
- North Sydney Service Package 8: Northern Beaches and Mosman LGAs
- North Sydney Service Package 9: North Sydney, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Willoughby LGAs

The properties will be transferred under a 20 year lease term. As a result of the SHMT Program, \$1 billion in additional revenue from Commonwealth Rent Assistance will be available to the social housing system in NSW over the 20 year lease period.

In addition to tenancy and property management, the new CHP landlords will be required to deliver additional services. The new CHP landlord will take over responsibility for delivery of the social housing service system in the Service Package location and invest some of the additional CRA revenue in these services. This includes providing tenant support coordination services to assist vulnerable tenants to improve their circumstances.

Following transfer, tenants will continue to maintain the same income after rent, and the terms of the program contract protect the right to housing, income after rent and tenancy rights of transferred tenants.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

As a result of the SHMT Program, the proportion of social housing in NSW managed by non-government organisations will rise to 32%, nearing the 35% figure agreed to by the States and the Commonwealth under the 2009 National Affordable Housing Agreement.

Budget Estimates 2017-2018

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOCIAL HOUSING, PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Questions on Notice

Question 26 (Transcript p. 30)

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I have a follow-up question. Can you give an update to this Committee about the maintenance backlog and how it is progressing for social and affordable housing?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We will take that on notice and respond to you.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the number of maintenance requests changes daily. FACS routinely carries out maintenance through responsive maintenance requests and planned maintenance programs to keep its properties in good condition and to ensure consistent maintenance standards across the state.

The NSW Government is focused on delivering better maintenance services to social housing residents. In 2016, the NSW Government entered into a new maintenance contract which emphasises responsiveness and timeliness and provides more opportunity for tenants to give feedback on work performed by contractors.

In 2016/17, the NSW Government spent over \$500 million on capital and recurrent maintenance for existing work programs and property upgrades, including new kitchens, bathrooms, roofing and gutters, hot water systems, carpets and painting.

During 2016/17 approximately 700,000 maintenance requests were received and actioned, an average of 2,000 a day. During this period wait times when the tenants called the maintenance hotline averaged less than three minutes. I also am advised that the tenant satisfaction survey, which was set up as part of the new contract, maintained a satisfaction of above 85% in 2016/17.

The NSW Government has also commenced running maintenance pop-ups, where social housing residents are able to meet the contractors, report their maintenance issues and either have the matter inspected and repaired immediately, or have arrangements made to have the work carried out in a given timeframe.

In 2016/17, there have been over 50 maintenance pop-up sessions completed with approximately 1,600 tenants attending and over 3,600 work orders raised.