

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

No. 64

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT

TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2000

(The Questions and Answers Paper published for the first sitting day in each week will contain, by number and title, all unanswered questions, together with questions to which answers have been received on the previous sitting and any new questions. On subsequent days, new questions are printed, as are questions to which answers were received the previous day. Consequently the full text of any question will be printed only twice: when notice is given; and, when answered.)

Notice given on date shown

Publication of Questions	Answer to be lodged by
Q&A No. 62 (Including Question Nos 563 to 578)	11 October 2000
Q&A No. 63 (Including Question Nos 579 to 619)	12 October 2000
Q&A No. 64 (Including Question Nos 620 to 622)	14 November 2000

29 AUGUST 2000

(Paper No. 58)

*490 HEALTH—ARNDELL CHILDREN'S UNIT—NORTH RYDE—Dr Chesterfield-Evans asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Health—

- (a) Has there been any internal inquiry into Arndell Children's Unit at North Ryde in the period 1996 to the present?
- (b) If so:
 - (i) Who conducted it?
 - (ii) What were the terms of reference?
 - (iii) What were the findings?
 - (iv) Are copies of the report publicly available?
 - (v) Were any staff disciplined as a result of the inquiry?
 - (vi) Were there any resignations?
 - (vii) Were any criminal charges laid?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Health, that the answer to the honourable member's question is:

An internal review of the Arndell Children's and Family Unit was conducted in August 1998 by representatives of NSW Health and the Department of Education and Training.

A report recommended that the Arndell service be reorganised and provide both an area and statewide resource, the programs and services be in line with the directions of the National Mental Health Strategy, classroom programs complement the therapeutic interventions provided by NSW Health staff, an advisory committee be appointed, and staff be supported through education and developmental programs.

No staff were disciplined or charged with criminal offences as a result of the inquiry, nor did any staff resign.

*491 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—LES POWELL SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a class not covered at Les Powell School on 17 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*492 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—GIRRAWEEEN PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were two classes not covered at Girraween Public School on 24 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

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As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

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*493 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—MOUNT DRUITT PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a class not covered at Mount Druitt Public School on 2 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

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Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

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*494 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—AUBURN PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were four classes not covered at Auburn Public School on 24 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

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Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

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*495 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—TUMUT PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a library and research skills program not covered at Tumut Public School on 23 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

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*496 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—HOMEBUSH WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a Year 4/5 class not covered at Homebush West Public School on 23 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

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*497 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—ST MARYS PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were three out of eight classes not covered at St Marys Public School on 2 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

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*498 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a Year 5 class split at Milton Public School on 28 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

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- *499 PREMIER—PERFORMANCE BONUSES—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship—

In relation to bonuses awarded to officers in the Premier's Department and Cabinet Office:

- (1) By name and title, which officers have been awarded performance bonuses in the last 6 months?
- (2) In each case, what is the amount of the bonus?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Bob Carr, MP, Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship, that the answer to the honourable member's question is:

- (1) and (2) Mr Ryan would be aware that *The Sydney Morning Herald* published a list of remuneration and performance payments on Friday 1 September 2000.

*500 PREMIER—PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES OUTCOME REFORM FRAMEWORK—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship—

In relation to the Public Sector Wages Outcome Reform Framework referred to in Premier's Department Circular No. 2000-21:

- (1) What is the "Public Sector Wages Outcome Reform Framework"?
- (2) What are its objectives?
- (3) To which New South Wales public servants will it apply?
- (4) What is the timetable for its implementation?
- (5) Which agency will be responsible for its implementation?
- (6) (a) Will the framework be reviewed and/or monitored?
(b) If so:
 - (i) when, and
 - (ii) by whom?
- (7) (a) Has the NSW Labor Council been consulted on the framework?
(b) If so, what has been its response?
- (8) What are the "sector wide reform agenda priorities"?
- (9) (a) What is the "Memorandum of Understanding"?
(b) What topics does it cover?

Answer—

(1) to (9) The Public Sector Wages Outcome Reform Framework is a document developed to progress the key priority areas identified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Labor Council of NSW, the Public Service Association of NSW, the NSW Nurses' Association and the Health and Research Employees' Association of NSW in March 2000. It outlines a suggested management agenda for consultation with the union parties to the MOU.

*501 OLYMPICS—PUBLIC SERVANTS—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for the Olympics—

In relation to New South Wales public servants working on the Olympic Games:

- (1) How many public servants (other than SES) have been seconded from each department and agency to work on Olympic Games-related tasks for:
 - (a) financial year 1999-2000, and
 - (b) 1 July 2000 to 29 August 2000?

- (2) How many SES employees have been seconded from each department and agency to work on Olympic Games-related tasks for:
- (a) financial year 1999-2000, and
 - (b) 1 July 2000 to 29 August 2000?
- (3) What roles have the SES secondments filled?
- (4) What is the Treasury estimate of the cost of these secondments for both:
- (a) financial year 1999-2000, and
 - (b) 1 July 2000 to 29 August 2000?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Michael Knight, MP, Minister for the Olympics, that the answers to the honourable member's questions are:

- (1) to (4) At the conclusion of the Games the Olympic Co-ordination Authority (OCA), in accordance with its statutory responsibility, will prepare a report to the Parliament on the overall costs. The report is to be reviewed by the Auditor General.

Treasury has recently issued a circular advising agencies that where staff are made available for Games related work, this expenditure is to be disclosed in the 2000-01 financial statements and will be included in the report.

To attempt to gather the information now would unreasonably divert resources and would be premature.

*502 PREMIER—SYDNEY HARBOUR FORESHORE AUTHORITY—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship—

In relation to the Chairman of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Mr Gleeson:

- (1) (a) Has he been appointed to any other New South Wales public sector positions or directorships since April 1995?
- (b) If so:
- (i) what are the appointments,
 - (ii) for what time period, and
 - (iii) at what remuneration?
- (2) (a) Has he accepted any other public sector appointments in other States since April 1995?
- (b) If so, what are the appointments?

Answer—

- (1) I refer to the answer provided in Parliament of 31 March 1998.
- (2) No.

Tuesday 10 October 2000

*503 URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING—SYDNEY HARBOUR FORESHORE AUTHORITY—Mr Ryan asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

In relation to Table 4.1 in Budget Paper No. 2, 2000-01 (page 4-5):

- (1) What is the detailed explanation for the accounting adjustment of \$90 million for 1998-99 reported for the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority?
- (2) What is the detailed basis for the \$50 million cost of transferring the Entertainment Centre to the Darling Harbour Authority in 1998-99?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Dr Andrew Refshauge, MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing, that the answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) The \$90 million mainly relates to two items. Firstly, to the difference between the book value and the fair value of property transferred to the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority when it was established on 1 February 1999. At this time properties were re-valued.

Fair value	\$310,320,000
Previous book value	<u>\$251,516,000</u>
Difference	<u>\$58,804,000</u>

The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority brought the re-valued amount of \$310 million for the assets into its books when the assets totalled only \$251 million in the books of the old City West Development Corporation and Sydney Cove Authority.

Secondly, the foreshore land around Circular Quay was transferred to the new authority from the Sydney City Council. This property was valued at \$30,880,000.

Together, the revaluation of property and transfer of the Circular Quay property led to a \$89.7 million adjustment to the authority's books.

- (2) The Darling Harbour Authority is in the portfolio of the Hon Michael Knight, MP, Minister for the Olympics, and it is suggested that question (2) be referred to him for a response.

*504 STATE DEVELOPMENT—HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEMES—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

In relation to home ownership schemes administered by the Office of State Revenue (OSR):

- (1) How many OSR employees have utilised the First Home Plus Scheme and/or its predecessor program the First Home Purchase Scheme?
- (2) How many OSR employees have utilised the First Home Owner Grant Scheme that was introduced on 1 July 2000?
- (3) (a) Do any of the employees in (1) and (2) above have the power to unilaterally alter the administrative details of participants in these schemes (such as payment dates, payment amounts, thresholds, etc.)?
- (b) If so, what measures are in place to prevent OSR employees from accessing their own administrative details?

Answer—

- (1) Two OSR employees have utilised the First Home Plus Scheme.

It is not possible to run a data match between OSR's employee database and the First Home Purchase database to determine how many staff have accessed the various versions of the First Home Purchase Scheme prior to 1 July 2000.

- (2) Two OSR employees have utilised the First Home Owner Grant Scheme.

- (3) (a) and (b) Following payment of grants, 100% of high risk applicants – including staff – are checked. Only one staff member with access to the administrative details of program applicants has utilised the First Home Owner Grant Scheme. In keeping with standard practice, the application will be independently checked.

*505 TREASURY—PEER REVIEW PROCESS—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

In relation to peer review assessment within Treasury:

- (a) Are any levels of Treasury staff assessed using a peer review process known as “360 degree” feedback?
- (b) If so:
- (i) What is the methodology for the peer review?
 - (ii) What measures are in place to ensure that individual assessments prepared by subordinates and peers are kept confidential?
 - (iii) Which officer(s) is/are charged with compiling, processing and summarising individual assessments?
 - (iv) Are officer(s) in (iii) above themselves reviewed using 360 degree feedback?
 - (v) If so, who compiles, processes and summarises their review?

Answer—

- (a) All levels of Treasury SES officers, as well as Grade 11/12 officers with significant management responsibilities, are assessed using 360 degree feedback.
- (b) (i) Officers being assessed are required to complete a questionnaire concerning behaviours they may display in carrying out their job as managers. The questionnaires cover a number of competencies which have been identified as being essential to be an effective manager within Treasury. Questionnaires are also completed anonymously by a selection of subordinates and peers of the manager being assessed, as well as the manager's manager.

The questionnaires are developed jointly by Treasury HR officers and an external consultant engaged to administer the process.

Completed questionnaires are placed in sealed envelopes and returned to the HR area. For OFM the unopened envelopes are then referred to an independent subcontractor who enters the results into a database. The aggregated data is then forwarded to the external consultant for analysis and production of individual and organisational reports. For OSR the unopened envelopes are referred to an external consultant who enters the data, analyses the results and produces the reports. No person other than the independent subcontractor or external consultant has access to the completed questionnaires.

Treasury's Executive receives an organisational report that analyses the collated data from all questionnaires. In addition, each manager assessed receives a personal report.

It is the practice for the manager assessed to discuss his/her results with their manager. It is their choice as to whether they wish to share the results with others.

- (ii) As outlined in (i) above, access to the survey documents is carefully restricted. Summary and personal reports are held only by the Director, Corporate Management, in OFM, and the Director, Corporate Services in OSR. These persons co-ordinate provision of the reports to the Executive and the individuals concerned.
- (iii) No Treasury officers are charged with compiling, processing and summarising individual assessments. See answer to (i) above.
- (iv) Not applicable.
- (v) Not applicable.

*506 TREASURY—STAMP DUTY SYSTEM—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

In relation to the Treasurer's undertaking to review the stamp duty system after the introduction of the GST, as reported in the *Australian Financial Review* (28 January 2000):

- (1) What is the timetable for the commencement and completion of this review?
- (2) What will be the terms of reference for the review?
- (3) Will the public be able to make submissions to the review?
- (4) Will the review be directed chiefly at removing the double tax effects of applying stamp duties on a GST-inclusive basis?

Answer—

- (1) Stamp duties will be reviewed as the impact of the introduction of the GST becomes clear.

In terms of the commitments set out in the *Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Arrangements*, the Government has already legislated to cease stamp duty on marketable securities from 1 July 2001.

- (2) Issues to be examined will include the impact of the GST on stamp duty revenue (some revenues are expected to fall, others are likely to rise) and the impact on taxpayers in the context of national tax reform.
- (3) See answer to (1). However, the public is always at liberty to make submissions to the Government.
- (4) See answer to (2).

*507 OLYMPICS—STATE RECORDS ACT (1998)—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for the Olympics—

In relation to the retention, management and protection of public records as required by the State Records Act (1998):

- (1) What specific actions have been taken to ensure compliance with this Act in relation to:
 - (a) SOCOG,
 - (b) OCA,
 - (c) ORTA, and
 - (d) his ministerial office?

-
- (2) What procedures will be followed for the safeguarding of records when bodies including SOCOG, OCA, ORTA and his ministerial office are wound up?
 - (3) What administration costs have been budgeted to ensure that records are safeguarded after the Olympic Games?
 - (4) Who will retain ministerial responsibility for documents related to the Olympics portfolio once the Minister has relinquished his role as Minister?
 - (5) What action has the Minister taken to ensure that the Auditor-General obtains all records and documentation required to ensure a thorough investigation of all Olympic-related financial transactions?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Michael Knight, MP, Minister for the Olympics, that the answers to the honourable member's questions are:

- (1) OCA has been given the responsibility of managing the wind-up of the Olympic agencies. As part of that process, OCA is ensuring that records and documents which have on-going value are properly catalogued and stored to be available for their post-Games use. All of the documents are effectively State Records and are being dealt with in accordance with the State Records Act and with advice from the State Records Office as required.
- (2) When the Olympic agencies are wound-up, all records will transfer to and be the responsibility of the nominated NSW Government agency, which is given the task of finalising the business of the wound-up agencies. OCA is currently filling this role and is arranging for appropriate storage and retrieval systems for the records.
- (3) There is a legal requirement to manage and maintain government records. The overall budget for wind-up of the Olympic agencies includes funds for record management and maintenance.
- (4) Agency and ministerial responsibility post-Olympics have not yet been determined.
- (5) See (1) above.

*508 LOCAL GOVERNMENT—MACLEAN SHIRE COUNCIL ELECTION—Dr Pezzutti asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs—

- (1) Was the Maclean Shire council election (in the Minister for Local Government's home LGA) held on 25 March 2000 conducted in accordance with the Local Government (Election) Regulation 1998?
- (2) Were the requirements that all printed material including newspaper advertising, pre-election handbills and election day how-to-votes carry the required authorisations and notifications honoured by candidates for that election?
- (3) (a) Were there any breaches of the Regulation?
(b) If so, what action has been taken by the Minister or the department to identify and prosecute those candidates responsible?

Answer—

- (1) I am informed by the Minister for Local Government that the State Electoral Commissioner, who conducts local government elections, has advised that the elections were conducted in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Government (Elections) Regulation 1998. However, the returning officer of Maclean omitted to have a mark on the ballot papers as instructed and as required by the Regulation. The Commissioner did not become aware of this until the Monday after polling day.

(2) and (3) The Electoral Commissioner has also advised that there is no legislative requirement for candidates to refer election material to the returning officer or the Commissioner, or for the returning officer or the Commissioner to consider whether election material complies with the Regulation.

Clause 111 (1) of the Regulation requires the name and address of the authoriser and printer of election material to be shown on such material.

Where alleged breaches of this clause are brought to notice, the Commissioner has a policy of informing the candidate, or person responsible for the document, of the requirements of the legislation in order that they, if possible, may remedy the situation. Any complainants are informed of the action taken and advised that if they wish to pursue the matter further, they should report the alleged breach to the police or alternatively seek legal advice as to their position.

It would not be practical or proper for the Electoral Commissioner, the State Electoral Officer or a returning officer to have the power to prosecute a candidate for an alleged breach of this clause or any other electoral offence as their impartial role in the conduct of the election would be jeopardised.

Under section 329 of the Local Government Act 1993, any aggrieved person may apply to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal for an order dismissing a person from office on demonstrating that the alleged offending document or documents constituted such an "irregularity" to justify making such an order.

Persons who brought to the attention of the Electoral Commissioner alleged breaches of the Regulation in relation to election material at the Maclean election were advised of the option of taking the matter to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

*509 WESTERN SYDNEY—SOLID FUEL HEATERS—Mr Richard Jones asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) How much has Sydney Water budgeted for buying up solid fuel heaters in the vicinity of the M5 East stack?
- (2) Will Sydney Water pay replacement cost or assessed current value of these heaters?
- (3) How many solid fuel heaters are within the area that Sydney Water has promised to buy?
- (4) What estimate has been made on the impact on air quality through the purchase of solid fuel heaters for residents affected by pollution from the stack in:
 - (a) summer, and
 - (b) winter?

Answer—

(1) to (4) The M5 East does not fall within the responsibility of Sydney Water.

*510 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION—SHARK HOTEL—Mr Richard Jones asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation—

- (1) Has the Shark Hotel breached conditions 1, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 12 of their exhibitor's licence?

- (2) If not, how is it that the hotel has not breached the conditions of its licence to exhibit black tip reef sharks?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Richard Amery, MP, Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation, that the answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) No.
- (2) The premises were licensed up to 30 June 2000 and it applied for renewal within the allowable time parameter under the Regulations. Until a determination is made on the application, the law regards the premises as being licensed.

To assist in making that determination, the premises were recently inspected and were found to comply with all conditions on the licence. The inspector confirmed that the levels of ammonia, nitrate and nitrite are being measured appropriately. The attendants are providing appropriate care and the sharks are still less than 900 millimetres long.

The department is considering a reduction in the maximum length of sharks which may be kept on the premises.

*511 ENVIRONMENT—TOMAGO SANDBEDS NATURE RESERVE—Mr Richard Jones asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) When will the Government honour the previous Minister for the Environment's promise to protect Port Stephens and Tiligerry koala colonies by establishing the Tomago Sandbeds Nature Reserve?
- (2) Will the reserve also preserve Newcastle's, Port Stephens' and surrounding areas' water supply from contamination?
- (3) Why has the fulfilment of this promise been delayed for so long?
- (4) Will the Minister ensure that the National Parks and Wildlife Service co-operates with the Hunter Water Corporation to allow water extraction as well as the conservation of these important koala colonies?

Answer—

- (1) The National Parks and Wildlife Service has had negotiations with Hunter Water Corporation and other relevant agencies about the proposed establishment of a nature reserve over the Tomago Sandbeds. These negotiations are ongoing and if they can be concluded satisfactorily a nature reserve will be established over the area.
- (2) If established, the proposed nature reserve will protect the natural environment of the Tomago Sandbeds. This will contribute to protecting the water supply catchment for Newcastle, Port Stephens and surrounding areas.
- (3) The Hunter Water Corporation has been keen to ensure its continued ability to plan, monitor, operate and maintain and to replace its existing water extraction infrastructure on the Tomago Sandbeds. There are a number of options being examined by both parties to ensure this can occur.
- (4) The National Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to co-operating with the Hunter Water Corporation to allow sustainable water extraction as well as the conservation of these important koala colonies. The Service is also committed to protecting these areas in accordance with the NSW Government Forest Policy.

*512 HEALTH—ELECTIVE SURGERY—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Health—

- (1) Are patients currently forced to wait longer for elective surgery than in March 1995?
- (2) If so, will the Minister ensure that elective surgery services are made available to relieve this situation?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Health, that the answers to the honourable member's questions are:

- (1) In 1994-95, there were 1,273,963 admissions to New South Wales public hospitals. In 1999-2000, there were 1,312,977 such admissions. The average waiting time for booked surgery is 2.2 months as at July 2000. Waiting times for elective surgery vary greatly according to type of procedure, number of surgeons performing different procedures and relative demand.
- (2) In the recent budget process, \$10 million was allocated to Areas for the management of elective surgery in 2000-01 as part of the Government Action Plan for Health.

*513 TRANSPORT—CITYRAIL—Dr Pezzutti asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

Will the Minister ensure that trains run on time to ensure that commuters are not forced to turn up to work late?

Answer—

The Government remains committed to providing an efficient public transport service. CityRail caters for more than 900,000 passenger trips each day and good customer relations play an important part of this service.

As part of its ongoing commitment to improving customer service, CityRail has recently commenced posting On-Time Running information on the CityRail website. This site can be found at www.cityrail.nsw.gov.au.

*514 TREASURY—DAIRY FARMERS—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

Will the Treasurer ensure that financial assistance is made available to dairy farmers to ensure that dairy farmers will not lose their business, and therefore income, for their families?

Answer—

Financial assistance is being provided to dairy farmers who formerly held quotas funded by consumers through an 11 cents per litre levy for 8 years on the price of retail milk. This works out to \$192,000 for an average New South Wales farm.

The assistance is part of a co-ordinated national package. The 8 years of payments will be able to be taken as a lump sum payment should the farmer so choose.

A component of the national package is being set aside by the Commonwealth Government for use in structural adjustment assistance. This component will be allocated to meet particular needs that emerge as a result of deregulation.

The NSW Government, with the support of the Opposition, has also appointed a committee to examine and report on the New South Wales dairy industry in the deregulated environment and make a report with recommendations on the financial impacts of deregulation on the State.

*515 POLICE—FRONT LINE POLICE—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Police—

- (1) Are front line police numbers below that in March 1999?
- (2) If so, will the Minister ensure that they are restored to that level?

Answer—

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

*516 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM—Dr Pezzutti asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

Will the Minister provide details of the strategy to reverse the drift of students from the public education system to private schools?

Answer—

The Howard Government is clearly supporting non-government schools at the expense of government schools. This is evidenced by disproportionate increases in its funding of non-government schools compared with its funding of government schools. In some cases, non-government schools that already operate at resource levels of up to twice those of government schools are receiving a funding increase of 170 per cent.

By contrast, the NSW Government will continue to maintain a strong and robust government schooling sector. Spending on education and training in New South Wales is at record levels. The Carr Government has increased recurrent spending for the education and training portfolio to \$7.2 billion in the 2000-01 Budget, an increase of almost \$320 million on 1999-2000 levels, and \$1,439 million or 25 per cent more since 1994-95.

Average expenditure per government school student in 1999-2000 is \$6,584, the highest per capita figure in the history of public education in this State. This is up from \$5,057 in 1994-95, an increase of 30.2 per cent, and has occurred despite the continuing Commonwealth funding cuts to government schools.

The planning framework for government schooling is set out in the statement, NSW Public Schools Strategic Directions 2000-2002.

*517 TRANSPORT—CITYRAIL—Dr Pezzutti asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

- (1) Have the operating grants to CityRail and Countrylink been cut from \$262 million to \$185 million, despite safety problems?
- (2) If so, why?

Answer—

- (1) and (2) There was no reduction in funds to support the operating costs of the SRA in 2000-01. The service funding shown in the budget paper does not include increased concession funding and the expected higher farebox revenue which also contribute to State Rail's operating costs. In addition, SRA received Olympic expenditure as part of its estimated operating costs in 1999-2000 which is being funded from a different source in 2000-01.

*518 TREASURY—REVENUE—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

- (1) Has revenue raised by State taxes increased by 53% since March 1995?
- (2) If so, why?

Answer—

- (1) No.
- (2) Revenue growth has been strong between 1994-95 and 1999-2000 reflecting strong economic growth as well as particularly strong growth in some activities subject to State taxation.
 - Over the 6 years from 1994-95 to 1999-2000, NSW Gross State Product (GSP – total output of goods and services during the year) rose by 35.6% in nominal terms or 6.3% per annum.
 - Real economic growth between 1994-95 and 1999-2000 has been above average, growing by 4.1% per annum. This compares with real growth of 1.1% per annum in the preceding 6 years (1988-89 to 1993-94) and compares to a long run real growth rate of 3.3% per annum (from 1984-85 to 1999-2000).
 - The growth in the Sydney property market was an important factor contributing to robust revenue growth.
 - Government policy decisions did not contribute to revenue growth over the period between 1994-95 and 1999-2000.
 - As shown in Table 1.4 of the 2000-01 Budget papers (*Budge Paper No. 2, p. 1-29*), policy changes have contributed a net zero to the change in tax collections. This is despite the need for some discretionary tax increases needed to fund \$527.3 million in Fiscal Contribution Payments to the Commonwealth between 1996-97 and 1998-99.
 - Furthermore, over the 4 years to 2003-04, government policy decisions will reduce tax revenue by \$656 million. During this period, New South Wales will not benefit in net financial terms from the receipt of GST revenue.
 - On current estimates, New South Wales will not benefit in net financial terms from the new financial arrangements with the Commonwealth until 2007-08. This reflects the fact that revenue lost from the abolition of State taxes and Commonwealth grants, as well as additional costs arising from tax reform (such as the requirement to pay the ATO for the administration of the GST), will initially exceed GST revenue. Until GST revenue exceeds abolished revenue sources and the additional costs arising from tax reform, New South Wales will be dependent on Budget Balancing Assistance from the Commonwealth to ensure it is no worse off from the reforms.

*519 GAMING AND RACING—SYDNEY CASINO—Dr Pezzutti asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Hunter Development—

- (1) Have the number of Sydney Casino inspectors been reduced from 71 to 36?
- (2) If so, will the Minister ensure that any criminals using Sydney Casino for money laundering have not been assisted by that reduction?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Richard Face, MP, Minister for Gaming and Racing, that the answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.

*520 ATTORNEY GENERAL—KEVIN CRUMP—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Attorney General—

Why did the Government not legislate to stop the release of Kevin Crump?

Answer—

In 1997, the Government introduced the Sentencing Further Legislation Amendment Bill to ensure that:

- (i) substantial weight be given to the recommendations, observations and comments of the original sentencing judge:
 - in a re-determination by the Supreme Court,
 - in a Parole Board hearing subsequent to re-determination, and
 - by the Serious Offenders Review Council in the exercise of its functions;
- (ii) it is mandatory for the Supreme Court, the Serious Offenders Review Council and the Parole Board to take into account the need to preserve the safety of the community;
- (iii) the period during which a prisoner may not re-apply for a re-determination is increased from 2 years to 3 years;
- (iv) the Supreme Court, when considering an application for re-determination from a pre-1990 life sentence offender, is to have regard to:
 - all the circumstances surrounding the offence for which the life sentence was imposed, and
 - all offences of the offender, wherever those offences were committed; and
- (v) the period of time which pre-1990 life sentence offenders, who are the subject of a non-release order, must serve before being eligible to apply for re-determination is increased from 8 to 20 years.

*521 COMMUNITY SERVICES—CHILD PROTECTION—Dr Pezzutti asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—

- (1) Have 70 children known to the Department of Community Services to be at risk died in the past 3 years?
- (2) If so, will the Minister ensure that neglected and abused children notified to the department will be protected?

Answer—

- (1) The NSW Child Death Review Team 1998-99 Report profiled 86 case studies of deaths of children and young people spanning a 3½-year period. Many died of natural causes, motor vehicle fatalities, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or drowning. It is true that in 70 of these cases, children or their siblings or their families had some contact with the Department of Community Services (DOCS). However the question infers that DOCS was in some way responsible for these 70 deaths. This is misleading and untrue.

The report uses the term “known to the Department of Community services” or “the family had previous involvement with the Department of Community Services.” It should be pointed out that a child or its family can be “known to the Department of Community Services” for many reasons. It is highly misleading to link child deaths with this expression.

- (2) During the past 3 years, the Department of Community Services managed in excess of 167,000 child protection reports. The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and the revised Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention will extend the responsibilities of agencies to work together to ensure abused and neglected children and young people are protected.

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*522 ENVIRONMENT—POLLUTION LICENCE—Ms Rhiannon asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) (a) Has the Environment Protection Authority granted Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd, of 26-28 Crosslands Road, Galston, a pollution licence to spray irrigate up to 1.4 million litres per week of abattoir effluent on neighbouring properties?
- (b) Is the use of the land for that purpose prohibited under the Local Environment Plan of Hornsby Shire Council?
- (2) If so:
- (a) On what basis was the pollution licence approved?
- (b) Why has the Environment Protection Authority issued a licence to disperse effluent on these properties when the use of the land for that purpose is prohibited under the Local Environment Plan of Hornsby Shire Council?
- (c) Does the Minister condone the Environment Protection Authority issuing a pollution licence for a property when the use of the land for that purpose is prohibited by a local government planning instrument?

Answer—

- (1) (a) Summertime Chicken holds an environment protection licence which provides for a maximum amount of 1.4 million litres of wastewater that may be irrigated in any week. I understand that on average the company irrigates about 800 kilolitres per week.
- (b) While this is a matter for the council, I am advised that council has resolved that the irrigation of wastewater is defined as an agricultural use under council’s Local Environmental Plan 1994 and is therefore a permissible activity.
- (2) (a) The former State Pollution Control Commission initially approved the wastewater treatment and irrigation system in 1990. I am advised that the commission assessed the wastewater treatment and irrigation system using the wastewater guidelines then prevailing titled *Design Guide for the Disposal of Wastewater by Land Application*.
- (b) and (c) Not applicable. See (1) (b) above.

*523 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—CHESTER HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a class not covered at Chester Hill Public School on 30 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*524 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—GEORGES HALL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were two classes not covered at Georges Hall Public School on 30 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

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- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

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Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

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In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*525 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—HOMEBUSH WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a class not covered at Homebush West Public School on 29 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

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*526 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—GIRRAWEEEN PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a class not covered at Girraween Public School on 29 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

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*527 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—ROOTY HILL HIGH SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were ten classes not covered at Rooty Hill High School on 29 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

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*528 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—ROOTY HILL HIGH SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were nine classes not covered at Rooty Hill High School on 28 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

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*529 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—ROOTY HILL HIGH SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were thirteen classes not covered at Rooty Hill High School on 30 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

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- (1) Was a classes not covered at Girraween Public School on 30 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
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*531 TREASURY—PEER REVIEW PROCESS—Mr Ryan asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

In relation to peer review assessment in Treasury, which levels of SES and non-SES staff in Treasury are assessed using 360 degree feedback?

Answer—

All levels of Treasury SES officers, as well as Grade 11/12 officers with significant management responsibilities, are assessed using 360 degree feedback.

*532 TRANSPORT—CITYRAIL—Mr Jobling asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

- (1)
 - (a) What is the total number of carriages available for use on the CityRail network, including Intercity network (i.e., Newcastle/Nowra, etc.), on a daily basis?
 - (b) What is the minimum number required for current morning and evening peak periods?
 - (c) How many of the total number of passenger carriages are:
 - (i) subject to maintenance/repair on an average daily and weekly basis,
 - (ii) held in reserve to replace failed units?
- (2)
 - (a) What is the maintenance/service schedule for rail carriages?
 - (b) What are the identified key checks undertaken?
 - (c) In view of the expected increase in hours of service and distance travelled by each unit during the Olympic period, what program has been developed for an increase in servicing in a reduced time span?
 - (d) Where will additional trained technicians come from to enable increased servicing?
 - (e) What program has been developed to deal with an anticipated equipment failure/breakdowns as a result of greatly increased use and reduction of service and maintenance?
- (3)
 - (a) Are maintenance/servicing programs undertaken in one or more places?
 - (b) Where are they located?
 - (c) What maintenance do they undertake?
- (4)
 - (a)
 - (i) How many trains are cleaned externally each day?
 - (ii) At what locations?
 - (b) At present, what time (on average) does a four-car and eight-car set take to complete?
- (5)
 - (a)
 - (i) How many trains are cleaned internally each day?
 - (ii) At what locations?
 - (b) What time (on average) does a four-car set and an eight-car set take to complete?
- (6) How many staff are involved in the external and internal cleaning programs?
- (7) With reduced time available for cleaning “cars”, how does State Rail propose a cleaning and maintenance program to enable the cleanliness of the cars to be maintained at a satisfactory level during the Olympic period?

- (8) With the increased peak running of train sets during the Olympic period, what plans are developed to ensure that regular safety maintenance of rails, points, wires and signalling is maintained, especially when the hours available to work are greatly reduced?

Answer—

- (1) to (3) CityRail has a large fleet comprising 1,458 carriages. The maintenance and repair of these carriages is a high priority for CityRail. A rolling program of daily, weekly, fortnightly, 3 monthly and 6 yearly inspections is underway on all CityRail carriages. A full maintenance plan is in place to ensure all cars have mandatory maintenance carried out as per schedule. Safety checks and brake inspections are carried out as part of these inspections.
- (4) to (7) Providing a high level of cleanliness on all services is a key goal of CityRail. The CityRail cleaning staff was recently expanded to 454 – the biggest ever. CityRail train cleaners spend 900 hours every night cleaning the suburban fleet at 21 train cleaning depots. CityRail has also recently increased the frequency of heavy spring cleans on each train to every 30 days. During the Olympics, an additional 130 train cleaners and 13 supervisors were working.
- (8) Rail Access Corporation's regular maintenance program has been brought forward to ensure that cyclical work that would have fallen due during that time was carried out prior to the Olympics. Routine maintenance of the network will continue after the Games period.

In addition, a Network Management Centre was established with 40 strategic sites around the network to deal with any incidents which could have arisen during the Olympic period. These sites were staffed by more than 200 rail experts on a 24-hour basis to respond to incidents.

*533 TRANSPORT—SECURITY CAMERAS—Mr Jobling asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

- (1) Which stations between Circular Quay and Olympic Park have all the security cameras installed and fully operational?
- (2) Which stations do not have their cameras fully operational due to either vandalism or incomplete works?
- (3) (a) Are staff at each station trained to monitor the security cameras?
(b) What training have they undertaken in response to an incident being observed?
- (4) Are any stations between Circular Quay and Olympic Park with security cameras unmanned at any period of time each day?
- (5) (a) Has a central monitoring system for all stations been established?
(b) If so, where is it?
- (6) (a) How long will the security cameras store information?
(b) Can it be retrieved for evidence after an incident occurs (i.e., an assault, etc.)?
- (7) (a) What was the original contract price to install cameras?
(b) What stations were not included in the contract?
- (8) What was the original contract's commencing and completion date?

Answer—

The State Rail Authority advises me of the following:

- (1) and (2) All stations across the CityRail network are having security cameras installed as part of the NSW Government's security upgrade of all stations on the network.
- (3) (a) Yes.
(b) Staff are trained in all aspects of monitoring and reporting procedures.
- (4) No.
- (5) (a) Yes.
(b) The centre is located at CityRail's Protective Services Unit, Surry Hills.
- (6) (a) 14 days.
(b) Yes.
- (7) (a) \$42 million.
(b) Only Olympic Park which is owned and operated by the Olympic Co-ordination Authority (OCA).
- (8) Completion of the Government security upgrade of all CityRail stations is now due by the end of the year.

*534 TRANSPORT—GUNNEDAH CHARCOAL PLANT—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

- (1) (a) How many additional tonnes of wood per annum will be required for the Gunnedah charcoal plant?
(b) What percentage of these additional tonnes will travel down roads through national parks?
- (2) Has the National Parks and Wildlife Service assessed the impact of this extra traffic?
- (3) Which agency is responsible for the upkeep of roads in national parks subject to log-truck traffic?

Answer—

- (1) This question does not fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Roads and Transport.
- (2) This question should be directed to the Minister for the Environment.
- (3) The agency responsible for the upkeep of roads in national parks depends on the status of the road. Classified Roads, which are State Roads, are maintained by either councils or RTA Road Services as contractors to the RTA under a Single Invitation Contract. Generally, councils are responsible for the upkeep of other public roads.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the upkeep of some public roads and any other road or track in a national park. A detailed answer would require identification of each particular road.

Log trucks may travel on any public road provided they conform to mass, dimensional and other requirements of regulations.

*535 TRANSPORTS—CITYRAIL—Mr Lynn asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to CityRail trains making unscheduled stops at a point between two stations:

- (1) What instructions have been given to CityRail staff about when and how to inform passengers of the nature of any delay?
- (2) How much time must pass before passengers on a train are informed via a public announcement system of the nature and expected duration of the delay?
- (3) For the Eastern Suburbs line:
 - (a) How many such delays occurred in the weeks beginning 7 August 2000, 14 August 2000, and 21 August 2000?
 - (b) In each case, how long was the delay?
 - (c) Were passengers informed of the nature and duration of the delay?

Answer—

I am advised by CityRail of the following:

- (1) Instructions pertaining to guards making announcements on trains are contained in the “DC4 Complete Book” and through “General Orders”.
- (2) No time limit is specified, however, this information should be conveyed to passengers as soon as possible.
- (3) In all instances where delays occur across the network, CityRail believes it is a priority to inform all passengers who may be affected.

*536 LOCAL GOVERNMENT—WEST BYRON SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS—Mr Gay asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs—

- (1) Does the West Byron Sewage Treatment Works have an additional unused capacity equivalent to 350 household systems?
- (2) If so, how long has the council been aware of this unused capacity?
- (3) If there is unused capacity at the West Byron Plant, will the Minister seek an explanation from the council as to why it has continually rejected development applications on the grounds that the town’s sewage system was insufficient to support new development?

Answer—

Byron Shire Council has advised me that on 12 August 1997, council placed a moratorium on development in Byron Bay because of the overloaded sewage treatment plants at West Byron and South Byron.

To overcome the overloading at the treatment plants, council undertook urgent interim upgrade works, completed in April 1999, to cater for the existing and committed loads on the plants at the time the moratorium was instigated. The cost of the upgrade was \$1.5 million.

In August 2000, after required monitoring, council undertook an evaluation of the sewage treatment plants to assess their performance after the upgrade. Performance related to the ability of the plants to meet EPA discharge licence conditions.

That evaluation revealed that the South Byron Sewage Treatment Works is still overloaded but that the West Byron Sewage Treatment Works has a small amount of additional unused capacity of 370 equivalent population.

*537 FORESTRY—GUNNEDAH CHARCOAL PLANT—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) Did the Minister promise a full environmental impact and community consultation process on the supply of wood to the Gunnedah charcoal plant to the General Purpose Standing Committee No 5 on Friday 9 June 2000 (Budget Estimates Committee, p. 36)?
- (2) If so:
 - (a) When will it take place?
 - (b) Will it take place before approvals are issued for the charcoal plant and silicon smelter?

Answer—

- (1) During my attendance at the Budget Estimates Committee on 9 June 2000, I stated there would be a full environmental and community consultation process in relation to the proposed charcoal plant. This is still the case.
- (2)
 - (a) An Environmental Assessment process for the proposed Gunnedah charcoal plant is underway under the auspices of the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, who is the consent authority for the project.
 - (b) Yes.

On the separate issue of wood supply, the Government will ensure that supplies from publicly-owned native forests for the charcoal plant will be derived from areas where Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) have been completed. State forests covered by an RFA have undergone extensive assessment of their environmental values and proposed levels of harvesting. Harvesting in these areas is acknowledged to be ecologically sustainable.

Wood supply arrangements are the subject of current commercial negotiation between Australian Silicon and State Forests. Once negotiations are finalised, the Government will ensure an open and transparent community consultation process in those regional centres relevant to the project.

*538 FORESTRY—GUNNEDAH CHARCOAL PLANT—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) Is the Government able to show that the supply of wood to the Gunnedah charcoal plant is ecologically sustainable?
- (2) If so, how?

Answer—

- (1) Yes.

- (2) Because the wood supply from public forests to the proposed Gunnedah charcoal plant will be derived from sawmill wastes and forest residues. The Government will ensure that wood supply from publicly owned native forests will be derived from regions where Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) have been completed. State forests covered by an RFA have undergone extensive assessment of their environmental values. Timber harvesting practices and volumes in these areas is regulated by an Integrated Forestry Operations Approval which ensures ecological sustainability.

*539 FORESTRY—GUNNEDAH CHARCOAL PLANT—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) Will a significant number of trees from native woodlands on private land on the New England Tablelands and North-West Slopes be logged for the Gunnedah charcoal plant?
- (2) (a) Is the primary principle of the recently released salinity strategy that existing native vegetation should be retained?
- (b) If so, has a salinity impact assessment on the supply of wood to the Gunnedah charcoal plant been completed?

Answer—

- (1) In relation to its proposed charcoal plant at Gunnedah, Australian Silicon is currently considering accessing wood supply from a range of sources in private and public forests. Decisions by the company as to who will supply its wood for charcoal production is a commercial matter for the company to negotiate and determine.

The company has expressed its willingness to invest in its future wood supply from plantations which will also provide benefits such as carbon sequestration, salinity remediation and biodiversity enhancement.

If the company chooses to obtain part of its wood supplies from native woodlands on private property or any other privately owned source, private landholders are quite entitled to offer timber on their land for sale to the company.

Timber harvesting on private land is subject to the provisions of the Native Vegetation Conservation Act. The Government is currently developing Best Management Principles which will be applied to ensure that harvesting operations on private property are ecologically sustainable.

- (2) Land clearing has been identified as a major contributor to dryland salinity. However, it should be noted that selective timber harvesting, with regrowth and replanting, does not constitute land clearing.

Sustainable timber production, such as currently practiced in New South Wales, will enhance the Government's salinity strategy. Planted forests and healthy regenerating or replanted forests can make a positive contribution to reducing ground water table levels in areas affected by high salinity.

Further questions regarding the implementation of the NSW Salinity Strategy should be directed to the Minister for Agriculture.

*540 ENVIRONMENT—ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY—Ms Rhiannon asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) Does the spray irrigation of up to 1.4 million litres per week of abattoir effluent by Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd, of 26-28 Crosslands Road, Galston, under licence from the Environment Protection Authority, comply in all respects with the "Environment Protection Authority's Environmental Guidelines for the Utilisation of Treated Effluent by Irrigation"?

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- (2) If not:
- (a) In what ways?
 - (b) To what extent does it not comply?
 - (c) Why did the Environment Protection Authority approve the licence?
- (3) If so:
- (a) On what basis did the Environment Protection Authority determine that it complies?
 - (b) What documentation can the Environment Protection Authority provide to substantiate compliance?

Answer—

- (1) The former State Pollution Control Commission initially approved the licence in 1990, having assessed the licence application against the guidelines then applicable, titled *Design Guide for the Disposal of Wastewater by Land Application*.

The EPA is currently preparing an Environmental Guideline titled *Use of Treated Effluent in Irrigation* which it expects to be published later this year. The new guideline will advocate the full beneficial utilisation of wastewater consistent with sustainability principles.

I am assured by the EPA that it will fully assess the company's existing wastewater irrigation activities against this guideline when it is complete, in the context of the approach for existing activities that is recommended by the guideline.

(2) and (3) Not applicable.

*541 LOCAL GOVERNMENT—EVANS HEAD AIRFIELD—Mr Gay asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs—

- (1) Has the Richmond Valley Council failed to adopt a Plan of Management in relation to the Evans Head Airfield that was passed by the former Richmond River Shire Council in 1997?
- (2) Has the motion to adopt that Plan of Management ever been rescinded by either the former council or the newly amalgamated Richmond Valley Council?
- (3) Has the Evans Head Airfield Advisory Committee, constituted by the former Richmond River Shire Council under s. 355 of the Local Government Act, now been abandoned by the new council, despite having produced the Plan of Management formally adopted by the council?
- (4) Is development proceeding on the airfield site despite that development not complying with the Plan of Management adopted by the former Richmond River Shire Council in 1997?
- (5)
 - (a) Will the Minister investigate whether the council has acted appropriately in this matter?
 - (b) If not, why not?

Answer—

I have sought Richmond Valley Council's advice on this matter and been provided with the following details in response to your questions:

- (1) In May 2000, Richmond Valley Council placed a draft document "The Evans Head Village Strategy 2000" on public display. This strategy includes four scenarios for the future of Evans Head Airfield. Following community requests, the public exhibition period has been extended and submissions will now be received until mid-November 2000.

Following consideration of the submissions received, a final draft strategy will be prepared and again referred to the community for further consultation prior to determination by council.

- (2) No.
- (3) Following the Richmond Valley Council election on 3 June 2000, council established its committees at a special meeting on 13 June 2000. Council decided not to continue the Evans Head Airfield Advisory section 355 Committee. The new Richmond Valley Council has responsibility for both Casino and Evans Head airfields. A new Sports Advisory Committee was established which will consider recreation issues relating to airfields, and all other airfield matters will be considered by council as a whole.
- (4) No.
- (5) (a) No.
- (b) As outlined above, the draft strategy for the Evans Head Village is currently open to public submissions.

*542 LOCAL GOVERNMENT—BOUNDARIES REPORT—Mr Gay asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs—

- (1) (a) Has the Boundaries Commission completed its report into the merger proposal between Concord and Drummoyne Councils?
- (b) Does the Minister for Local Government now have a copy of that report?
- (c) If so, does the report recommend that no merger take place?
- (2) (a) Did the Minister give a commitment to the councils concerned that a merger would take place?
- (b) Has the Minister handed this report to the Premier because he gave a commitment to the councils concerned that a merger would take place, and if he were to recommend a merger, it would be a compulsory amalgamation?
- (3) Will the Minister make a commitment that he will not compulsorily amalgamate Drummoyne and Concord Councils?

Answer—

- (1) (a) The Inquiry Commissioner, Mr Bill Gillooly, submitted his report to the Director-General of the Department of Local Government on 25 July 2000. The Director-General forwarded the report to the Local Government Boundaries Commission for review and comment on 2 August 2000.
- (b) The Boundaries Commission reviewed the report and forwarded it to the Minister for Local Government on 10 August 2000.
- (c) No. The report makes five recommendations:
- (i) That the Director-General, Department of Local Government, and the Local Government Boundaries Commission consider this report and refer it with such comments as deemed appropriate to the Minister for Local Government.
- (ii) That the Minister consider the report and such comments, and, if in agreement with the proposal, commence the final steps of the amalgamation.
- (iii) That the councils be formally requested to nominate a name for the new council.
- (iv) That subject to the comment concerning section 263 (3) (e) elsewhere in this report, that the initial constitution should provide for an undivided council with the mayor elected from among nine councillors.

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- (v) That a referendum be held at the initial election of councillors to determine whether the electors wish to have a popularly elected mayor, effective from the second term of the new council.
- (2) (a) No.
- (b) No. On 31 August 2000, the Minister forwarded the report to the councils for consideration and advice on their preferred course of action.
- (3) This Government has a policy of no forced amalgamations. In considering their futures, Concord and Drummoyne Councils identified an amalgamation as beneficial to their communities and decided to develop and submit their voluntary amalgamation proposal accordingly.

*543 FORESTRY—GUNNEDAH CHARCOAL PLANT—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) Will native woodlands and forests on private land not presently being logged be logged for the Gunnedah charcoal plant?
- (2) Do the Upper and Lower North-East Forest Agreements and Regional Forest Agreements prevent the logging of additional trees in association with sawlog harvesting or silviculture thinning?
- (3) Did the consultant's report prepared for State Forests of NSW (Leech, May 2000) referred to in the Statement of Environmental Effects for the Gunnedah charcoal plant note that additional logging will occur due to the supply of wood to the charcoal plant?
- (4) Will the Government guarantee that no tree will be used solely for charcoal?
- (5) Is the Premier's statement (10 June 2000) that there will be "no additional logging of native forests" still valid?

Answer—

- (1) Australian Silicon is currently considering accessing wood supply from a range of sources. Decisions by the company as to who will supply its wood for charcoal production is a commercial matter for the company to negotiate and determine.

If the company chooses to obtain part of its wood supplies from native woodlands on private property, or any other privately owned source, private landholders are quite entitled to offer timber on their land for sale to the company.

Any wood sourced from privately owned native forests will comply with the provisions of the Native Vegetation Conservation Act. The development of special guidelines by the Department of Land and Water Conservation, known as Best Management Principles, will ensure that harvesting operations on private property are ecologically sustainable.

- (2) Harvesting operations that occur in the Upper North East and Lower North-East Forest Regions must comply with the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOAs) granted under Part 4 of the Forestry and National Parks Estate Act 1998. The legislatively based IFOAs specify the silviculture that may be practiced, that is, Single Tree Selection, Australian Group Selection and thinning.

Subject to the upper limits permitted under approved IFOA silviculture, the actual number of trees harvested is determined by the prevailing market conditions.

- (3) The consultant's report to which the question refers confirms that the company's specified timber requirements for charcoal production can be met within the existing limitations on timber harvesting in public native forests in the Upper North East and Lower North East Regions.
- (4) In relation to timber supplies from publicly owned native forests, no tree will be cut for the sole purpose of charcoal production.
- (5) Yes. See answer to question (2) above.

31 AUGUST 2000

(Paper No. 60)

*544 JUVENILE JUSTICE—ORANA JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE—Mrs Forsythe asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment—

In relation to the Orana Juvenile Justice Centre:

- (1) (a) Has the official visitor to the Orana Juvenile Justice Centre received complaints from five detainees alleging sexual harassment or sexual assault by another detainee?
- (b) If so, what action has been taken as a result of the complaints received by the official visitor?
- (2) (a) Have two senior youth workers previously reported concerns to the operational co-ordinator about the same detainee?
- (b) If so, what action was taken in response to their reports?
- (3) (a) Have three staff reported assaults on them from a detainee?
- (b) If so, what steps have been taken to ensure the staff have a safe work environment?
- (4) (a) Was a 12-year-old held at the centre, who had been given bail, driven to a bus station to catch a bus by the centre manager and previous centre psychologist?
- (b) If so:
- (i) Does the Minister consider this action to be appropriate?
- (ii) Is this action outside departmental guidelines?
- (iii) Was the young person returned to the centre when he refused to get on a bus, despite bail having been granted?
- (5) (a) Are rosters for senior youth workers meant to be displayed 14 days in advance?
- (b) If so, can the Minister indicate how frequently that has occurred?
- (c) On the occasions that this has occurred, was the roster correct?
- (6) How are incidents recorded at the centre?
- (7) (a) Are fact-findings the usual method of dealing with incidents?
- (b) If so, have over 100 been conducted since the centre opened?
- (8) (a) Is fact-finding normally the means of dealing with serious incidents?
- (b) If so, what system is in place for dealing with minor incidents?

- (9) Should minor incidents be dealt with at supervision or management level?
- (10) Has any documentation of incidents where appropriate action has been taken gone missing?

Answer—

In relation to the questions asked by the Hon Patricia Forsythe, MLC, I am advised:

- (1) (a) On 3 August 2000, a group of four detainees spoke to the official visitor regarding the issue of sexually inappropriate behaviour towards themselves by another detainee.
- (b) The four detainees were interviewed individually by the centre manager and the official visitor and signed statements were obtained. The matters were referred to the Dubbo police who immediately attended the centre and took further details from the centre manager.

On 4 August 2000, the detainee allegedly responsible for the inappropriate behaviour was transferred to another juvenile justice centre. The parents of the four detainees and the Department of Community Services were notified of the allegations.

Referrals to the Department of Health, Sexual Assault Services, for sexual assault counselling were made for the alleged victims of the indecent assaults.

Further investigations are pending.

- (2) (a) No, but concerns were expressed about the detainee's apparent threatening behaviour at a Centre Support Team meeting on 27 June 2000. There is no record in the minutes of the meeting of any behaviour of a sexual nature occurring at that time.
- (b) Following the Centre Support Team meeting on 27 June 2000, the Co-ordinator Operations recommended increased checks on this detainee.
- (3) (a) The only single incident in which three staff members were assaulted by a detainee occurred in February this year. As a consequence, the detainee was transferred that day to another juvenile justice centre and staff were assisted in obtaining medical attention as well as an immediate referral to the department's trauma counselling service. Staff also laid charges of assault against the perpetrator.
- (b) Departmental and centre policies are written and implemented with a view to creating a safe and secure environment for detainees without compromising the safety and well-being of staff.

Team Leaders and Co-ordinator Operations advise and educate staff on a daily basis regarding safe work practices.

Mediation has been utilised where differences exist between staff and detainees and this has been viewed as successful and worthwhile.

The department is initiating further training to all staff in juvenile justice centres in the management of challenging behaviours.

- (4) (a) Yes. The young person was granted bail by the magistrate conditional on his family producing a rail/bus ticket for his travel home from Dubbo to Bourke.
- (b) (i) Yes.
- (ii) No. It is the department's responsibility to arrange the safe return on release of a young person to his or her place of residence as determined by the court conditions.
- (iii) Yes. The young person refused to get onto the bus. He subsequently made his intentions of not returning to Bourke very clear. As such, his safety and well-being was of great concern. With this in mind, it was negotiated that he return to the centre, which was his preference. The centre manager contacted the young person's father, who subsequently spoke to his son, and following further dialogue, the young person returned to his father's care safely several days later on the first available rail/bus service.

- (5) (a) Yes.
- (b) Since the initiation of shift work on 21 January 2000, the rosters have been displayed 14 days in advance, with the exception of one occasion when it was displayed 9 days in advance.
- (c) Out of the eight rosters displayed to date involving approximately 980 shifts for each 28-day roster period, there has been one error, a typing error, and this error was corrected immediately it came to notice.

Since becoming operational, there have been many instances where adjustments to rosters were required for various reasons, such as:

- Staff taking leave (recreation, sick, family and community leave).
- Staff undertaking escorts of detainees.
- Staff training.
- Staff wanting changes for personal and/or social reasons.
- Team changes for sound operational reasons, such as ensuring an even balance of staff skills on each team.
- If female detainees are in the centre, additional female staff may need to be rostered.

- (6) There is a Director-General's instruction that outlines the procedures to be followed by staff when reporting incidents. This instruction details the definition of incidents and the appropriate means for recording them.

Orana Juvenile Justice Centre operates in accordance with this instruction.

- (7) (a) A fact-finding investigation is initiated where there is an allegation of inappropriate conduct and/or actions by staff. The purpose of such an investigation is to establish the facts of an incident to determine whether there has been an apparent breach of discipline by a departmental officer.

Allegations of abuse against a client by a staff member as defined by the Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection and Community Services) Act 1988 are dealt with by way of fact-finding investigation.

- (b) No.

- (8) (a) A fact-finding investigation is only initiated when there appears to be some question in relation to a staff member's conduct and/or action.

- (b) There is a variety of strategies to deal with minor incidents. These include revision of policies and procedures and additional staff support, supervision and training. There have also been instances where an incident has resulted in the revision of the centre routines. Minor incidents may form part of the basis for performance management of staff and used as a learning tool for all staff. Minor incidents can also identify further training needs of staff.

- (9) Taking into account the circumstances of each minor incident, action may be determined at either a team leader or centre management level.

Minor incidents are always dealt with in a supervisory capacity in the first instance. Where there is no appreciable change in the performance, behaviour and/actions of that staff member, it is referred to management for management supervision.

- (10) As far as centre management is aware, no documentation related to an incident has been reported as missing.

*545 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—E.A. SOUTHEE PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was E.A. Southee Public School unable to staff two classes due to a lack of casual teachers in the 2 weeks leading up to 31 August 2000?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to alleviate the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*546 HEALTH—HOME VISITS—Mr Corbett asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Health—

- (1) Is it possible for a visiting medical officer, under current arrangements at a public hospital, to be asked by the local area health service to visit a patient in their home?
- (2) What process should a patient undertake to enable this visit to occur?
- (3) Is this process documented in any NSW Health publication?
- (4) What criteria would be used by a local area health service to determine the need for a home visit?
- (5) What appeal process is available if a request by a patient to an area health service for such a home visit is refused?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Health, that the answer to the honourable member's question is:

NSW Health contracts Visiting Medical Officers to provide medical services in public health facilities. In some instances, for example in providing continuing care to palliative care patients, doctors who are Visiting Medical Officers visit patients in their homes but this is outside their contractual arrangements with the Area Health Service.

In rare circumstances, where a patient is unable to attend the local hospital or where there is a clinical need, hospitals can help in arranging home visits by Visiting Medical Officers. In these circumstances, arrangements can be made through the general manager of the hospital. Again, these arrangements would be outside the Visiting Medical Officer's contractual arrangements with the Area Health Service.

*547 ENVIRONMENT—ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES—Ms Rhiannon asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) What environmental studies did the Environment Protection Authority conduct, or require the applicant to conduct, before awarding a pollution licence to Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd of 26-28 Crosslands Road, Galston, to spray irrigate up to 1.4 million litres per week of abattoir effluent?
- (2) If studies were conducted:
 - (a) How many were there?
 - (b) Of what nature?
 - (c) What topics did they cover?
 - (d) Who were they conducted by?
 - (e) What were the conclusions?

- (3) If no environmental studies were conducted, how was the Environment Protection Authority able to determine that the cumulative effect of spray irrigation allowed for under the pollution licence will not cause adverse environmental impacts to the Berowra Creek catchment or Berowra Creek system?

Answer—

- (1) and (2) The former State Pollution Control Commission approved the licence, having assessed the licence application against guidelines titled *Design Guide for the Disposal of Wastewater by Land Application*. The assessment was undertaken using information submitted by the applicant on wastewater pollutant concentrations and available land area for irrigation. The commission concluded that the wastewater treatment and irrigation system could be operated in accordance with the guidelines.
- (3) Not applicable.

*548 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—EAST HILLS BOYS TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were 32 classes not covered at East Hills Boys Technology High School between 28 August and 31 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*549 AGRICULTURE—GRAIN BOARD—Dr Chesterfield-Evans asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation—

- (1) (a) Did the NSW Grain Board incur a loss of \$35 million?
- (b) If so, will the Minister explain to the House why he did not report the financial situation of the board earlier?
- (2) Does the Minister consider that the current system of the board being accountable to the Auditor-General is satisfactory?
- (3) Can the Minister guarantee that the substantial losses sustained by the board will not be borne by the growers?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Richard Amery, MP, Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation, that the answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) (a) As the honourable member should now be aware, the trading losses and bad debts of the board have been subject to independent assessment and have been publicly acknowledged. A working party established by this Government has since been working with the board and the independent consultant to determine the full extent of the losses and determine the most appropriate arrangements for the future of the board.
- (b) The directors of the board were advised of the trading losses experienced by the board in late July 2000. These losses were publicly revealed in media reports on 28 July and I was advised of the situation immediately on my return from overseas the following week. As soon as the Government became aware of the situation, immediate action was taken to determine the extent of the problem and to ensure that the board will be able to meet its obligations to New South Wales coarse grains and oilseed growers, and for a grower-focused marketing facility to continue to be available to those growers.

- (2) The honourable member should be aware that the NSW Grains Board is subject to exactly the same reporting and auditing requirements as other statutory bodies in this State. Under the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, the board is required to submit financial statements to the Auditor-General within 6 weeks of the end of its financial year. I can advise the House that the board, which reports on a year ended 31 August basis, has routinely met this requirement. Moreover, I can further advise the House that the financial difficulties of the board arose only recently and their financial statements to 31 August 1999, their last reporting period, gave no indication of any problems in that regard.
- (3) This Government is currently working with the board to establish arrangements with other organisations that will enable the board to meet its obligations to New South Wales coarse grains and oilseed growers. The decision to extend the board's vesting powers for a further 5 years was an expression of confidence in the board's future and to enable negotiations with other organisations to proceed with greater confidence. Every effort is being made to negotiate an arrangement that returns the board to solvency, enables any remaining pool payments due to growers to be paid, and ensures that a grower-focused marketing facility continues to be available to New South Wales growers.

*550 TRANSPORT—COMPENSATION—Dr Chesterfield-Evans asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

The Assistant General Manager of the Motor Accident Assessment Services with the Motor Accidents Authority, Belinda Cassidy, stated in the Law Society Journal Vol. 38, No. 7, page 38 that:

“... damages for the Glenbrook victims will be assessed in the context of ‘restrictions imposed by the Motor Accidents Compensation Act 1999’, such as those on economic loss, domestic assistance, interest and on the ability to claim non-economic loss.”

In contrast to this, on page 4 of the *Daily Telegraph*, dated 11 August 2000, a spokesperson for the Minister for Transport is reported to have stated that:

“State Rail will ‘settle claims directly with the Glenbrook survivors’ and that ‘their status under the Motor Accidents Compensation Act is ‘irrelevant’.”

Could the Minister please clarify on what basis compensation will be offered?

Answer—

The State Rail Authority and its underwriters are in communication with the solicitors acting for the claimants to finalise any compensation payments.

5 SEPTEMBER 2000

(Paper No. 61)

*551 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—GEORGES HALL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were seven classes not covered at Georges Hall Public School on 5 September 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) Was the school's reading recovery program unable to operate because a replacement could not be found for the school's support teacher learning difficulties?
- (3) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) and (3) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*552 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were five classes not covered at Punchbowl Public School between 17 July 2000 and 21 July 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

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*553 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were ten classes not covered at Punchbowl Public School between 24 July 2000 and 28 July 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

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*554 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were six classes not covered at Punchbowl Public School between 31 July 2000 and 4 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

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*555 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were twelve classes not covered at Punchbowl Public School between 14 August 2000 and 18 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

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*556 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were sixteen classes not covered at Punchbowl Public School between 21 August 2000 and 25 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

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*557 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were ten classes not covered at Punchbowl Public School between 28 August 2000 and 1 September 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

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*558 EMERGENCY SERVICES—INGLESIDE BUSHFIRE BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS—Mr Gay asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) Was an extension built at the Ingleside Bushfire Brigade headquarters in 1994-95?
- (2) If so:
- (a) Have full details of that work been provided?
- (b) Are there concerns from former brigade members that the extension to the building is unsafe and does not conform to applicable building standards?
- (3) (a) Is there video footage of the extension that clearly shows substandard building work?
- (b) If so, has the Minister or the department seen the footage?

- (4) If Government money was spent on an extension that is substandard, unsafe and could be a risk to those who work there, will there be an investigation?

Answer—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Yes.
(b) Yes.
- (3) (a) I understand that video footage was forwarded by the complainants to the Ombudsman.
(b) No.
- (4) Following allegations from former brigade members, several investigations have been conducted by independent bodies including ICAC, police and the Ombudsman. I understand that both the police and the Ombudsman's Office, after reviewing the available information, have declined to investigate matters further.

*559 TREASURY—MARKET IMPLEMENTATION GROUP—Mr Gay asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

- (1) (a) Is there a contract between Frontier Economics and State Treasury to provide services to the Market Implementation Group?
(b) If so:
(i) What is the value of the contract?
(ii) What is the length of the contract?
- (2) (a) Are any other companies contracted to State Treasury to provide services for the Market Implementation Group?
(b) If so, what are the details, including names of companies and the value of those contracts?

Answer—

- (1) (a) Yes. The Secretary of NSW Treasury signed a contract with Frontier Economics Pty Ltd on 28 April 2000 to provide services to the Market Implementation Group (MIG). The personnel specified in the contract include individuals from Frontier Economics as well as Burn Voir Partners, Deacons Graham & James and Freehill, Holingdale & Page.
(b) (i) The full value of the contract is linked to a plan which outlines the scope of MIG work. This plan is currently being finalised with oversight by the Energy Sub-committee of Cabinet. A number of MIG projects have proceeded in parallel with the development of the plan given that there have been separate approvals for this work. An example is the corporatisation of Pacific Power.
(ii) The current contract is in force until 30 June 2001.
- (2) (a) There are a number of individual contractors (operating within company frameworks) currently employed by NSW Treasury to provide services to MIG. These contractors provide high level technical assistance with matters including energy trading, regulatory submissions, full retail contestability, and corporatisation of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electricity Scheme. Assistance is also provided on project management.

- (b) The current contractors (each providing a single contractor to undertake services for the MIG) are:
- Couch and Associates Pty Ltd.
 - Energy Futures Australia Pty Ltd.
 - Geoff Chambers and Associates Pty Ltd.
 - Global and Corporate.
 - Greg Bedford and Associates Pty Ltd.
 - Magga Holdings Pty Ltd.
 - Meritus.

These contractors are employed on an “as required” basis and final estimates for the specific contract values are being finalised for 2000-01. This is linked to the plan for MIG mentioned above.

These contractors are separate to consultancies that MIG commissions from time to time.

*560 AGRICULTURE—PESTICIDES—Mr Corbett asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation—

- (1) Which agricultural pursuits have traditionally involved the least use of pesticides?
- (2) Which local government areas in New South Wales:
 - (a) have historically practiced these types of agriculture, and
 - (b) currently practice these types of agriculture?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Richard Amery, MP, Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation, that the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

- (1) The reference to “tradition” in terms of chemical use in agriculture is not entirely valid because the level of pesticides use can vary significantly between different agricultural pursuits and, even within a particular agricultural pursuit, the level of usage can and does vary over time. For example, the arrival of a new pest or disease can result in a significant increase in the use of pesticides in the short term. Similarly, the development and introduction into a particular agricultural pursuit of new technologies such as biological control, resistant varieties or improved cultural practices can significantly reduce pesticide use at a particular point in time.

In general terms, the lower input extensive agricultural crops require less pesticide applications than the intensively farmed crops.

- (2) (a) and (b) Local government areas with access to water for irrigation are those associated with more intensive farming practices, whereas those areas of the State without access to water for irrigation are restricted to extensive cropping practices.

*561 ENVIRONMENT—PESTICIDES—Mr Corbett asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

Within which local government areas of New South Wales do people:

- (a) have the lowest risk of exposure to pesticides, pesticide drift and contaminated soil, and
- (b) the highest risk of exposure to pesticides, pesticide drift and contaminated soil?

Answer—

The honourable member would be aware that the Government enacted the *Pesticides Act 1999* to significantly reduce the risk of pesticide use on humans and the environment.

Within New South Wales, the Pesticides Implementation Committee, established under the *Pesticides Act 1999*, is developing regulations for mandatory record keeping by the State's commercial pesticide users, including farmers. The proposed record keeping regulation would enable individual users of pesticides to provide consistent data for any mechanism that may be proposed in future to collect usage data.

With regard to assessment of risk of exposure from contaminated soil, I am not aware of any such work having either been proposed or undertaken.

However, this Government's new Contaminated Land Reform Package, which was introduced in 1997 and 1998, ensures that those sites that are unacceptably impacted by contamination are dealt with appropriately. Those sites being considered for a change to a more sensitive type of use are also investigated for contamination and, where necessary, remediated before the new use takes place.

*562 HEALTH—CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY—Mr Corbett asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Health—

Which local government area or areas are:

- (a) the least likely to cause problems to people who have a chemical sensitivity, and
- (b) the most likely to cause problems to people who have a chemical sensitivity?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Health, that the answer to the honourable member's question is:

There is no available evidence, either in New South Wales or internationally, on the geographic distribution of this condition.

6 SEPTEMBER 2000

(Paper No. 62)

*563 ENVIRONMENT—SCHEYVILLE NATIONAL PARK—Ms Rhiannon asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) Since the creation of Scheyville National Park, has there been widespread and growing concern in the local community regarding weed infestation, the levels of funding made available for the park and the priorities used in allocating that funding?
- (2) Are noxious weeds now abundant in prominent and accessible locations, including pampas grass, privet and blackberry?
- (3) Is the Longneck Lagoon wetland, recognised under State Regional Environment Plan 20, now almost totally covered by an infestation of the weed *Salvinia molesta*?
- (4)
 - (a) Since the creation of Scheyville National Park, how much funding has been allocated to that park?
 - (b) What have been the priorities in the use of that funding?
 - (c) How much of that funding has been used on weed control or bush regeneration?

Answer—

- (1) No. There has not been any widespread nor growing concern in the local community that has been brought to the attention of local National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) staff.
- (2) No more so than prior to reservation. Weed species have been identified and mapped and priorities for management have been determined. Blackberry has been the weed targeted in 1996–2000. Privet has been identified but as yet is untreated and pampas occurs as isolated plants and is treated opportunistically.
- (3) No. This water body was infested from a neighbouring property during 1999-2000 and has responded to the first stage of a control and eradication program that involved physical removal of the weed. The current and continuing action to control *Salvinia molesta* involves the application of herbicide.
- (4) (a) Recurrent funds received by the area office since gazettal of Scheyville National Park in 1996 amount to \$652,000. This funding is used to manage Scheyville National Park, the Cattai National Park; Pitt Town, Castlereagh, Windsor Downs and Agnes Banks Nature Reserves and until March 2000 the Wisemans Ferry Historic Site. These funds are allocated to priority projects.
(b) Within Scheyville National Park, the NPWS has undertaken the following priority projects: preparation of a plan of management, maintenance of culturally significant buildings, construction of boundary fencing, maintenance of infrastructure, construction of interpretive signage, weed management and eradication programs, construction of visitor facilities including walking tracks, establishment of fire breaks.
(c) Controlling the *Salvinia molesta* infestation will cost in excess of \$80,000 over 3 years. The cost of terrestrial weed control is about \$10,000 to \$12,000 per annum.

*564 PREMIER—KYOTO PROTOCOL—Ms Rhiannon asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship—

- (1) On 8 May 2000, did Ms Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand, ratify the Kyoto Protocol?
- (2) What is the view of the NSW Government on ratification of the protocol by the Commonwealth Government?
- (3) Has the Government had discussions with the Commonwealth Government on conditions either party requires prior to ratification?
- (4) Will the Premier undertake to consult with the community and interest groups in any negotiations with the Commonwealth Government on greenhouse gas policy?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Bob Carr, MP, Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship, that the answers to the honourable member's questions are:

- (1) The Premier is aware that the Prime Minister of New Zealand announced her Government's commitment to pass legislation to enable New Zealand to ratify the Kyoto Protocol by mid-2002.
- (2) Ratification of the protocol is constitutionally a matter for the Commonwealth Government. The details of the protocol are not yet resolved and the Government has therefore not formed a final view on its ratification. In principle, the NSW Government supports ratification.
- (3) No. However, before ratification is proposed, a National Interest Analysis must be prepared by the Commonwealth Government for attachment to the protocol when tabled in Parliament for ratification. Consultation on ratification will then be held by the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties on the basis of the National Interest Analysis.

- (4) The Commonwealth Government consults the NSW Government on a number of aspects of greenhouse gas policy. Consultation with community and interest groups is frequently a part of the same processes.

*565 ENVIRONMENT—SUMMERTIME CHICKEN PTY LTD—Ms Rhiannon asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) Did the Development Consent Orders issued by the Land and Environment Court on 27 March 1998 in relation to Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd, of 26-28 Crosslands Road, Galston, required strict compliance on the part of Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd with Environment Protection Authority licence 003488 as in force at that time?
- (2) Did the Environment Protection Authority compliance audit dated April 1999 find that Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd did not comply with a number of licence conditions?
- (3) (a) Was one of the conditions with which Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd did not comply in relation to noise on site?
- (b) Did the Environment Protection Authority find that Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd was unable to comply with the noise conditions in the licence?
- (4) (a) Due to the 24-hour operation of the business, are residents constantly being awoken at night by noise pollution from truck movements on site and from noise generated by the loading and unloading of these vehicles?
- (b) Has the Environment Protection Authority resolved this problem by removing from the licence of Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd the condition relating to noise on site?
- (c) If so:
- (i) Does the Minister believe that this is an appropriate and fair way for the Environment Protection Authority to deal with a company in breach of a licence issued by that authority?
- (ii) Does the Minister believe that this is an appropriate and fair way for the Environment Protection Authority to deal with the concerns of residents in relation to a breach of a licence issued by that authority?
- (5) On what basis did the Environment Protection Authority remove from the licence relating to Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd the provision relating to noise on site?
- (6) Will the Minister give a commitment to review the history of this case with a view to reinstating in Environment Protection Authority licence 003488 the original requirement for Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd relating to noise on site?

Answer—

- (1) The development consent orders are a matter for Hornsby Council and the Land and Environment Court.
- (2) Yes. These non-compliance issues were mostly minor technical or administrative matters which the licensee has addressed since the audit.
- (3) (a) Yes. The company had not met two noise conditions of its licence.
- (b) The EPA found that the night-time truck movements on the site could not comply with the night-time noise limit on the licence. All other activities could be undertaken in compliance with the night-time noise limit, with appropriate management practices.

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- (4) (a) Some residents have raised concerns at night-time traffic noise on Crosslands Road and movement of trucks on the site at night.
- (b) No.
- (c) Not applicable.
- (5) See (4) (b) above.
- (6) No. The EPA is the appropriate regulatory authority under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act and exercises its licensing powers in strict accordance with the Act. I am also aware that considerable resources have already been expended on addressing residents' concerns and am satisfied that the EPA has acted appropriately to minimise the impacts on residents. I expect the EPA to take additional action if any new issues are substantiated.

566 URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING—TOMALPIN EMPLOYMENT ZONE—Ms Rhiannon to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

567 URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING—TOMALPIN EMPLOYMENT ZONE—Ms Rhiannon to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

568 URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING—TOMALPIN EMPLOYMENT ZONE—Ms Rhiannon to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

569 TRANSPORT—SYDNEY FERRIES RIVERCATS—Mr Gallacher to ask the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

*570 FAIR TRADING—HOT WATER MIXING VALVES—Mr Gallacher asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Fair Trading, and Minister for Sport and Recreation—

- (1) How many manufacturers of hot water mixing valves have issued product recalls in the last 2 years?
- (2) How many of these product recalls were initiated by the Department of Fair Trading?
- (3) How many actual valves are involved in the product recalls in each case?
- (4) Where product recalls have been issued, how many valves have been replaced, modified, or inspected?
- (5) Have there been any reported cases of scalding or other injuries resulting from these recalled products?
- (6) What action is the Department of Fair Trading taking to ensure that all affected hot water mixing valves are inspected and modified?

Answer—

- (1) to (6) The Department of Fair Trading is committed to measures to reduce product-related injuries. The department provides advice and assistance in choosing safe items for the home, such as children's nursery furniture and toys, as well as in relation to issues such as electrical safety.

Hot water mixing valves are devices that mix hot and cold water and which may be set at specific temperatures. The ability of a valve to correctly and constantly deliver water at a specific temperature is critical in minimising the risk of scalding.

I am advised by the Manager of the Safety and Standards Branch of the Department of Fair Trading that departmental records do not record any manufacturer recalls of hot water mixing valves over the past 2 years.

The honourable member should be aware that the NSW Plumbing and Drainage Code of Practice, which refers to Australian Standard AS 3500.4, commenced in March 2000. The code is not administered by the Department of Fair Trading.

I am further advised that, according to the NSW Department of Health, there has been an overall reduction in scalds in New South Wales.

The honourable member should also be aware that, at the Premier's request, I recently undertook a review of New South Wales product recall procedures within the national context. As a result, I took a range of proposals to the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs (MCCA) in July. This included ensuring a national approach was taken to the issue of product recalls. At the same council, the Commonwealth Minister proposed a new Commonwealth website for product recalls.

As a result, senior public servants from all States and the Commonwealth are preparing a report for MCCA's consideration. Any appropriate improvements arising from this report will, I'm sure, be implemented by jurisdictions across Australia.

*571 CORRECTIVE SERVICES—PERIODIC DETAINEES—Mr Gallacher asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) How are records of inmates on Periodic Detention kept?
- (2) What records, if any, are kept of detainees who fail to attend Periodic Detention?
- (3) How is this information available to departmental staff?
- (4) What action is taken if a detainee is late or fails to attend?
- (5) What action is taken if a detainee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol during detention?
- (6) Are records regarding Periodic Detainees kept in written form or computerised?

Answer—

- (1) The Department of Corrective Services compiles a list of periodic detainees who are required to report for each periodic detention period and the detainee signs against his/her name on arrival. This list is retained and the attendance or absence of each detainee is transferred to a computerised record.
- (2) See (1) above.
- (3) Authorised officers can access the hard copy or computerised record.
- (4) A detainee who is late may be refused entry to the periodic detention centre and he/she is recorded as being absent. The sentence of a detainee who reports late or who fails to attend is extended by 1 week and a penalty period is incurred which means that the detainee's sentence is extended by an additional period, to a maximum of six additional periods. Section 89 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* covers action taken in regard to failure to report or reporting late. Under section 163, if a detainee fails to attend on three or more occasions, the Parole Board must, on application by the Commissioner of Corrective Services, revoke the detainee's periodic detention order. Revocation results in the detainee being taken to prison.

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- (5) A detainee who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol when he/she reports is refused entry to the periodic detention centre and is recorded as being absent. See clause 8 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) (Periodic Detention, Home Detention, Community Services Work and Parole) Regulation 1995*. A detainee who is found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during detention is subject to a range of penalties including a fine.
- (6) See (1) above.

*572 HEALTH—FUNERAL INDUSTRY COUNCIL—Mr Gallacher asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Health—

- (1) Are there plans by the Funeral Industry Council to set up a board to regulate the funeral industry throughout New South Wales?
- (2) For what purpose is this board being established?
- (3) (a) Have local councils, the Local Government or Shires Associations been approached to provide representatives on this board?
- (b) If they have not been approached, why not?
- (4) (a) Does this board propose to charge a registration fee of \$300 for each cemetery, with an annual renewal fee of \$200, in addition to a fee for each burial?
- (b) If not, how will the board be funded?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Health, that the answers to the honourable member's questions are:

- (1) The NSW Department of Health is currently undertaking a review of the Public Health Act 1991 and the Public Health Regulation 1991. In its submission on the review, the Funeral Industry Council has proposed the establishment of a Funeral Industry Board to regulate the industry in New South Wales.
- (2) to (4) The Funeral Industry Council's submission is being considered, along with submissions from other interested parties, in the context of the review. The review has not been finalised at this stage.

573 TRANSPORT—COMMUTER SAFETY—Mrs Nile to ask the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

*574 GAMING AND RACING—SYDNEY STAR CASINO—Mrs Nile asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Gaming and Racing, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Hunter Development—

- (1) Have a series of breaches of casino rules been identified at Sydney's Star Casino including minors in the casino, intoxicated patrons and cards missing from blackjack decks?
- (2) Has the Star Casino allegedly breached casino rules on three occasions by giving Mr Kerry Packer credit contrary to high roller room rules as revealed on security video tapes and running sheets?

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- (3) Has the Department of Gaming and Racing's casino surveillance director recently told a parliamentary hearing that he was "unaware" of the existence of any security video tape in relation to Mr Kerry Packer?
- (4) What action is the Government taking to strengthen and enforce the surveillance of the Star Casino to ensure that they operate properly and according to the law?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Richard Face, MP, Minister for Gaming and Racing, that the answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) No.
- (3) The Director of Casino Surveillance informed a Parliamentary Committee on 11 August 2000 that he was not aware of a tape titled "Kerry Packer tape".
- (4) The Government is implementing measures following a public statement by Mr Peter McClellan, QC, who is inquiring into the Sydney casino licence, which entail transferring the Director of Casino Surveillance and casino inspectors from the Department of Gaming and Racing to the Casino Control Authority; employing additional casino surveillance inspectors and appointing a criminal law officer to improve liaison and information exchange between casino surveillance officials and law enforcement agencies; convening a high-level task force consisting of the Police Commissioner, the Director-General of The Cabinet Office and the Chief Executive of the Casino Control Authority to improve intelligence and organisational links between the Authority and law enforcement agencies; and leading the way with other Australian jurisdictions by developing a scheme that promotes cross-jurisdictional recognition of casino exclusion orders issued at the direction of police authorities.

- 575 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOL FUNDING—Revd Mr Nile to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—
- 576 POLICE—CABRAMATTA POLICE—Mrs Nile to ask the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Police—
- 577 HOUSING—CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS—Mr Corbett to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—
- 578 ENVIRONMENT—SUMMERTIME CHICKEN PTY LTD—Ms Rhiannon to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

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- 579 POLICE—CHILD ABUSE REPORT—Dr Chesterfield-Evans to ask the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Police—

*580 ENVIRONMENT—WATER EMISSIONS—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) (a) Have licence conditions been breached by the Port Kembla copper smelter for selenium discharge into the harbour?
 - (b) If so:
 - (i) How many times?
 - (ii) What will the company do to stop the breaches?
 - (c) Will there be regular testing for selenium in the harbour and in the fish in the harbour?
- (2) What will be the estimated annual mass of selenium, lead, copper, zinc, arsenic, cadmium, and hexavalent chromium discharged to the harbour?

Answer—

- (1) (a) and (b) Water sampling reported by Port Kembla Copper indicates that on five occasions the company has exceeded its licence conditions for selenium in the wastewater discharged into Port Kembla Harbour. Initial results indicate that the elevated levels occurred during the commissioning period for the smelter. The EPA has directed the company to undertake an intensive program to investigate the potential for any future elevated levels of selenium.
 - (c) EPA licence conditions require the company to undertake ongoing environmental monitoring of water quality in Port Kembla Harbour. I am advised that biological monitoring (including tests on fish) must also be considered in this program.
- (2) The EPA licence limits the concentration of pollutants discharged to Port Kembla Harbour. In addition to this, the Government has introduced a load-based licensing scheme to provide an economic incentive to industries to reduce pollution even further than the recognised standards.

*581 ENVIRONMENT—COMPLAINTS—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) How many complaints have been made by the community about the Port Kembla copper smelter during the commissioning period?
- (2) How many noise complaints have been made?
- (3) Have residents been unable to carry out their employment because of lack of sleep?
- (4) Has one man taken temporary accommodation elsewhere because he cannot sleep?
- (5) Have the Environment Protection Authority and the Minister for the Environment received such complaints?

Answer—

- (1) During Port Kembla Copper's commissioning period, from 4 February 2000 until 4 August 2000, the EPA received a total of 433 complaints relating to the company.

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- (2) Fifty-three of these complaints related to noise. The EPA has issued a legal notice requiring the company to develop and implement additional noise mitigation measures to ensure unacceptable noise impacts will not occur during normal operation of the smelter.
 - (3) The EPA and I have received complaints from a single resident indicating that he has been unable to carry out his employment due to lack of sleep and that he has sought temporary accommodation elsewhere.
 - (4) See (3) above.
 - (5) See (3) above.

*582 ENVIRONMENT—CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) (a) Will the community be made aware of the details of the critical incident plan, relating to the Port Kembla copper smelter, required in case of potential impact on residents?
- (b) If so, when?
- (2) (a) Are the workers in the plant provided with respirators?
- (b) If so, who will provide the residents on the other side of the fence with respirators?
- (c) Will the Minister support the community's request for an early warning system?
- (3) Will residents need to be gassed and sickened before the Minister closes the smelter?

Answer—

- (1) (a) and (b) I am advised that the company has provided details of relevant aspects of the Critical Incident Plan to the Community Liaison Committee. The company has also produced a Community Notification Protocol as required by its Development Consent and EPA licence. The protocol has been developed in consultation with the Community Liaison Committee.
- (2) (a) and (b) As this issue relates to the responsibilities of NSW WorkCover, the question should be directed to the Minister for Industrial Relations.
- (c) A draft Community Notification Protocol has been prepared as outlined in my answer to question (1). This protocol has been tabled at the community liaison meetings for comment and further review as necessary.
- (3) The EPA announced on 3 August 2000 its intention to prosecute Port Kembla Copper for five alleged breaches of its environment protection licence. This demonstrates the EPA's regulatory functions are being exercised.

*583 ENVIRONMENT—AIR EMISSIONS—Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) Has there been an investigation into reports that emissions have been dropping on the community and missing the three monitors in Port Kembla?
- (2) (a) Have any reports of public health concerns been made to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in relation to the Port Kembla copper smelter in the commissioning period?
- (b) If so, how many?

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- (3) (a) Have residents been affected by emissions that were not recorded on any of the three monitors in the Port Kembla community?
- (b) If so, how many times?
- (4) If residents have been affected by emissions from the smelter, please detail the occasions and explain why they were affected when the plant was working in compliance with the EPA licence conditions?
- (5) (a) Have licence conditions been breached during the 6 months commissioning period?
- (b) If so, how many times?
- (6) As the mass limit for emissions to air for sulphur dioxide is 6,300 tonnes per year and there are no other mass limits set in the licence, what are the estimated masses of lead, cadmium, arsenic, antimony, mercury, and solid particulate that will be emitted to air from the smelter?

Answer—

- (1) The three monitor sites in Port Kembla (along with seven other sites in surrounding residential areas) were selected based on recommendations of an independent meteorological study which ranked areas around Port Kembla most likely to be affected by emissions.
- (2) (a) Yes. Where alleged health concerns have been reported to the EPA, the information is recorded and provided to the Illawarra Area Health Service. The EPA advises any callers who report health problems to seek medical advice.
- (b) There were 78 calls to the EPA alleging health concerns in relation to Port Kembla Copper during the commissioning period from 4 February 2000 until 4 August 2000.
- (3) (a) The EPA has received complaints alleging that residents have been affected by emissions that were not recorded on any of the three monitors. The EPA investigates complaints as they are received to assess the environmental performance of the plant and compliance with licence conditions.
- (b) See answer to (3) (a) above.
- (4) I am advised that the EPA's licence conditions are very stringent and are based on internationally recognised health goals. Persons complaining of health impacts have been referred to medical authorities.
- (5) (a) Yes.
- (b) The EPA has commenced legal action against Port Kembla Copper over five alleged breaches of its Environment Protection Licence at its copper smelter earlier this year.
- (6) The company advised the Government and the community, including a Port Kembla Public meeting in March 1997, that the estimated annual stack emissions would be: total particulates – 21.4 tonnes, lead – 3 tonnes, arsenic – 0.2 tonnes and cadmium – 0.1 tonnes.

*584 SPORT AND RECREATION—CRIMINOLOGY STUDY—Mrs Nile asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Fair Trading, and Minister for Sport and Recreation—

- (1) Has a study by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that sport offers the best way out from a life of crime for young people?
- (2) Has the study found that sport offers a diversion from criminal activity, provides a sense of belonging and creates loyalty among young people and does the report state that sport “can change people's lives and society for the better”?

(3) What action is the Government taking to develop sport programs for the youth of New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) I am advised that a study called “Crime Prevention Through Sport and Physical Activity” has been undertaken by the Australian Institute of Criminology in conjunction with the Australian Sports Commission.
- (2) The case studies examined in the paper suggest that it is possible to reduce the supply of motivated offenders by diverting young people from offending behaviour to engage in sport and other physical activities.
- (3) The Carr Government is committed to using sport and recreation as an integral part of its crime prevention strategy. The Department of Sport and Recreation supports local police and community youth clubs and other community organisations to offer sporting and recreational programs aimed at youth at risk of coming into contact with the juvenile justice system. By working with schools, community centres and local councils, we are helping to build active communities that value and encourage the participation of youth.

Feedback from police and community youth clubs in 1999-2000 highlighted some of the benefits to be gained from involvement in the program including:

- improved school attendance,
- improved behaviour, and
- improved relationship with police.

*585 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Was a class not covered at Tolland Public School on 31 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*586 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were two classes not covered at Tolland Public School between 21 August 2000 and 25 August 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*587 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—PUNCHBOWL PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were two classes not covered at Punchbowl Public School on 7 September 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

*588 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—TOLLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL—Mrs Forsythe asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) Were five classes not covered at Tolland Public School between 4 September 2000 and 7 September 2000 due to the unavailability of casual teachers?
- (2) What is the Minister doing to address the shortage of casual teachers in New South Wales?

Answer—

- (1) The organisation of classes and teacher staffing arrangements in New South Wales government schools is carefully managed by principals.

Principals have a range of options to cover unexpected teacher absences, including the temporary engagement of casual replacement staff. There are approximately 28,000 active casual teachers across New South Wales.

In some cases, principals may allocate the students of absent teachers to other classes. This occurs on occasions when a casual teacher cannot be located at short notice, or as otherwise determined by the principal.

The decision to engage a casual teacher or make other arrangements to cover a specific teacher absence rests with the school principal, taking into account the circumstances of the day, the availability of casual staff at short notice, and other arrangements within other classes at the school.

- (2) The Department of Education and Training has implemented a wide range of strategies to assist principals to recruit and retain appropriately qualified casual teachers.

Among these is the *Teacher Employment Priority Scheme* which allows casual teachers to accelerate their priority for permanent employment by 6, 12 or 18 months for every 50 days of casual teaching service. The scheme is popular among casual teachers and principals and is attracting more casual teachers to government schools.

Principals have access to a free, weekly advertising service in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Daily Telegraph*. Display advertisements listing casual teaching vacancies are published in Saturday editions of these newspapers. Principals can use this service to pre-book casual teachers or to develop a larger pool of day-to-day relief teachers.

As a further initiative, *CasualConnect*, an on-line casual teacher employment service, commenced statewide in August this year. The service allows casual teachers to register their availability, while principals can advertise casual teaching opportunities and match prospective staff with those opportunities. Every government school principal in New South Wales has access to this service.

CasualConnect is used by principals who wish to extend their supply of casual teachers. In the first month of statewide operation, more than 3,000 casual teachers registered their interest and availability for work.

Principals also have access through local district offices to the contact details of another 3,000 recently approved teachers. Daily updates on teacher availability are provided to district offices and are shared with principals.

Mobile permanent teachers have been appointed by the department to cover a range of staffing needs in schools. In some cases, this has included schools where there is a limited or seasonal supply of casual teachers. Mobile appointments have increased staffing certainty and the local pool of casual teachers that can be recruited to cover day-to-day teacher absences.

In addition to all of these strategies, any principal needing assistance in recruiting casual teachers can contact their local personnel support officers or the department's School Staffing Unit for direct assistance.

Schools are well served by casual teachers and are getting on with the job of preparing students for further study and work.

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- 590 COMMUNITY SERVICES—FUNDING CARERS—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 591 COMMUNITY SERVICES—EARLY DISCHARGE—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 592 COMMUNITY SERVICES—CARER ASSISTANCE—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 593 COMMUNITY SERVICES—PRIMARY CARERS—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 594 COMMUNITY SERVICES—CHILD CARER ASSISTANCE—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 595 COMMUNITY SERVICES—CARER PROGRAMS—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 596 COMMUNITY SERVICES—CARER FUNDS—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 597 COMMUNITY SERVICES—FUNDING SUBMISSIONS—Mr Corbett to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Women—
- 598 URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING—FORMER FREEWAY CORRIDOR—Mr Richard Jones to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—
- *599 ROADS—FORMER FREEWAY CORRIDOR—Mr Richard Jones asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—
- (1) Are there a number of blocks of former freeway corridor land in the Willoughby area which are to be disposed of?
 - (2) Are these lands in the following areas:
 - (a) Precinct 1:
South Willoughby – Small Street and Marlborough Road opposite the leisure centre and incinerator?

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- (b) Precinct 2:
“Willoughby Paddocks” – between Eastern Valley Way, Mowbray Road, Windsor Road and Warners Avenue?
- (c) Precinct 3:
Castlecrag – parking area/native garden at bus stop, corner of Eastern Valley Way, Edinburgh Road and Raeburn Avenue?
- (d) Precinct 4:
Castlecrag – northern escarpment facing Sugarloaf Bay, site of former proposed roadway and bridge crossing, and Edinburgh Road facing Middle Harbour and Seaforth?
- (3) Are these small pockets of land regarded as open space and bushland reserves by the community?
- (4) (a) Will the Minister, instead of selling this land for development, donate this to the community as open space?
- (b) If not, why not?

Answer—

- (1) Yes.
- (2) (a) Yes.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) No.
- (d) Yes.
- (3) The planning study of Government land in Seaforth includes community consultation. The study is currently on public exhibition and provides the community additional opportunity to comment on the proposed development of land.
- (4) (a) No.
- (b) The Government has a responsibility to achieve optimum disposal value for surplus property assets on behalf of the community. Therefore, the RTA has entered into an In-Principle Agreement with council and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning that the asset value of the land will be retained. The funds from the disposal of surplus RTA land will be used to finance road construction programs that benefit the whole community. Appropriate zoning of the land is in place.
- 600 POLICE—ABUSE LINK—Mr Corbett to ask the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Police—
- *601 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—SEAFORTH TAFE—Ms Rhiannon asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—
- (1) What options are currently being considered for the future of the Seaforth TAFE site?
- (2) With which parties have consultations been conducted on the future of this site?
- (3) Do any of the options involve sale of the site or part of the site?

- (4) (a) Do any of the options involve sale or lease of the site to a non-government educational institution?
(b) If so, what is the nature of that institution?

Answer—

- (1) The Department of Education and Training has not yet made any decisions about the future of the Seaforth TAFE Campus.
(2) Whilst the department has received representations in relation to the site, there have been no negotiations with other parties in relation to this matter.
(3) and (4) Not applicable.

602 POLICE—SPECIALIST POLICE STOCK SQUAD—Dr Pezzutti to ask the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Police—

*603 POLICE—MR ROBERT SIMPSON—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Police—

- (1) Has Mr Robert Simpson of the Bush Ranger Country Hideaway at Midginbil endured the loss of his business and therefore his livelihood?
(2) If so, is this:
(a) directly related to the regulations brought about by the commencement of the Firearms (General) Regulation 1997, and
(b) because the guidelines established by the Commonwealth Government for the payment of compensation, after consultation with the police Ministers of all States, failed to incorporate the category of business in which Mr Simpson operated?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Paul Whelan, MP, Minister for Police, that the answers to the honourable member's questions are:

- (1) Whilst I have received numerous representations from, and on behalf of, Mr Simpson, whom I understand operates a shooting range that caters for tourists, I am not able to comment on the state of his personal business affairs.
(2) One of the key features of the 1996 National Firearms Agreement, which is implemented by the Firearms (General) Regulation 1997, was the limitation of the availability of non-military style semi-automatic rifles and shotguns to primary producers, professional vermin exterminators, and a limited class of clay target firearm users. In line with the NSW Government's commitment to implementing the National Agreement, tourists are therefore not permitted to use semi-automatic firearms on ranges in New South Wales.

As the honourable member has previously been advised, under the guidelines for the payment of compensation by the Commonwealth Government, which were established as part of the National Firearms Agreement, there is no provision for compensation for tourist shooting range operators who cannot use semi-automatic firearms on their ranges.

Nevertheless, as a result of the letters I have received on Mr Simpson's behalf, I have written to the Federal Minister for Justice and Customs, the Hon Senator Vanstone, requesting that the Commonwealth consider further the options for compensation in this instance.

*604 AGRICULTURE—STOCK IDENTIFICATION—Dr Pezzutti asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation—

- (1) Are stock identification services available to the residents of Mumulgum, Whiporie, Rapville, Ellangowan and Yorklea areas?
- (2) Are producers losing their livestock to thieves?
- (3) (a) Do inadequacies in Transported Stock Statements mean that producers have no way of proving their claims?
(b) If so, when will such inadequacies be addressed?
- (4) Will the Minister ensure that stock identification services are made available to these areas?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Richard Amery, MP, Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Land and Water Conservation, that the answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

- (1) Yes, stock identification services are available to stock owners throughout the Casino Rural Lands Protection District, which includes the centres referred to in Dr Pezzutti's question. Under the provisions of the Rural Lands Protection Act, stock owners may brand or earmark their cattle. However, the appliances used in such branding or earmarking must be registered with the local Rural Lands Protection Board.

A more expensive option is to apply for the supply of rumen (first stomach) boluses or ear tags fitted with transponders under the National Livestock Identification Scheme. This also involves an application to the Rural Lands Protection Board.

Bearing in mind that stock identification for cattle is optional (with the exception of consignments to the European Union which requires transponder identification), it is disappointing to note that well under half of cattle owners elect to identify their stock. It is up to industry to address this situation.

- (2) Yes, there is evidence of a significant increase in reported stock theft from many areas in the State. Such theft has involved cattle, sheep and goats. Because of this growing problem, the Minister for Police and I established a Pastoral and Rural Crime Working Party to recommend ways of addressing stock theft and other rural crime. The matters of stock identification and transported stock documentation are high on the list of matters being examined by that body.
- (3) (a) Transported Stock Statements may be used as evidence of ownership, but they are not definitive proof of ownership. Certain problems associated with the Transported Stock Statement system are recognised, and such problems are currently being jointly addressed by NSW Agriculture, the Police Service, NSW Farmers' Association, Livestock Transporters' Association and others.
(b) It is anticipated that problems associated with the Transported Stock Statement system will be rectified by the introduction of revised documentation as early as possible in 2001. This will involve extensive consultation with industry and legislative amendments.
- (4) As previously mentioned, stock identification services are available now through the 48 Rural Lands Protection Boards in New South Wales.

605 POLICE—SPECIALIST POLICE STOCK SQUAD—Dr Pezzutti to ask the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Police—

*606 STATE DEVELOPMENT—STUART & SONS—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

- (1) Are Stuart & Sons of Newcastle the only manufacturers of pianos in Australia?
- (2) Are 6,000 pianos imported each year?
- (3) Will financial assistance be made available to Stuart & Sons so that they can adequately compete with overseas suppliers?

Answer—

- (1) Stuart & Sons is the only manufacturer of pianos in Australia, with its specialty being the 2.9-metre concert grand piano. Stuart & Sons is also embarking on manufacturing a 1.3-metre upright piano, with plans also for a 2-metre medium grand piano.

The company is becoming the catalyst for reviving an industry that once thrived in Australia. The domestic piano manufacturing industry ceased in the mid-1970s and during its peak was producing 1,500 pianos per annum.

- (2) Australia imports around 6,000 pianos per annum, with the majority being non-concert grand pianos.

Around 20 concert grand pianos are imported into Australia, annually.

- (3) There has been extensive promotional support by the NSW Government of the Stuart piano, both in Australia and overseas, through the Australian Technology Showcase (ATS). This has been complemented by financial support to profile the Stuart piano at major local and international institutions

Support that has been provided includes:

- The provision of financial assistance to enable the showcasing of the Stuart piano at prominent cultural institutions, both in Sydney and overseas. This led to the sale of the Stuart piano to the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Festival and the Welsh College of Music and Drama in Wales.

These sales complement the sales of the Stuart piano to the Powerhouse Museum and the Universities of New South Wales, Tasmania and Central Queensland. Presently, there is strong overseas interest in the Stuart piano being exhibited from the US, Canada, Korea and European countries.

- The inclusion of the Stuart piano in the Australian Technology Showcase (ATS) program, a major business program of the Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD) dedicated to the promotion of innovative and locally developed technologies.

The support that has been provided by the NSW Government has assisted Stuart & Sons to realise its 5-year business plan within 2 years. As a result, new premises are now required to enable the company to expand. The Department of State and Regional Development is assisting Stuart & Sons to locate suitable new premises to accommodate this growth.

*607 HEALTH—ONCOLOGY SPECIALIST—Dr Pezzutti asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Minister for Health—

- (a) Are some cancer patients in the Northern Rivers area unable to receive specialist oncology treatment?
- (b) If so, will the Minister provide a full-time Oncology Specialist in that area?

Answer—

I have been advised by the Hon Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Health, that the answer to the honourable member's question is:

- (a) No.
- (b) Not applicable.

*608 FISHERIES—COMMERCIAL FISHERIES—Dr Pezzutti asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries—

Will the Minister follow the lead of the Queensland Government and ensure that financial assistance is made available to commercial fishery restructuring to prevent fishers losing their business and therefore income for their families?

Answer—

It has been reported that the Commonwealth Government has proposed to provide \$10 million towards a structural adjustment scheme for Queensland's east coast trawl fishery.

The Commonwealth has a substantial interest in this area with its responsibilities to protect the World Heritage values of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Commonwealth funding is contingent upon a number of requirements being met. The funding is dependent upon:

- the Queensland Government contributing \$10 million towards the scheme, and
- the commercial fishing industry contributing \$10 million, and
- amendments to the trawl management plan to reduce fishing effort, close non-trawled areas, and introduce mandatory by-catch reduction devices and turtle excluder devices, and
- any adjustments must be fair and equitable to any smaller family operators who might be disadvantaged by the scheme, and
- guarantees that there will be an up-front 15 per cent reduction in effort below 1996 levels, with the reductions targeted to the World Heritage Area, and
- a comprehensive review of the fishery to take place in 2003. If that review does not demonstrate that the fishery is ecologically sustainable, then a further reduction in effort of 5 per cent each year must be implemented in 2004 and 2005, and
- a commitment that the Queensland Government will report formally to the Commonwealth's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority on the management of the fishery.

Until all these conditions are met and the funding has been sourced from the Queensland Government and the Queensland commercial fishing industry, the restructuring package remains a proposal.

The NSW Government would welcome a Commonwealth Government and industry contribution towards the restructure of commercial fishing. I am more than willing to consider and consult with industry on any serious proposal to assist in industry restructure.

609 TRANSPORT—RAIL EMERGENCIES—Mr Ryan to ask the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

*610 STATE DEVELOPMENT—FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE—Mr Moppett asked the Treasurer, Minister for State Development, and Vice-President of the Executive Council—

- (1) What assistance has been granted by the Government to cover water charges for abattoirs at Grafton and Singleton?
- (2) Will the Government offer similar assistance to Wingham Beef Exports, who may be forced to relocate to Queensland because of the \$460,000 cost imposed on them by Mid Coast Water?
- (3) Will such a move to Queensland mean a loss of 455 jobs in the Manning Valley?

Answer—

- (1) In the case of both Ramsey Holdings Pty Ltd at Grafton and Shellden Pty Ltd at Singleton, the companies were offered assistance in the form of establishment grants and payroll tax concessions. The assistance package to Shellden involved assistance toward a water supply line to the abattoir site. At both sites, long-term agreements for water supply were reached between the abattoir operators and the respective local council.
- (2) As part of its facilitation role, the Department of State and Regional Development has been working closely with the company, Mid Coast Water, Greater Taree Council and other local agencies to resolve water headwork charge issues. A proposed solution path has been put to the company. The parent company of Wingham Beef Exports has not yet made a final decision on expansion plans for the site.
- (3) Wingham Beef Exports currently employs 350 staff with a further 150 jobs likely to be created at the abattoir if the proposed expansion proceeds. The NSW Government is working hard to help secure this new investment proposal.

*611 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—SCHOOL COUNSELLORS—Ms Rhiannon asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) How many school counsellors were employed in the public education system in New South Wales in:
 - (a) 1995,
 - (b) 1996,
 - (c) 1997,
 - (d) 1998, and
 - (e) 1999?
- (2) How many full-time equivalent school counsellors were employed in public primary schools in New South Wales in:
 - (a) 1995,
 - (b) 1996,
 - (c) 1997,
 - (d) 1998, and
 - (e) 1999?

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- (3) How many full-time equivalent school counsellors were employed in public secondary schools in New South Wales in:
- (a) 1995,
 - (b) 1996,
 - (c) 1997,
 - (d) 1998, and
 - (e) 1999?

Answer—

- (1) There are large numbers of casual school counsellors as well as part and full-time school counsellors employed in the public education system in New South Wales and as such, to determine those figures for the years requested, would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.
- (2) and (3) School counsellors provide services to students in primary, high, central and special schools. The actual allocation of school counsellors is based on need determined at the local level. A school counsellor works with students from Kindergarten to Year 12 and provides services to a number of primary schools and a high school(s), but the service responsibilities vary depending on the needs of those schools. The Department of Education and Training does not distinguish between primary and secondary schools in the employment of school counsellors.

*612 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—SCHOOL ENROLMENTS—Ms Rhiannon asked the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

- (1) What is the Minister's estimate of the ratio of public to non-government school enrolments in New South Wales in:
- (a) 2002,
 - (b) 2004,
 - (c) 2006,
 - (d) 2008, and
 - (e) 2010?
- (2) With respect to each of the enrolment mix ratios referred to above, what planning figures are being used by the department?
- (3) With respect to each of the planning figures referred to above, what would be the Minister's preferred outcome?
- (4) What policy settings and programs does the Minister have in place to ensure that these outcomes occur?
- (5) What independent advice and analysis has the Minister received that would suggest that these policy settings and programs are likely to succeed in achieving that enrolment mix?

Answer—

- (1) to (5) On the basis of recent trends, the Government expects a marginal shift in proportional enrolments toward non-government schooling to 2002. The government school share should not vary substantially from the broad 70 per cent mark.

Changes in the proportion of government school students is the result of the interplay of a wide range of structural, demographic, economic and policy factors.

Any firm projections beyond the expectation of a marginal shift over the next year or 2, are not reliable.

Policy development for public schooling does not alter on the basis of marginal changes in enrolment proportions between government and non-government schools. Enrolment projections do not increase or diminish the responsibility of government to provide universal public schooling of the highest possible quality.

The Government accepts this responsibility despite the Commonwealth Government's penalisation of government schools through the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA). By 2002, the EBA will cost New South Wales public schools up to \$50 million a year.

The NSW Government continues to maintain and develop the largest government school system in the country. Spending on education and training in New South Wales is at record levels. The Carr Government has increased recurrent spending for the education and training portfolio to \$7.2 billion in the 2000-01 Budget, an increase of almost \$320 million on 1999-2000 levels and \$1,439 million, or 25 per cent more, since 1994-95.

Average expenditure per government school student in 1999-2000 is \$6,584, the highest per capita figure in the history of public education in this State. This is up from \$5,057 in 1994-95, an increase of 30.2 per cent, and has occurred despite the continuing Commonwealth funding cuts to government schools.

The Department of Education and Training's planning strategy involves examining current and emerging educational policy and planning issues, including social, economic and work place developments, and then implementing actions for addressing those issues. The current planning framework for government schooling is set out in the statement, *NSW Public Schools Strategic Directions 2000-2002*:

Over the next 3 years, public schools will build on their strengths in providing high quality teaching and learning for all students in New South Wales by:

- positioning public schools as the leading education provider for New South Wales backed by the NSW Government, offering stability and consistency of service to a cross-section of our population
- strengthening the foundations for lifelong learning by extending the State Literacy Strategy with a focus on spelling, speaking and writing and introducing a statewide Numeracy Plan, all backed by an unprecedented level of resources
- enhancing the breadth, depth and diversity of secondary school curriculum through the implementation of reforms and changes such as the inclusion of nationally accredited, industry-recognised vocational training within the New Higher School Certificate, and the establishment of new multi-campus arrangements embracing schools, TAFE institutes and universities
- promoting teacher professionalism and workplace flexibility, encouraging staff to share knowledge and expertise, and implementing the New Higher School Certificate
- providing programs to support regular school attendance, student welfare, drug education, social and civic responsibility, and dispute resolution
- monitoring and analysing student performance and progress and reporting on education and training outcomes to students, parents, and the community.

613 EDUCATION AND TRAINING—TEACHERS SALARY PACKAGE—Ms Rhiannon to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Minister for Education and Training—

*614 SPORT AND RECREATION—GOLF COURSES—Ms Rhiannon asked the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries representing the Minister for Fair Trading, and Minister for Sport and Recreation—

- (1) What criteria are employed by the Department of Sport and Recreation in establishing the need and demand for new golf courses in regional areas?
- (2) How does the department intend to ensure that such developments do not adversely impact on the environment, and in particular on sensitive coastal lands such as State Environmental Planning Policy No. 14 wetlands?

Answer—

- (1) The Department of Sport and Recreation has a process when making recommendations for any sporting facility. The department would seek input from a range of individuals and organisations, including: the Regional Co-ordination Management Group, the Local Member, Regional Organisation of Councils and Peak State Body of the appropriate sport.
- (2) The Department of Sport and Recreation has no statutory controls over developments that impact on the environment.

615 MINERAL RESOURCES—GAS EXPLORATION—Mr Cohen to ask the Minister for Mineral Resources, and Minister for Fisheries—

616 URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING—GUNNEDAH CHARCOAL PLANT—Mr Cohen to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

617 FORESTRY—SAWLOG RESOURCES—Mr Cohen to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

618 URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING—AUSTRALAND DEVELOPMENT—Ms Rhiannon to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

*619 ENVIRONMENT—SUMMERTIME CHICKEN PTY LTD—Ms Rhiannon asked the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Corrective Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

- (1) In December 1999, did Summertime Chicken Pty Ltd, of 26-28 Crosslands Road, Galston, de-sludge a dam owned by that company and located at 22-24 Crosslands Road?
- (2) Did this sludge have a highly offensive odour and was this sludge buried on site?

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- (3) Was this sludge dug up and spread over the site on or about 22 December 1999?
 - (4) Did the plant operator performing this task wear protective clothing and breathing apparatus, whilst residents living adjacent to the site were subjected to highly offensive odours on that day and for some days following this event?
 - (5) Were residents notified that this work was to take place?
 - (6)
 - (a) Did residents of Fishburn Road, Galston, write a letter of complaint to the Environment Protection Authority regarding this incident?
 - (b) Have the residents received a reply?
 - (7) Did water samples taken immediately below this dam on 28 June 1999 by Hornsby Shire Council show extremely high levels of faecal coliform pollution?
 - (8) Does the Minister regard as environmentally sound or appropriate the practice of burying contaminated sludge then digging it up and spreading it across open ground?
 - (9) Does the Minister view such practice to be in accordance with the existing legislative provisions in New South Wales relating to protection of the environment and planning controls?
 - (10)
 - (a) Has the Environment Protection Authority responded to residents' concerns and investigated this incident?
 - (b) If not, why not?

Answer—

- (1) I am advised that the company de-silted a dam on a property in November 1999 and that the dam at that time contained stormwater, not wastewater, from the Summertime Chicken operations. I understand that the material removed from the dam was silt.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The company has advised the EPA that silt from a freshwater dam—not sludge from a wastewater treatment pond—was dried and spread out over the property in the same way that topsoil is commonly used in domestic situations.
- (4) I am not aware of what the plant operator was wearing. However, the company has advised the EPA that no protective clothing was being worn by the plant operator because the material was just silt from a freshwater dam.
- (5) I understand that the company issued a Notice to Residents in August 1999 advising that works were to be undertaken on the property.
- (6)
 - (a) The EPA has advised that it has no record of having received a letter from Fishburn Road residents about this activity in December. A resident of Fishburn Road wrote to the EPA in January 2000 about a noise incident.
 - (b) Not applicable.
- (7) Samples taken by council did show elevated levels of faecal coliforms. I understand that council's water sampling was undertaken for a short duration and in a stormwater channel which receives run-off from the upstream catchment which includes the Summertime Chicken site and many other sites. I understand that the samples collected by council were not taken directly from the company's site.

Given the nature of other land uses in the catchment such as livestock keeping and the fact that most properties operate separate on-site sewage treatment systems, the source of the pollution identified by the council monitoring is uncertain. Further, the extent of monitoring is insufficient to confirm whether the pollution is on-going or a result of a single event. I can assure you that the EPA will take immediate appropriate action should any evidence become available to confirm that the company is acting unlawfully, or that wastewater management practices need improvement.

- (8) No and nor did this occur.
- (9) Not applicable.
- (10) (a) and (b) The EPA responds appropriately to all residents' concerns. The de-silting of a dam does not require an EPA investigation.

10 OCTOBER 2000

(Paper No. 64)

620 ENERGY—INDUSTRY CONVERGENCE—Mr Jobling to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) What is Industry Convergence?
- (2) Does the joint venture proposed by Pulse Energy, and could the launch in the UK of a company called Virgin Energy with non-traditional players selling energy both on and offline, be described as Industry Convergence?
- (3) (a) Did Andersen Consulting describe Energex (a Brisbane-based company), Yarra Valley (water) and United Energy as good as the best in the world with websites?
- (b) How did they describe New South Wales energy producers and distributors?

621 ENERGY—INTERNET WEBSITE—Mr Jobling to ask the Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth, and Minister Assisting the Minister for the Environment representing the Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) (a) Does the NSW Government support its corporatised energy producers and suppliers to establish an eCommerce website?
- (b) If so, what support is given?
- (2) (a) Will the website be a critical selling and service channel to the residential market given the introduction of full retail contestability?
- (b) What studies have been undertaken and what advice or conditions given to the New South Wales corporatised energy producers and suppliers to deal with the probability that real online competition has begun, especially noting the recent launch of several Internet energy start ups in Australia, an example of which is energyauctions.com.au?
- (3) What plans and provision has the NSW Government put in place to counter the potential for the overseas energy companies, using their experience of online selling in overseas energy markets and sophistication in website use, gaining competitive domination of New South Wales energy markets?

622 SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE—MOTOR ACCIDENTS AUTHORITY—Dr Chesterfield-Evans to ask the Special Minister of State, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, Minister Assisting the Premier on Public Sector Management, and Minister Assisting the Premier for the Central Coast—

On 6 September 2000, the honourable leader of the Opposition asked a question regarding a possible conflict of interest of the Chairman of the Motor Accidents Authority, Mr Richard Grellmen, and mentioned Crown Solicitor's advice on the matter.

- (a) Will the Minister make this brief and advice available to the Parliament?
- (b) If not, why not?

John Evans
Clerk of the Parliaments