



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

2023-24

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

No. 171

WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024

(The Questions and Answers Paper published on Monday to Friday of each week will contain, by number and title, all questions to which answers have been received the previous day and any new questions asked that 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. 156 (Including Question Nos 1609 to 1612) | 17 January 2024 |
| Q & A No. 157 (Including Question Nos 1613 to 1620) | 18 January 2024 |
| Q & A No. 158 (Including Question Nos 1621 to 1621) | 19 January 2024 |
| Q & A No. 159 (Including Question Nos 1622 to 1622) | 22 January 2024 |
| Q & A No. 160 (Questions—Nil) | - |
| Q & A No. 161 (Including Question Nos 1623 to 1654) | 24 January 2024 |
| Q & A No. 162 (Including Question Nos 1655 to 1657) | 25 January 2024 |
| Q & A No. 163 (Questions—Nil) | - |
| Q & A No. 164 (Including Question Nos 1658 to 1663) | 30 January 2024 |
| Q & A No. 165 (Questions—Nil) | - |
| Q & A No. 166 (Including Question Nos 1664 to 1665) | 1 February 2024 |
| Q & A No. 167 (Including Question Nos 1666 to 1671) | 2 February 2024 |
| Q & A No. 168 (Including Question Nos 1672 to 1672) | 5 February 2024 |
| Q & A No. 169 (Including Question Nos 1673 to 1675) | 6 February 2024 |
| Q & A No. 170 (Including Question Nos 1676 to 1686) | 7 February 2024 |
| Q & A No. 171 (Including Question Nos 1687 to 1687) | 8 February 2024 |

13 DECEMBER 2023

(Paper No. 156)

* 1609 EDUCATION AND EARLY LEARNING—SCHOOL FACILITIES—The Hon. Chris Rath to ask the Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) In relation to community use of school facilities, how are the guidance rates calculated for not-for-profit hire charges?
 - (a) When were the guidance rates for not-for-profit hire charges last reviewed?
 - (b) What are the rates / guidance rates for-profit / commercial hire charges?
 - (i) Will the rates / guidance rates be made public?
 - (c) Does all revenue go back directly to that school?

Answer—

I am advised by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney that:

The Department of Education has advised that guidance rates are set at an amount to cover expected costs. This includes utilities, administration, cleaning and maintenance.

The department differentiates between for-profit and not-for-profit operators by charging for-profit users a licence fee as they are ineligible to enter into a community use agreement under the Sharing of School Facilities Procedures.

* 1610 EDUCATION AND EARLY LEARNING—SHARE OUR SPACE PROGRAM—The Hon. Chris Rath to ask the Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) How many schools participated in the ‘Share Our Space’ program in the following school holidays:
 - (a) 2021 Summer Holidays?
 - (b) 2021 Autumn Holidays?
 - (c) 2021 Winter Holidays?
 - (d) 2021 Spring Holidays?
 - (e) 2022 Summer Holidays?
 - (f) 2022 Autumn Holidays?
 - (g) 2022 Winter Holidays?
 - (h) 2022 Spring Holidays?
 - (i) 2023 Summer Holidays?
 - (j) 2023 Autumn Holidays?
 - (k) 2023 Winter Holidays?
 - (l) 2023 Spring Holidays?

Answer—

I am advised by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney that:

Share Our Space is a program that runs during school holidays and enables school grounds to be used by the public for a range of activities, including sports, recreation, cultural events and celebrations.

During school holidays, outdoor facilities at hundreds of schools are open and available to the public to use between 8am and 5pm, including on public holidays. Some schools are only open on weekends.

A total of 1,534 schools have participated since the program began.

- * 1611 EDUCATION AND EARLY LEARNING—PREMIER’S READING CHALLENGE—The Hon. Chris Rath to ask the Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources representing the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney—

- (1) How many students participated in the Premier’s Reading Challenge in:
- (a) 2018?
 - (b) 2019?
 - (c) 2020?
 - (d) 2021?
 - (e) 2022?
 - (f) 2023?

Answer—

I am advised by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney that:

The following numbers of students participated in the Premier's Reading Challenge:

2018 - 334,878

2019 - 382,512

2020 - 413,984

2021 - 431,553

2022 - 424,871

2023 - 433,657

- * 1612 MULTICULTURALISM—HINDU COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA—Ms Abigail Boyd to ask the Treasurer representing the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport—

- (1) Have you been made aware of evidence that the Hindu Council of Australia has engaged in acts of religious vilification, caste discrimination and social discord?
- (2) Are you aware that on 7 November 2023 Periyar Ambedkar Thoughts Circle of Australia (PATCA) wrote to Dr Malcolm Haddon, the Associate Director of Community Resilience, documenting alleged incidents of religious vilification, caste discrimination and social discord?
- (3) Are you aware that the activities that the Hindu Council of Australia is alleged to have participated in would contravene the essential criteria for nomination to the NSW Faith Council (listed on [NSW Government website](#)) and violate the Multicultural Principles of the Multicultural NSW Act 2000?
- (4) What were your reasons for nominating the Hindu Council of Australia for the NSW Faith Council over other Hindu organisations?
- (5) Do you consider that the Hindu Council of Australia has contravened the essential criteria for nomination to the NSW Faith Council (listed on [NSW Government website](#)) and violated the Multicultural Principles of the Multicultural NSW Act 2000?
 - (a) Will you reconsider the nomination of the Hindu Council of Australia to NSW Faith Affairs Council on this basis?
- (6) Are you aware that community leaders are concerned that if action is not taken to require the Hindu Council of Australia to curtail their alleged vilification and discriminatory activities, it might

embolden them to persist in ongoing vilification of Sikh and Muslim communities, perpetuate caste discrimination and contribute to targeted hate crimes?

- (a) Will you meet with community leaders to address widespread concerns caused by the Hindu Council of Australia's nomination to the NSW Faith Council and the nomination of Mr Surinder Jain as its Co-Chair?

Answer—

The NSW Faith Affairs Council is established to improve the NSW Government's understanding and competency in relation to policies, programs and services that affect religious communities and people of faith in New South Wales.

I am advised that Mr Surinder Jain was nominated for the NSW Faith Affairs Council by the Hindu Council of Australia, as one of 12 organisations representing the 12 largest faith groups in New South Wales. The Hindu Council of Australia was selected as a nominator on the recommendation of Multicultural NSW.

I am advised that membership of the Faith Affairs Council is time-limited to ensure a diversity of representation over time.

I am advised that a series of complaints have been made to Multicultural NSW about the Hindu Council of Australia. I am advised that in the opinion of Multicultural NSW, those complaints include highly selective and partial information. I am advised that, having reviewed this information, Multicultural NSW is not satisfied that Mr Surinder Jain or the Hindu Council of Australia as an organisation should not have the opportunity to engage in NSW Government activities, including the newly formed NSW Faith Affairs Council.

This Government introduced new laws to make religious vilification unlawful. Any actual evidence of religious vilification or discrimination should be reported to the appropriate authority, which is Anti-Discrimination NSW.

17 JANUARY 2024

(Paper No. 171)

1687 HUNTER—LOCAL SMALL COMMITMENTS ALLOCATION—The Hon. Damien Tudehope to ask the Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast representing the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter—

- (1) According to the document 230728 \$400k local commitments master list.xlsx provided to the Legislative Council by the Premier's Department, on 3 October 2023 (sic: read 10 March 2023) Alex Costello was notified that in relation to the electorate of Swansea "NSW Labor will deliver up to \$24,000 to the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club to purchase all-terrain vehicle" In relation to that election commitment for Swansea, as of 10 March 2023, were you a member of the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club?

- (a) Have you at any time been an office holder of the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club?
- (i) If so, which office or offices and for what periods?
- (b) What years were you a member of the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club?
- (c) In nominating the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club for a grant of \$24,000 under the local small commitments allocation on 10 March 2023, did you advise either Alex Costello or any other relevant person of the details of your membership (and office holding, if any) in the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club?
- (d) When were you advised that as the Labor candidate for Swansea you could nominate projects for funding totalling \$400,000 under the local small commitments allocation?
- (i) Who advised you of this?
- (e) Were you given any advice, in writing or otherwise, about any process to manage potential conflicts of interest in relation to nominations?

- (f) Have you at any time advised anyone in the Premier's Department of your membership of the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club in relation to your nomination of the Caves Beach Surf Lifesaving Club for a grant of \$24,000 in funding under the Local Small Commitments Allocation (LSCA) Program?

David Blunt AM
Clerk of the Parliaments