QUESTIONS
AND
ANSWERS

No. 59

TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2003

(House prorogued 31 January 2003)

(The Questions and Answers Paper is published for each sitting day and will contain, by number and title, all unanswered questions, together with questions to which answers have been received on the previous sitting day and any new questions. Consequently the full text of any question will be printed only twice: when notice is given; and, when answered.)
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31 OCTOBER 2002

(Paper No. 51)

*1002 TRANSPORT APPEALS BOARD—Mr Debnam to Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Corrective Services, representing 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—

In relation to the appeal to the Transport Appeals Board (TAB) by Mr R. Todorovski:

(1) Are you aware of a complaint by Mr R. Todorovski regarding his recent appeal to the TAB?
(2) Did the decision of the TAB include a dissenting opinion or report by one of the Members and if so, what were the grounds for this dissenting report or opinion?
(3) Did a member of the Australian Labor Party write to the Government seeking intervention in the case and if so, what was the nature of that correspondence, the reply and any action taken?

Answer—

(1) The Transport Appeals Board are not aware of a complaint lodged by Mr R Todorovski.
(2) The decision made by the Transport Appeals Board did not include a dissenting opinion. The decision was made in accordance with s.9 of the Transport Appeals Board Act 1980.
(3) The Transport Appeals Board are not aware of any intervention in this matter by a member of the Australian Labor Party.

*1003 TRANSPORT APPEALS BOARD—Mr Debnam to Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Corrective Services, representing 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—

In relation to the Transport Appeals Board:

(1) In each of 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03 to date, how many matters have been heard by the Board?
(2) In each of 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03 to date, what was the cost of running the Board?
(3) In each of 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03 to date, how many staff did the Board have?

Answer—

(1) In 2000/01 118 matters were heard. In 2001/02 a total of 166 matters, and in 2002/03 to date there have been 111 matters heard.
(2) The Transport Appeal Boards are serviced by the same Registry as the Government and Related Employees Appeal Tribunal. It is estimated that the Transport Appeal Boards accounts for approximately one third of the entire budget. This figure for 2000/01 is $553,102; for 2001/02 is $533,077; and for 2002/03 to date is $209,266.
(3) The Registry (GREAT & TAB) has an establishment of five (5) permanent officers.
*1011 NATIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

(1) Does the legislation that provides for the provision of Native Vegetation Management Plans require a socio-economic study to be carried out in conjunction with any plan for Native Vegetation management?
(2) If so, was a socio-economic plan carried out in relation to the Manning Draft Native Vegetation Management Plan?

Answer—

(1) The Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997 requires that a regional vegetation committee, in preparing a draft regional vegetation management plan, must give consideration to matters relating to the social and economic aspects of land uses as they relate to native vegetation management, within that region. This does not necessarily entail a separate socio-economic study. However, I have indicated to all committees that should it be desired that a socio-economic study be undertaken, I will be able to provide around $20,000 to each committee for a study to be commissioned.

(2) The Manning Regional Vegetation Committee’s deliberation over its draft regional vegetation management plan thoroughly canvassed the full range of potential social and economic impacts on the regional community.

*1012 HAZARD REDUCTION—BOOTI BOOTI NATIONAL PARK—Mr J. H. Turner to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

(1) When was the last hazard reduction burn carried out in Booti Booti National Park?
(2) Was all the Park hazard reduction burnt at the time?
(3) If not, which parts were burnt?
(4) If not, when was the last time that other parts had had a hazard reduction burn?

Answer—

A number of hazard reduction burns have been undertaken over the past ten years within Booti Booti National Park, including burns at Lethbridge Road, Elizabeth Beach, the Ruins Camping Ground, Green Point and Cape Hawke. In addition, a number of hazard reduction burns have been undertaken cooperatively with local landholders on private land adjacent to the reserve. Hazard reduction burning is not the only component of fire protection undertaken in Booti Booti National Park. Each year fire trails and walking trails that form firebreaks are slashed and maintained.

*1013 NITA REED RENAL DIALYSIS CENTRE—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Health—

(1) Does the Department of Health assist in the funding of the Nita Reed Renal Dialysis Centre in Taree?
(2) If so what funding is received?
(3) If so, have you or the Department of Health or any associated department required the name of the dialysis centre to be changed?
(4) If so, to what name?
(5) If so, why?
Answer—

(1) Yes.
(2) The Mid North Coast Area Health Service through the Department of Health, Non-Government Organisation (NGO) program, provides funding of $180,300 a year to the Mid North Coast Kidney Association for salary and wages.
(3) to (5) No. Neither I nor the Department of Health has required the name of the dialysis centre to be changed. The Mid North Coast Kidney Association submitted its licensing application to Private Health Care Branch of the NSW Department with the name of the facility as the Taree Community Dialysis Centre. The Department of Health is not able to comment on any requirements by other government departments or agencies.

*1014 RUTHERFORD ROAD CHILDREN’S CENTRE — MUSWELLBROOK—Mr Souris to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Juvenile Justice, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth—

(1) Does the Rutherford Road Children’s Centre at Muswellbrook currently receive any Department of Community Services funding?
(2) If not, why not?
(3) Does the Minister intend to provide funding for the Rutherford Road Children’s Centre to enable the Centre’s continued provision of a valuable community service?
(4) If so, when can the Rutherford Road Children’s Centre expect to receive such funding?
(5) If funding is to be forthcoming, how much will the Rutherford Road Children’s Centre receive?
(6) If the Minister will not provide such funding to Rutherford Road Children’s Centre, why not?

Answer—

(1) No.
(2) to (6) Rutherford Road Children’s Centre is a long day care centre. The Centre is eligible for Commonwealth Government funding for fee relief. The Department of Community Services (DoCS) provides funding of over $8 million per annum to 147 children’s services in the Hunter area, through the Children’s Services Program. I am advised that DoCS is planning for the allocation of an additional $8,000 pa for children’s services in the Hunter area, which will become available from 1 January 2003. Rutherford Road Children’s Centre’s request for this funding is being considered in this process.

*1016 COMMUNITY VISITS—Mr Hazzard to Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship—

(1) Which aboriginal communities, and on what dates, has the Premier visited since 26 March 1999?
(2) What were the primary issues discussed at each meeting?

Answer—

The Premier regularly meets with representatives from Aboriginal communities across the State. Issues discussed at these meetings vary, depending on the delegation, but include health, education, employment, housing and reconciliation.

*1017 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW—Mr Hazzard to Deputy Premier, Minister for Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

(1) What legislation is presently under review by the Department?
(2) What proposals does the Department have for legislative change?
Answer—

(1) There is no legislation currently under review by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
(2) None.

*1018 BENCHMARKS—Mr Hazzard to Deputy Premier, Minister for Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

What government departments have introduced benchmarks for the delivery of services to Aboriginal residents of New South Wales?

Answer—

The NSW Government is currently working on an initiative which identifies 7 priority areas for addressing the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people. Within each area, targets will be set in accordance with national indicators identified by the Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Services Provision. In a whole of government approach, government agencies will work together on specific action plans and strategies to meet those targets over a set timeframe.

*1019 RESIGNATIONS—Mr Tink to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, representing the Minister for Police—

(1) Between 31 October 2000 and 31 October 2001 how many Constables have resigned?
(2) Between 31 October 2001 and 31 October 2002 how many Constables have resigned?

Answer—

NSW Police have advised me police strength details including resignations are published in the NSW Police Annual Report.

*1020 PROBATIONARY CONSTABLES—Mr Tink to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, representing the Minister for Police—

(1) Between 31 October 2000 and 31 October 2001 how many Probationary Constables have resigned?
(2) Between 31 October 2001 and 31 October 2002 how many Probationary Constables have resigned?

Answer—

NSW Police have advised me police strength details including resignations are published in the NSW Police Annual Report.

*1021 DIVER SIONS OF WATER FOR IRRIGATION—Mr Slack-Smith to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

What diversions of water have taken place for the purpose of irrigation below the Yarraman gauge on the Gwydir River since 1974, including diversions to cover the Gwydir River and the Gingham Channel, on a monthly basis and yearly basis with annual totals?
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
Tuesday 25 February 2003

Answer—

Post 1983 data on licensed Gwydir diversions for irrigation is recorded electronically in a statewide database maintained by the Department of Land and Water Conservation. Programming and extraction of specific data can be quite complex and time consuming, and in this case would involve a substantial number of entries. This information sought, post 1983, could be obtained, on appointment, through the Department.
While records do exist prior to 1983, these are held manually and would prove more difficult to readily collate.

*1022 PRE-SCHOOL FUNDS—Mr Maguire to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Juvenile Justice, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth—

(1) How many pre-schools Statewide have changed to Federal funded Long Day Care Centres in 1999, 2000, 2001 and in the 6 months to June 30th 2002?
(2) How much has been saved by the Department of Community Services due to the change of pre-school status to Long Day Care Centres?
(3) What was the total of funds allocated to pre-schools in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2003 by DOCS?
(4) How many pre-schools were under DOCS agreements in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002?
(5) Now that more pre-schools are federally funded, will you apply the funding saved from your DOCS budget originally allocated to a greater number of pre-schools to the remaining pre-school still offering placements?

Answer—

(1) to (4) This specific information is not readily available and the extensive resources required to produce it cannot be justified, at this time, owing to more pressing priority work being undertaken by the Department.
(5) It is the Department of Community Services’ policy to re-allocate any savings resulting from the conversion of pre-schools to long day care to funding priorities in the Children’s Services Program.

*1023 AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) What is the status of the negotiations between the NSW Government and the ARTC to lease NSW rail lines that are primarily used for the transport of freight?
(2) When will these negotiations be concluded?
(3) Will you give a guarantee that no jobs will be lost from the Goulburn Railway Workshops if the NSW Government approves the lease proposal?

Answer—

The Commonwealth, on behalf of the Australian Rail Track Corporation, has provided the NSW Government with a detailed proposal for the leasing of certain rail lines in NSW. The NSW Government is closely considering all issues associated with the proposal, including the potential impact on rural employment.
**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**
Tuesday 25 February 2003

*1024 SENIOR ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANTS—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) Are you aware that staff at small P5 and P6 level schools have stated that the administrative load placed on them by the Department of Education is so large that classroom time and student supervision are suffering?
(2) What was the result of the meeting between yourself and the Small Schools Committee on 31 October 2002?
(3) Will you commit the necessary funds to allow the employment of full time Senior Administration Assistants at P5 and P6 level schools?

**Answer—**

(1) The work of school assistants and senior school assistants is currently being assessed by a working party convened jointly by the Department of Education and Training and the Public Service Association.
(2) At the meeting with the NSW Teachers Federation Small Schools Committee on 31 October 2002, a range of matters relating to small schools was discussed.
(3) As the Honourable Member is aware, the State Budget is released in May/June each year.

*1025 FAILED BILLING SYSTEM—Ms Seaton to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

(1) Who bears responsibility for the loss of approximately $50 million on the failed customer billing system?
(2) How many sewerage treatment plants and related projects does this $50 million represent? Which specific projects will be affected?
(3) What other activities or services of Sydney Water will be cut or modified to absorb the loss?

**Answer—**

(1) to (3) The CIBS project has been referred to the NSW Auditor-General for investigation, and it would be inappropriate for me to comment before his report is finalised. Further, the Board of Sydney Water has advised me that the Corporation will be taking legal action to recover the Corporation’s losses and damages. It is inappropriate for me to comment on matters that will come before a court of law.

*1026 WOLLONDILLY DEVELOPMENT—Ms Seaton to Deputy Premier, Minister for Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

(1) When will the Minister for Planning respond to requests on behalf of residents of Appin to meet to discuss concerns about overdevelopment?
(2) When will the Minister publicly release plans by PlanningNSW on proposals for urban expansion in Wollondilly Shire and detailed timetables for decision making by the Department on the Greater Macarthur (Macarthur South) strategy?
(3) Why was the request to the Minister for Departmental officers to attend a meeting on planning issues in Bargo not agreed to?

**Answer—**

(1) I replied to Ms Seaton’s representations on 13 November 2002. I acknowledged the importance of these local issues to her constituents and expressed regret that my commitments were such as to rule
out a meeting. I placed my Regional Planning Coordinator, Riverina and South-East, at Ms Seaton’s disposal to assist her constituents in any way possible.
(2) At this time, Macarthur South is not identified for significant urban expansion although I understand Wollondilly Council is undertaking a strategic review of its local planning controls.
(3) The Department informs me it has no record of such a request having been received. The offer contained in my letter to Ms Seaton of 13 November 2002 remains.

*1027 HEALTH FACILITIES—Ms Seaton to Minister for Health—

(1) Which regional centres have renal dialysis machines available to local patients and where they exist, were the renal dialysis machines supplied by (a) community-raised funds or (b) state government funding?
(2) Will the Government commit to matching locally raised community funds to build a new ambulance station and medical facility in Kangaroo Valley?
(3) What is the Government’s position on the options under consideration for the relocation of Bowral Hospital’s helicopter landing pad to a location on campus?

Answer—

(1) (a) & (b) The vast majority of renal dialysis machines are State Government funded. The diversion of public resources necessary to answer this question in the detail asked is not justified.
(2) I refer the Honourable Member to my response to her earlier question on this matter (No. 922).
(3) I refer the Honourable Member to my response to her earlier question on this matter (No. 921).

*1028 COMMUNITY FIRE UNITS—Mrs Hopwood to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

Given the increasing demand from community members to set up community fire units to assist in preparedness for bush fires, will the Minister increase funding to Fire Brigades to match the requests to set up these units?

Answer—

The NSW Government has already provided increased funding for Community Fire Units (CFUs). This year, the level of funding for the CFU program increased from $225,000 to a record $975,000, a 333% increase in one financial year. Since 1995 the NSW Government has allocated almost $2 million to fund the CFU program. It is anticipated that by the end of June 2003 about 230 CFUs will have been installed at strategic locations throughout the urban/bushland interface.

*1029 SEPP5 EXEMPTION—Mrs Hopwood to Deputy Premier, Minister for Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

(1) Will the Minister grant Hornsby Shire Council an Interim Exemption from SEPP 5?
(2) If yes, when will the Interim Exemption be granted?

Answer—

(1) I am advised that Hornsby Shire Council is currently preparing a submission seeking exemption from SEPP 5, in accordance with Guidelines issued by PlanningNSW. I will consider this submission when it is received.
(2) See (1) above.
*1030 WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES — Mr Webb to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts —

(1) Are you aware that the National Parks and Wildlife Service’s report for Assessment, Identification and Options for the protection of additions to the Brogo Wilderness, Appendix 7, Damage and Recoverability Ratings, at page 116 states:
   (a) the Impact as Recreation Activities of Bushwalking and Horse Riding both have a damage rating of 1 and both have an equal recoverability rating of 1.
   (b) for impacts on Access Tracks, Bridle and Walking both have a damage rating of 2 and an equal recoverability rating of 1?
(2) Why wasn’t this report printed in the recent Assessment for the extensions of the Tuross, Deua and Buckenboura Wilderness areas?
(3) Why are the declarations of Wilderness areas and extensions being made without the benefit of full scientific fact or full disclosure of available comparative information?
(4) If the above report is correct then why isn’t horse riding classified as a Self Reliant Activity just as Bush Walking is?
(5) Are you aware that similar findings have previously been published as the Beavis Report which proved the low impact and high recoverability of horse riding on bush tracks and trails?
(6) Are you aware of the location and historical importance of the Shoebridge Track?

Answer—

(1) to (2) The Southern Region Wilderness Assessment Report comprised an assessment of many large areas. It was based on a comprehensive assessment of the capability of lands under consideration to be identified as wilderness according to the Wilderness Act 1987. The decisions rules used to assess disturbances as part of the southern NSW Wilderness Assessment are detailed in Section 1.4 of the report.
(3) All available scientific information and data was considered by an expert panel as part of the process of assessing wilderness values. Additional extensive field assessment by staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service was also undertaken.
(4) The National Parks and Wildlife Service is required to implement the intent of the Wilderness Act 1987 to conserve or restore the natural condition of wilderness areas and to provide opportunities for self-reliant recreation.
(5) The Beavis Report considered the impacts of horse riding relative to the impact from other established activities, such as mountain bikes, motor bikes, walkers and vehicles in Canberra Nature Park, which is a relatively heavily-disturbed, suburban fringe area.
(6) The inclusion of part of the Shoebridge Track in declared wilderness will not affect its historic significance or the National Parks and Wildlife Service’s ability to manage the track for its historic significance.

*1031 PORT MACQUARIE ARTS THEATRE — Mr Oakeshott to Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship —

(1) Is he aware of the planning currently underway in Port Macquarie for a 600-seat performing arts theatre, stage 2 of a regional art gallery, and an improved visitor information centre, and is he also aware of planning for an outdoor performing centre in the Camden Haven?
(2) Can he give an update on progress as well as an update on State involvement?

Answer—

(1) Yes. Officers of the Ministry for the Arts have been briefed by Hastings Council on the proposed new theatre and gallery in Port Macquarie and by the members of the Camden Haven Association for Regional Performing Arts Inc (CHARPA), on the proposed outdoor amphitheatre at Camden Haven.
(2) The Government has advised the Hastings Council that it would be eligible to apply for assistance towards the new theatre and gallery project under the 2004 capital infrastructure program administered by the Minister for the Arts.

I am advised that an in principle offer has been made by the Department of Public Works and Services (5 December 2002) to make the former Laurieton quarry site and surrounding land near Camden Haven available for development as an outdoor amphitheatre.

*1032 TACKING POINT LIGHTHOUSE—Mr Oakeshott to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

What is the progress of completing the plan of management for Tacking Point Lighthouse and surrounding lands?

Answer—

The Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) contracted the Department of Public Works to prepare a conservation management plan for the Tacking Point Lighthouse site. The first draft of the conservation management plan has been submitted to DLWC where it is presently undergoing review. I have been advised that the final draft of the plan is expected to be completed by end March 2003 when it will be forwarded to the Heritage Council of NSW for its endorsement.

*1033 WINGHAM SPORTING COMPLEX—Mr Oakeshott to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship—

(1) Is he aware of applications for funding to upgrade the Wingham Sporting Complex to make it the premier sports field in the Manning Valley?
(2) Can the Minister give an update as to the State involvement in the project?

Answer—

(1) Yes, I am aware that an application has been received for funding assistance under the 2002-2003 Regional Sports Facility Program, which is administered by the New South Wales Department of Sport and Recreation.

(2) This application is being evaluated with all other projects received for consideration of a grant under this program in line with the relevant criteria.

*1034 BUSHFIRE PRONE AREAS CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS—Mr Stoner to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

In relation to proposed developments (houses) in an area deemed as bushfire prone, which construction standard takes precedence:

(a) the Rural Fire and Environmental Assessment Legislation Amendment Act 2002 or
(b) Australian Standard 3959 – 1999 (B.C.A.)?

Answer—

Australian Standard AS 3959 – 1999 under the Building Code of Australia (BCA) is called up by virtue of clauses 98, 133 and 187 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations. Schedule 66 of the Rural Fires and Environmental Assessment Legislation Amendment Act 2002 inserts new section 79BA into the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) which requires Council when considering a development application either to ensure a development

(i) complies with Planning for Bushfire Protection – 2001 (BFBP), or
(ii) seeks the advice of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) in relation to the matter
PFBP relies on Section 3 of AS 3959 – 1999 and as such is complementary to this Australian Standard. Appendix 3 of PFBP provides for an improved Site Assessment Methodology for the application of AS 3959. As such, Appendix 3 effectively replaces Section 2 to the Australian Standard.

The Member for Oxley may recall that the Joint Select Committee on Bushfires noted this inconsistency and recommended that AS 3959 and PFBP be aligned. I can report that my colleague the Minister for Planning has initiated action to provide for a NSW variation to the BCA so as to adopt Appendix 3 of PFBP and any requirement of the NSW RFS under S.79BA of the EP&A Act for the purposes of the BCA.

*1035 SCHOOL ENROLMENT STATISTICS—Mr Stoner to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) What are the yearly enrolments for the following schools for the individual years 1996 to 2002:
   (a) Kinchela Public School?
   (b) Galdstone Public School?
   (c) Smithtown Public School?
   (d) Bellimbopinni Public School?
   (e) Stuarts Point Primary School?
   (f) South West Rocks Public School?

Answer—

Enrolments fluctuate from year to year. Enrolment figures are already publicly available in the annual Department of Education and Training Directory.

13 NOVEMBER 2002

(Paper No. 53)

*1036 SYDNEY WATER USAGE—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

What is the average daily consumption of water per person in the area supplied by Sydney Water?

Answer—

Under its Operating License, Sydney Water calculates per capita consumption based on the total water released into the delivery system, and divided by the estimated population in the supply area. In 2001-02 the per capita consumption, using the methodology, was 414 litres per day. This included all customers – residential houses and units, industrial, commercial, government and institutional and primary production. In the same period, residential per capita consumption was estimated at 249 litres per day.

*1037 RURAL TOWN WATER SUPPLIES—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

(1) Has the Department of Land and Water Conservation undertaken a statewide study of the adequacy of town water supplies in rural cities, towns and villages?
(2) If so, when was this study conducted and what was its finding?
(3) What specific plans has the Department made to ensure an adequate water supply for the city of Goulburn and other towns in the electorate of Burrunjuck in the event of the drought continuing?
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Answer—

(1) to (2) The Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) is actively monitoring the status of all water supply schemes in country NSW and reporting to the Government on a weekly basis. This is a dynamic process, with information being progressively updated by the Department. Information includes towns and villages where water supply schemes have failed, those towns where supply is at risk over coming months without significant rainfall, water levels of DLWC operated storages, and water quality reports.

To date, five out 350 town water supply schemes have failed and emergency measures have been employed.

(3) Local water utilities are responsible for the construction, operation and management of reticulated water schemes to the towns they supply. DLWC is working with many of these local utilities to ensure essential town water supplies are maintained through the current drought.

The Goulburn water supply scheme is being monitored very closely, as are the small towns of Bigga, Gunning and Dalton in the Burrinjuck electorate.

Special assistance may be available, on application, for drought management plans and their recommended measures. This may involve emergency capital works or water cartage, depending on circumstances. Funding is provided through the emergency provisions of the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewage Program, administered by DLWC.

*1038 RURAL MENTAL HEALTH—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Health—

(1) What is the population of the areas covered by the following Area Health Services?
   (a) Far West AHS
   (b) Greater Murray AHS
   (c) Macquarie AHS
   (d) Mid North Coast AHS
   (e) Mid Western AHS
   (f) New England AHS
   (g) Northern Rivers AHS
   (h) Southern AHS

(2) How many full-time equivalent positions are allocated to Mental Health Case Workers in each of these Area Health Services?

Answer—

(1)

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<td>Northern Rivers AHS</td>
<td>271,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern AHS</td>
<td>186,366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) “Mental Health Case Worker” is not a defined occupational category.

*1039 COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING STATION DESIGN—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Why does the design of the M5 East Freeway Community Based Monitoring Station (CBMS) at the Gipps Street Lookout, Bardwell Valley, differ to other RTA Community Based Monitoring Systems for the Freeway?
(2) Why was the weld-mesh cage that surrounds the Gipps Street Lookout CBMS not constructed at ground level, like other CBMS?

Answer—

(1) I am advised that the Community Based Monitoring Station at the Gipps Street Lookout is the same design as the station at Wavell Parade. They are a newer more compact design than the older stations at Thompson Street and Jackson Place which were constructed to monitor existing ambient conditions prior to opening of the M5 East Tunnel.

(2) Thompson Street and Jackson Place sites are larger buildings with a man-proof fence. The Gipps Street and Wavell Parade sites feature a smaller, more aesthetic design, which can be positioned unobtrusively on a compact site. Use of a man-proof fence rather than the weldmesh cage would have aesthetic impacts and present difficulties in fitting the stations on the sites.

*1040 ALSTONVILLE BY-PASS—Mr D. L. Page to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Given your comments that the Alstonville By-pass is “needed and funding is the issue”, can you advise whether the Government intends to announce funding for this prospect in this financial year?

(2) If yes, when?

(3) Will the State Government take advantage of a $12 million allocation to this $35 million project by the Federal Government even though the Alstonville By-pass is totally a State responsibility?

Answer—

I refer the Honourable Member to Ballina Shire Councillor Dakin’s public statements of 11 December 2002

*1041 PREMIER’S OFFICIAL EXPENSES—Mr Hazzard to Premier, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Citizenship—

What is the cost of the following items purchased in relation to your official duties from 1995 to present:

(a) hotel accommodation
(b) car hire/taxis
(c) helicopter and other aircraft charter
(d) airfares?

Answer—

Costs incurred in the performance of official duties during the period 1995 to present were in accordance with the relevant guidelines.

*1042 LANGUAGE CLASSES—Mrs Hopwood to Minister for Education and Training—

Will the Minister for Education increase funding to the language classes operating concurrently with public schools (eg Beaumont Road) to enable more students with specific language needs to access extra needed positions?

Answer—

The question asked by the Honourable Member is couched in extremely difficult to understand terms. If she could more clearly define the question, I would be happy to provide an answer.
1043 RAIL STAFF—Ms Seaton to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Which stations in the Southern Highlands electorate are no longer staffed with personnel who are able to:
   (a) assist passengers
   (b) sell tickets
   (c) give timetable and rail operation advice?
(2) How many staff have lost jobs?

Answer—

(1) There have been no station closures in the Southern Highlands electorate since 1991.
   Stations that are unattended are:
   - Menangle – unattended since approximately 1990;
   - Menangle Park – unattended since approximately 1980;
   - Douglas Park – unattended since approximately 1980;
   - Yerrinbool – unattended since approximately 1970; and
   - Burradoo – no record of ever being attended.
(2) None.

14 NOVEMBER 2002

(Paper No. 54)

1044 PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS—Mr Maguire to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, representing the Minister for Police—

(1) Under the Commercial Agents and Private Enquiries Agents Act 1963: (i) how many licences are currently held in New South Wales and (ii) what was the figure for 1997?
(2) How many current licences were issued by the courts without any report on the fitness of the applicant having been submitted by the officer in charge of Police?
(3) How many persons holding licences were summoned between 1997 and 2002 to show cause why their licences should not be cancelled?
(4) How many of any such licences were cancelled as a consequence?
(5) Is the Register of those holding licences kept solely by the Commissioner for Police?
(6) Where is the Register currently held, and to whom do requests to examine it have to be made?
(7) How many requests by members of the public have been made to see the Register between 1997 and 2002?
(8) Are there any restrictions, other than payment of the prescribed fee, upon any member of the public having access to the Register?
(9) How are checks conducted, and by whom, to ascertain whether those persons holding a licence have displayed at their registered premises a conspicuous notice showing their names and descriptions?
(10) Following such checks, how many licence holders were found to have committed an offence under the Act between 1997 and 2002?
(11) When will the Government respond to the report commissioned by the Criminology Research Council, published in July 2002, entitled “Private Investigators in Australia: Work, Law, Ethics and Regulation”?

Answer—

I am advised by NSW Police:
(1) Information on the number of licensees will be published in the position paper on the review of the Commercial Agents and Private Enquiries Agents Act 1963. For the members information, 1084
Private Inquiry Agents, 421 Private Inquiry Sub-Agents, 276 Commercial Agents and 505 Commercial Sub-Agents licences were issued in 2002. Information for 1997 is not readily available.

(2) Individual fitness checks are mandatory for all applicants under section 10(5) of the Commercial Agents and Private Enquiries Agents Act 1963.

(3) This information is not centrally recorded or collated and is not available within time constraints.

(4) This information is held by the Local Courts.

(5) to (6) The Register is currently held by the Firearms & Regulated Industries Crime Squad as delegated by the Commissioner. The Firearms & Regulated Industries Crime Squad is located within the State Crime Command at 219-241 Cleveland Street, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

(7) In 2002 there have been 12 inquiries. Previous details are not readily available on any database.

(8) Yes, privacy requirements apply.

(9) Enforcement is conducted by the Local Area Command in which the licence holder’s office is located.

(10) This information is held by Local Courts.

(11) The Government is currently considering the report as part of the review of the legislation.

*1045 HEALTH WARNINGS—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Health—

(1) Has the Department of Health issued a health warning or advice of the dangers of eating soft boiled eggs?
(2) If so, when?
(3) If so, why?
(4) Has the Department of Health issued a health warning and advice of the dangers of eating strawberries?
(5) If so, when?
(6) If so, why?

Answer—

(1) No
(2) Not applicable
(3) Not applicable
(4) Yes
(5) 8 December 1999
(6) To reduce the likelihood of listeriosis in the at-risk population in health-care institutions from fruit whose physical structure prevents scrubbing or removal of soil and where the fruit has not been subjected to a listericidal process.

*1046 TOURISM PLANS—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Small Business, and Minister for Tourism—

(1) On what dates did the Minister and/or her Department officially release the following plans:
   (a) Regional Tourism Action Plan 2000-2003
   (b) Snowy Mountains Regional Plan
   (c) New England/NorthWest Regional Plan
   (d) Northern Rivers Regional Plan?
(2) When does the Minister intend to release the three-year plans for each of the other tourism regions within New South Wales?

Answer—

(1) The Plans were launched on the following dates:
   (b) Snowy Mountains - 15 October 2001
   (c) New England North West - 16 October 2001
**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**  
**Tuesday 25 February 2003**

(d) Northern Rivers Tropical NSW - 16 October 2002

(2) The proposed launch dates are yet to be finalised.

**1047 MARINE MAMMAL LEGISLATION—Mr Webb to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—**

(1) Has the closing date for submissions on the Marine Mammal Observation Industry Discussion Paper on proposed legislation been extended until mid-December?
(2) Has the decision been made to postpone the proposed introduction of the levy and charges until 2004, rather than May 2003?
(3) When introduced can you confirm that the regulations will apply to selected regions only and be implemented on a needs basis?
(4) Have all charter boat operators along the coast and those who have already made submissions been notified of these changes?

**Answer—**

On 23 October 2002, I decided to extend the consultation period on the Discussion Paper. I am advised that the National Parks and Wildlife Service directly notified operators of this extension. I am currently considering the submissions received so far and will be shortly contacting key operators with further information. I can advise that no final decision has been made to introduce a levy.

**1048 IMPACT OF WATER RESTRICTIONS—Mr Webb to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—**

(1) Are you aware that irrigators in the Pambula area watering from the Yowaka River have been told by officers of your Department to stop irrigating?
(2) Are you aware that Mr and Mrs Stan Dragosevic currently irrigate a small area of market gardens for local area vegetable production?
(3) Why were they informed that they could put down a bore within 40 metres of the river, when they were told to stop extracting water from the river?
(4) Would the bore take water from the river?
(5) Why can’t transition arrangements be put in place to ensure some continuity of production?
(6) Are you aware that the decision by officers of your Department will put the Dragosevics out of production and out of business?

**Answer—**

(1) As a result of the drought, the Yowaka River has ceased flowing and comprises only intermittent pools. All irrigators have been required to cease pumping from the remaining pools in the river. Only water for essential purposes such as stock and domestic needs may be extracted.
(2) Mr and Mrs Dragosevic’s water licence authorises irrigation of up to five hectares. The licence provides no guarantee of water availability.
(3) In trying to provide some degree of flexibility during the current water shortage, the Department of Land and Water Conservation suggested to the Dragosevic family that they investigate sourcing groundwater by installing a bore. The Department’s advice was that the bore should be installed greater than 40 metres from the river, to avoid interference with river water.
(4) A distance of at least 40 metres from the river, in this area, was considered sufficient to avoid interference with river water.
(5) The Yowaka River is unregulated, meaning that water availability is reliant on rainfall. The area is experiencing unprecedented drought conditions and the remaining pools of water must be preserved for critical domestic needs and to sustain the water-dependent ecosystems. Transitional arrangements in the form of possible groundwater access and on-site storage have been suggested to the Dragosevic family.
(6) The drought is causing hardship to many farmers and businesses, including the Dragosevics. The Department has had little choice, however, other than to suspend extractions for irrigation. This decision has not been taken lightly, but the remaining pools of water in the river must be preserved for essential domestic purposes.

The Department would continue to encourage the Dragosevics to seek access to possible groundwater reserves in their vicinity. There can be no guarantee, however, that a suitable supply will be found.

*1049 POLICE STRENGTH—Mr Tink to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, representing the Minister for Police—

(1) How many of the 13,999 Police shown as the actual total strength on the Police web site for October 2000 were:
   (i) full-time
   (ii) permanent part-time
   (iii) part-time after maternity leave?

(2) In relation to those Police working permanent part-time, what was their equivalent full-time strength?

(3) In relation to those Police working part-time after maternity leave, what was their equivalent full-time strength?

Answer—

NSW Police have advised me police strength details for October 2000 are not published on the NSW Police web site. Publication of police strength details was a Carr Government initiative that commenced in April 2002.

There are now more police in New South Wales than ever before.

The Commissioner for Police, Mr Ken Moroney APM and I are taking steps to improve police visibility and response. The police force is putting more police on the front line and cutting down paperwork to allow officers to return to the street as soon as possible after an arrest.

The recent NSW Police restructure has reduced the number of Region Commands from 11 to 5. This has returned up to 900 police back to Local Area Commands across the State.

A record number of 637 new police joined the force on 30 August 2002 and were deployed to 80 Local Area Commands.

*1050 NSW POLICE COLLEGE PLACEMENTS—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, representing the Minister for Police—

(1) Were the members of DPP 14 informed that they would be given their post attestation parade placements during week four of their training?

(2) Why have these placements not yet been given to the course members?

(3) Are you aware that many trainees can only plan for their children’s 2003 schooling when they receive their placements?

(4) How many officers from DPP 14 will be allocated to the Goulburn Local Area Command?

Answer—

NSW Police have advised me:

(1) No. DPP 14 members were advised by Chief Superintendent Phil Holder on a visit to the NSW Police College on 16 September 2002 (ie Week 3 Session 2) that they would be advised of placements mid November 2002 (ie Week 11 Session 2).

(2) Course members were advised of their placements on 15 November 2002.
(3) Yes. From the date of advice of placements trainees had five weeks to arrange schooling. However, I have raised this with the Commissioner to see if it is practical for students with children to be provided with more notice.

(4) One.

*1051 SYDNEY WATER USAGE—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

(1) Since 20 October 2002 how many applications for a rebate under the Rainwater Tank Rebate Scheme have been received by Sydney Water?
(2) How much has Sydney Water spent advertising the Rainwater Tank Rebate Scheme?
(3) How many residences are there in the area covered by the Rainwater Tank Rebate Scheme?
(4) How many of these residences have an existing rainwater tank?

Answer—

(1) By 3 December 2002, Sydney Water had received 7 applications for a rebate under the Sydney Water Rainwater Tank Rebate Scheme.
(2) There has been no specific campaign relating to the Rainwater Tank Rebate Scheme. However rainwater tanks have been just one part of a broader water conservation advertising campaign.
(3) There are approximately 1.4 million residential properties that are covered by the Scheme.
(4) There are an estimated 46,000 residences with existing rainwater tanks in the Sydney Region.

*1052 PRE-ROADWORK BUILDING INSPECTIONS—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Did the RTA carry out road works on State Road 54 Goulburn-Crookwell Road in the vicinity of Kingsdale on 4 March 2001?
(2) Prior to this work commencing how many properties were inspected for damage?
(3) Why was the residence at “Kingsdale Park” 598A Crookwell Road Goulburn not inspected at this time?
(4) Why is the RTA refusing to make a fair and equitable offer of compensation to the owner of the above property?

Answer—

I am advised that the RTA has attempted to negotiate a fair and equitable offer of compensation with the owner of the property. The RTA is willing to continue with meaningful negotiations. If preferred by the owner, an alternative would be for both parties to commit to a process of mediation. However, to assist that process, the RTA’s insurer (the Treasury Managed Fund) is expected to seek supporting information from the owner to support the amount claimed.

*1053 PACIFIC HIGHWAY BANGALOW BLACK SPOTS—Mr D. L. Page to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Will funding be made available to improve black spots on the Pacific Highway between Ballina and Bangalow?
(2) Will the section of the Pacific Highway just south of Lawlers Lane near Bangalow be made an immediate priority given the number of heavy vehicle rollovers that have occurred there, the latest being 13 November 2002?
(3) Is there a fault in the camber of that section of road that contributes to accidents at this site?
(4) When will the upgrade of this particular section of road be funded to make it safer for all tourists?
(5) Will signs be erected in the interim to warn truck drivers travelling north of the possibility of truck roll-overs at that site?

Answer—

(1) I am advised that this section of the Pacific Highway does not meet either the Federal or State Black Spot Program funding criteria.

(2) With the Bangalow Bypass already completed and planning for the Ballina Bypass in progress, it is expected that planning for this section of the Highway would be undertaken sometime in the future.

(3) No fault was detected when the previous detailed road surface survey was undertaken approximately 10 years ago. A new road surface survey has been undertaken and from the evidence obtained it appears that the truck accidents of the past few years are all driver behaviour related.

(4) See (2) above.

(5) A safety inspection will be undertaken and additional signposting will be installed, if required.

*1054 SERIAL NUMBERS—Mr Oakeshott to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

In product lines that have a serial number for identification, such as electrical products, why is it not compulsory for serial numbers to be included in all sales advertising of second-hand products to assist police in tracking stolen goods?

Answer—

It is not necessary for licensees to include this information in any advertisements because the Police are already receiving it directly.

In addition, recent legislation that was assented to on November 29, 2002 enhances the existing provision and will assist Police even further with the tracking of stolen goods.

*1055 SEPP 71—Mr Oakeshott to Deputy Premier, Minister for Planning, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Minister for Housing—

(1) In seeking to achieve strategic and sustainable planning outcomes on the New South Wales North Coast, what broad principles has the State Government adopted for all new land releases (eg underground wiring, energy re-use systems)?

(2) Does SEPP 71 deal more with DA outcomes rather strategic principles and guidelines, and so not achieve the desired outcomes for the New South Wales Coast?

Answer—

(1) The State Government released the “Sustainable Urban Settlement Guidelines for Regional NSW” in December 2000 on the North Coast. These guidelines cover actions that can be taken to achieve sustainable outcomes in strategic planning, local environmental planning, site planning, and building. PlanningNSW applies these guidelines in its regional planning work on the North Coast. PlanningNSW has also prepared “Urban Settlement Strategy Guidelines” for the North Coast which requires any strategic planning for the release of residential land to be consistent with these guidelines.

The Coastal Council of NSW is also preparing “Coastal Design Guidelines” for the NSW coast which are based on the principles of ecologically sustainable development. The guidelines were publicly exhibited as a Discussion Paper late last year and are due to be finalised shortly.

(2) No, SEPP 71 must be considered when a council prepares a draft local environmental plan. SEPP 71 also requires master plans to be prepared and adopted by me, as the Minister for Planning, for certain land subdivisions. This ensures that significant coastal issues are considered at a strategic level.
In relation to rock lobster fisheries:
(1) How many rock lobster endorsement holders are there in NSW?
(2) How much did NSW Fisheries raise from rock lobster endorsement holders in 2001/02 from boat licences, fishing licences, management fees and transfer fees?
(3) How much will NSW Fisheries raise from rock lobster endorsement holders in 2002/03 from boat licences, fishing licences, management fees and transfer fees?
(4) In relation to lobster management fees for 2002/03 how much is budgeted to be spent on (a) compliance? (b) research? (c) administration?
(5) In relation to compliance, how many offences have been detected in relation to the rock lobster fishery?
(6) How many prosecutions have there been?
(7) How many research projects have been conducted, or are planned, for 2002/03 in relation to the rock lobster fishery?
(8) Of total fines levied by NSW Fisheries how much is returned directly to NSW Fisheries?
(9) Did NSW Fisheries meet with Treasury in relation to the lobster fishery EIS?
(10) Did NSW Fisheries put to Treasury that the cost of the EIS would be $600,000?
(11) Did Treasury recommend that the cost be about $300,000?
(12) Did DUAP get a consultant who quoted a figure of approximately $160,000 for this work?
(13) Under section 57 of the Fisheries Management Act does the rock lobster and abalone fishery need to have an EIS?

Answer—
(3) to (4) I refer you to the 2002/2003 Budget Papers.
(5) to (6) Details of the NSW Fisheries prosecutions are contained in the Department’s annual report.
(7) 6.
(8) See (1-2) and (3-4).
(9) to (12) I met with the Treasurer, the Hon Michael Egan to discuss the cost to industry of the environmental impact study. As a result we both agreed to delay the implementation of the community contribution.
(13) Section 57 relates to the contents of a share management fishery management plan, not to the requirement for an EIS.

In relation to the Job Allocation Scheme (JAS):
(1) Are you aware of a request for tender document dated 6 November 2002, issued by the NRMA calling for the provision of towing services for selected areas in NSW?
(2) How will this request for tender interfere with your promise to implement a pilot JAS by the end of December?
(3) Given the ICAC investigation into the tow truck industry, why haven’t you intervened to prevent this Request for Tender from proceeding?

Answer—
(1) to (3) I am advised that the NRMA is responsible for the tender.
*1058 TOW TRUCK INDUSTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to the Tow Truck Industry Advisory Council:
What checks did you perform to ensure that Kevin Waters and Steve Willis were fit and proper persons before you personally appointed them to the Tow Truck Industry Advisory Council?

Answer—

Messrs Waters and Willis were appointed to the Tow Truck Industry Advisory Council pursuant to the 
_Tow Truck Industry Act 1998_.

15 NOVEMBER 2002
(Paper No. 55)

*1059 LIVERPOOL/PARRAMATTA BUS TRANSITWAY—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to the Liverpool/Parramatta Bus Transitway:
(1) Will taxis be permitted to pick-up and drop-off passengers on the Transitway?
(2) Will taxis be permitted to travel on the Transitway?

Answer—

(1) to (2) No.

*1060 RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE CORPORATION SAFETY PLAN—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to the Rail Infrastructure Corporation (RIC) Safety Plan 2000/01;
As set out under “Responsibilities and Function”, has the RIC provided “annual certificates to the Minister for Transport relating to the state and integrity of the infrastructure and signalling systems” and if so, on what dates were these certificates provided and if not, why haven’t these annual certificates been provided?

Answer—

I am advised that the Rail Infrastructure Corporation has in place a comprehensive system for ensuring the safety and integrity of its infrastructure and signalling systems. Safety and integrity is verified regularly by testing and certifying critical infrastructure to ensure that it accords with established engineering standards.

*1061 BLUE/GREEN ALGAL BLOOMS—Mr D. L. Page to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

(1) What is the latest technology available to help solve blue/green algal blooms in rivers like the Darling?
(2) Is the Department of Land and Water Conservation conducting or sponsoring research into the issue of blue/green algal blooms?
(3) If the Department of Land and Water Conservation is doing this, can you advise the latest developments in this research?
(4) What options, other than filtration plants, are available to people and stock who consume water affected by algal blooms?
(5) Has the Government given any consideration to providing a subsidy for filtration plants for those whose only water access option involves filtering water affected by algal blooms?

Answer—

(1) There have been few technological advances made into the prevention of blue-green algal blooms in recent years. Most advances have been made in terms of management options. In NSW, the catchment blueprints include long term catchment management options aimed at reducing nutrient inflows to water bodies, and the introduction of environmental flows to improve in-stream water quality. There have been some new mixing devices developed to improve the mixing of the water column of reservoirs to make conditions in these less suited to blue-green algal growth. There has also been further research into water treatment methods for town water supply, including the use of ozone to destroy algal toxins during the treatment process.

(2) The Department of Land and Water Conservation is conducting some research aimed mainly at providing improved monitoring and management of blue-green algal blooms. This includes:
   - research into blue-green algal biovolumes, to determine the variation within each species of blue-green algae across NSW. This will assist in the reporting of biovolumes for management purposes. Note that the current trend is to report blue-green algal presence in terms of its biomass, or biovolume.
   - cooperative research with the University of NSW into the application of its toxicity testing method in algal management programs across the State. This will also provide valuable knowledge on the statewide distribution of toxic algal blooms.

(3) The biovolume research commenced in 2001/02 and investigated whether the addition of preservatives to samples of blue-green algae affected cell size (i.e., were biovolumes measured in the laboratory representatives of those actually within living blooms?). Analysis of data has indicated that the sampling and preserving of algal samples prior to laboratory analysis may significantly alter cell size. The biovolume research is continuing in 2002/03 to determine variation in the cell size within the major bloom forming species in NSW. Sampling commenced in November 2002 and is to continue until April 2003. No conclusions have yet been determined. Sampling for the toxicity testing research with the University of NSW also commenced in November 2002, with samples being taken from Darling, Hunter and Murrumbidgee Rivers and the far North Coast. Only two samples have been found to be potentially toxic, thus far.

(4) There are a number of options available. These include:
   - the use of emergency treatment systems at a household level, which has been proposed. During the algal bloom in the Darling River in 1991, the NSW Department of Public Works designed a filtration system based on a 44 gallon drum and using activated carbon to remove blue-green algal cells and their toxins from the water. The systems were designed to provide safe drinking water for stock and humans, but are not cost effective at providing sufficient water for general household use. Bourke Shire Council is currently using this system.
   - reserve osmosis systems which are available for purchase, to provide safe potable supply at a household level. These, however, are generally expensive and have a low yield, but supply enough water for drinking and cooking purposes.
   - pre-treatment of water in a farm dam. Water can be pumped from an infested water source into a farm dam, which is then treated with alum to flocculate and remove algae. The water should then be filtered prior to use, using fine sand filters (to remove coarse materials) followed by activated carbon filters (to remove algae toxins and taste and odour compounds). Such filtration systems are available commercially.
   - possible use of groundwater as an alternative water supply source. This approach was also used during the blue-green algal bloom along the Darling River in 1991.

(5) The Government is providing a subsidy for filtration plants at a town water supply level, under the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewage Program. Under the program, subsidies are available to
local water utilities for the treatment of water supplies impact by blue-green algae, subject to conditions.

*1062 TRAIN DELAY AT DOUGLAS PARK STATION—Ms Seaton to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to the 50 minute delay at Douglas Park station of the 5.32pm service from Central on 12 November:
(1) Why did the train stop at the station?
(2) Why was no announcement made initially to passengers to explain the delay?
(3) What was occurring on the train travelling in the Sydney direction at the same time?
(4) Why were police attending that train?
(5) Why could the Goulburn bound train not proceed?
(6) Was there any connection between the events on the Sydney bound train and the Goulburn train?
(7) If not, why did the Goulburn train have to remain at the station?
(8) Was there any matter of dispute between the train drivers?
(9) Will any disciplinary action be taken?
(10) Will you guarantee a full explanation and apology to the affected passengers as they have requested to the feedback line?
(11) Will passengers be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses such as alternative transport?

Answer—

I am advised that the train is timetabled to stop at Douglas Park and that a passenger on the Sydney bound train became abusive and aggressive after being asked by the Guard to stop smoking in the toilet. Police were called.

In terms of the response of State Rail staff, the matter is the subject of an internal investigation. State Rail apologises to the passengers of the affected services for the disruption and inconvenience encountered, and will apologise to those who have contacted the Transport Infoline.

19 NOVEMBER 2002

(Paper No. 56)

*1063 REDFERN POLICE STATION—Ms Moore to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship—

Given that the Minister for Police has advised (in answer to Q645) that the inadequacy of the Redfern Police Station is a matter within your administration:
(1) What procedures are in place to ensure effective co-ordination between your responsibilities as Minister for Public Works and Services and your representation of the Minister for Police in the Legislative Assembly?

Answer—

The procedures that are in place to co-ordinate representation for the Minister for Police are in accordance with the Standing Rules and Orders for the Legislative Assembly. I can provide you with advice that the premises formerly occupied by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) were leased to the Information Technology Training Institute early in September 2002.
**REDFERN POLICE STATION**—Ms Moore to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, representing the Minister for Police—

(1) Given that the Redfern Police Station is seriously inadequate and the former ICAC offices nearby are vacant, will you explore the possibility of relocating the Redfern Police Station to the more adequate facilities in that building?

(2) If the former ICAC site is not viable, what action will be taken to ensure adequate station accommodation for the Redfern Local Area Command, in both the short and long-term?

**Answer**—

NSW Police have advised me the former ICAC offices are unavailable.

I am further advised NSW Police is currently developing a strategic plan for the replacement/upgrading of a number of police stations and Redfern is under consideration in this context.

**50KM SPEED LIMIT**—Ms Moore to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

Regarding the introduction of a 50 kilometre per hour General Urban Speed Limit (GUSL):

(1) Does the NSW Government support this reform in the Australian Transport Council?

(2) What has the Government done to ensure the earliest possible introduction of a 50kph GUSL in NSW?

(3) When does the Government expect to implement a 50kph GUSL in NSW?

**Answer**—

The NSW Government supports the 50 km/h urban speed limit, as is clearly demonstrated by the state’s leadership on a national basis of this important road safety initiative. NSW began implementation of the lowered urban limit in 1997. Around 97% of NSW residents now live in a local government area where the 50 km/h urban speed limit applies.

As to the national proposal to make 50 km/h the default limit, I will await the Regulatory Impact Statement from the National Road Transport Commission before making a decision.

**NORTH HEAD/MANLY ENVIRONMENT**—Mr Stoner to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

In relation to environmental issues in the North Head/Manly area:

(1) When was the last baiting program for feral animals at North Head Quarantine Station site to protect penguin colonies?

(2) Was it successful?

(3) After the baiting program did the penguin population increase in the Spring Cove area?

(4) Has the penguin population at Smedley’s Point increased or decreased over the past year?

(5) Is there cyanide and/or PAHs leaking from Little Manly Point?

(6) Has the Government implemented a penguin protection zone on the western side of Little Manly Point?

(7) Is there any cyanide and/or PAHs leaking into the Harbour from this location?

(8) Is the drainage pit on the western side of Gas Company Point picking up heavy metals, cyanide and/or PAHs?

(9) In relation to the protection of seagrass has the Government conducted any studies at Spring Cove?

**Answer**—

(1) 5 August 2002.

(2) Yes. There have been no reports of predation by foxes since the program.
(3) to (4) Currently the population is around 75 breeding pairs. Any increase in numbers is a slow process and subject to long-term monitoring. It appears that numbers over the last 34 years at Smedley’s Point have been relatively stable. A further assessment of numbers will be made when the breeding season ends in February 2003.

(5) and (7) I am advised that minute levels of cyanide, well within the levels acceptable for drinking water, have been detected. PAHs have not been detected in the water seeps.

(6) Penguin Protection Zone is not a statutory term. The area on the western side of Little Manly Point has been identified as potential habitat but is not affected by the Minister’s declaration of critical habitat or the regulations.

(8) The drainage collection pit on the western side of the former gasworks site at Little Manly Point has not contained sufficient water to take a sample since 1991. It has remained virtually dry.

(9) This matter is the responsibility of my colleague the Hon Eddie Obeid MLC, Minister for Fisheries.

*1067 HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI HOSPITAL—Mrs Hopwood to Minister for Health—

Following the rebuilding of the Accident and Emergency, Paediatrics and Maternity Units, what is the Government’s next plan for the improvement of health services at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital?

Answer—

As part of the Government’s Greater Metropolitan Transition Taskforce announcements, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital will get an additional $3.2 million boost to provide extra services for stroke, surgery and intensive care.

The plan will improve facilities and increase staffing at Hornsby Hospital, giving patients access to even higher quality care, close to home.

The initiatives for Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital include:

- Appointment of a clinician to support teaching and research
- Appointment of a Surgical Clinical Nurse Educator and Registrars to provide additional surgery sessions for ear, nose and throat/urology/general surgery and orthopaedics
- Establishment of a new Stroke Unit
- Expansion of the Aged Cared Assessment service
- Appointment of additional clinicians to improve provision of care in the Intensive Care Unit
- Appointment of additional clinicians to expand the capacity of the Emergency Department
- More staff and additional training for staff in the maternity ward, and
- Designated inter-hospital transport to ensure patients can access services at Royal North Shore Hospital quickly and safely.

In addition, in 2003 construction is expected to commence for the Neringah Hospital re-location to the Hornsby site. The move will bring increased expertise in palliative care to the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital campus.

*1071 RIVERINA HIGHLANDS PLAN—Mr Maguire to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

(1) Why did Riverina Highlands Vegetation Committee fail to hold a second public consultation meeting as suggested would happen?

(2) Is the concept of stewardship or buyback being considered as a result of the implications of the suggested vegetation plan for the Riverina Highlands?

Answer—

(1) The Reverina Highlands Vegetation Committee did consider the issue of a second public meeting. However, it was decided that as two Government Ministers and the Native Vegetation Advisory Council still had to sign off on the Plan before gazettal, it would be inappropriate to present the final
The Committee wrote to all interested parties advising them of this decision.

(2) A discussion paper on cost-sharing was circulated to the relevant Catchment Boards, and Investment Services within the Department of Land and Water Conservation. The Catchment Blueprints will now be the means of delivery of all investment in natural resource management. Whilst there has been some preliminary discussion by the Murray Catchment Board on stewardship payments for vegetation management, there has been no discussion or provision made for compensation or buy-back. The Murray Catchment Blueprint currently suggests only incentive payments towards fencing and other costs associated with the management of native vegetation.

*1072 FIREBREAK CLEARING—Mr Maguire to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

(1) What methods of firebreak clearing and maintenance are employed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service?

(2) Do the National Parks and Wildlife Service use slashing and grading among the methods used in firebreak clearing and maintenance?

(3) How many kilometres have been cleared in preparation for the current fire season and what method was used?

(4) How much hazard reduction has been carried out in National Parks in the Electorate of Wagga Wagga, including Kosciuszko National Park?

Answer—

(1) Methods used by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to protect life and property include slashing, mowing, clearing using brush cutters, weed removal and the maintenance of fire trails. The establishment of fuel reduced (or radiation) zones is also achieved through a further range of techniques, such as vegetation pile burning and chemical weed spraying.

(2) Yes.

(3) The National Parks and Wildlife Service checks that all its 17,000 kilometres of fire trails and firebreaks are cleared before each fire season. This ensures access to parks and reserves during the fire season. This is achieved by manual clearing with staff or use of machinery.

(4) Since July a 1,100 hectare prescribed burn has occurred on the western edge of Kosciuszko National Park. Livingstone and Woomargama National Parks only became National Park lands in January 2001 and the National Parks and Wildlife Service is currently developing fire management plans with extensive community consultation to ascertain the hazard reduction requirements of these Parks.

*1073 TUMUT COOTAMUNDRA RAIL LINE—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) What factors were taken into account when compiling the recently released Rail Infrastructure Corporation Report that the reopening of the Tumut-Cootamundra Railway line could only be justified if the contestable freight market increased by 25%?

(2) Did the study address issues such as the rehabilitation costs of local roads, pollution, savings in fuel over road transport and road safety?

(3) If not, why not?

Answer—

(1) to (3) I am advised that the size of the contestable freight market was estimated by M-Strad, which focused on freight associated with forestry and agricultural products in the Tumut and Batlow areas.
**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Tuesday 25 February 2003**

*1074 NSW POLICE RECRUIT COSTS—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship, representing the Minister for Police—

(1) What is the total cost to individual students, including HECS contributions, education fees, accommodation and meal charges of obtaining a Diploma in Policing Practice in NSW?

(2) What is the total cost to individual students associated with training as Police Recruits in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia?

Answer—

NSW Police have advised me total costs vary for different students according to their circumstances. HECS fees are a Federal levy and outside my portfolio responsibility. Fees for interstate students are also outside my portfolio responsibility.

I am further advised students can receive scholarships to the value of $12,000 when studying for the Diploma in Policing Practice. In addition, all students receive a $100 accommodation allowance if they commenced study after May 2002.

*1075 YASS PUBLIC SCHOOL SPEECH THERAPY SERVICES—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Juvenile Justice, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth—

(1) Why have there only been three visits by Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care Speech Therapists to the Andalini Special Unit at Yass Public School in the last eighteen months?

(2) If the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care are unable to provide a suitable service to the disabled children at the Andalini Unit, why is the Department refusing to allow these children to seek therapy services from the Department of Health?

(3) What action will you take to ensure that adequate speech therapy services are provided to the disabled students at Yass Public School?

Answer—

- I am advised that staff from Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) – Disability Services visit Yass on a weekly basis. They provide services to Yass and Berinba primary schools, Yass High School, Mt Carmel Catholic Schools, the Early Intervention Playgroup also to neighbour towns of Bowning, Binalong and Wee Jasper. These visits are made as a response to the referrals made to the DADHC - Queanbeyan Intake Team, by either the schools or the families. When referrals are not received, Community Support Teams will not routinely visit schools. I am also advised that since the beginning of this year only one referral for speech therapy services has been made to the Queanbeyan Intake Team by the Yass School Special Unit, this referral has been processed and the family contacted.

- The Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care does not have any authority or jurisdiction to prevent any clients seeking services from any Government or non-Government service provider. The Department of Health and DADHC have clear eligibility criteria targeting different client groups. Both Departments work in cooperation to provide services to clients in the Yass district.

- I have been advised that a meeting was held during the last week in November between officers from the Department of Education and DADHC – Disability Services. During this meeting the referral process to the Queanbeyan Intake Team was clarified, the current needs of children within the school unit were discussed and a consultative process between the Yass Special Unit, officers from the Department of Education and DADHC was established.

- I am also advised that parents of children in the Special Unit have been contacted individually and arrangements have been made to assess the service needs of these families within a mutually agreed timeframe.
BOWRAL HIGH SCHOOL AMENITIES — Ms Seaton to Minister for Education and Training —

(1) When will the student representatives of the P and C of Bowral High School receive a response to the Private Members Statement I made following a meeting at the school?
(2) What is the Ministers view of the issues raised including need for additional toilets, lack of compliance with code, and need to reconfigure the toilet and canteen arrangements?
(3) Will the Minister commit funds for additional toilets and canteen re-design?
(4) Will additional funds be made available to allow the canteen to be redesigned in connection with the COLA, recognising that P and C raised-funds for a COLA/canteen project lost value as a result of long departmental assessment delays?

Answer —

(1) to (4) I have responded to several pieces of correspondence concerning Bowral High School throughout the course of the year. In relation to the specific issues, the Department of Education and Training is progressively upgrading older style toilet facilities in schools throughout the State through the Toilet Upgrade Program. In order to improve ventilation in the short term, I have approved the allocation of $16,905 for the installation of extractor fans in the toilet blocks at Bowral High School. In addition, during 2002, a further $450,000 has been allocated to other work at the school.

IM CLASS 2003 — Mr O'Farrell to Minister for Education and Training —

(1) Is the Minister aware of parents' concerns about a delay in committing funding for an IM Class in 2003 at the Umina Campus of the Brisbane Waters Secondary College?
(2) If so, when will the Minister approve funding so that parents and students have certainty about their schooling in 2003?

Answer —

(1) to (2) There will be an IM class at Brisbane Water Secondary College for the 2003 school year.

HOME WARRANTY SYSTEM — Mr Debnam to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading —

In relation to your press release of 12 July 2002, “Grant helps explore home warranty options”:

(1) Has the Master Builders Association (MBA) completed a feasibility study into options for an industry-based home warranty system and if so, on what date was it delivered to your office?
(2) What is your response to the MBA’s feasibility study and when will that response be implemented?

Answer —

The Report from the MBA was delivered to the Department of Fair Trading on October 17, 2002. The Report put forward a number of models for an alternative home building indemnity scheme. The Department has had ongoing consultation with the MBA in determining how they can progress any proposed scheme. The MBA is aware of the necessity for the requirements for APRA prudential regulation to be met. It is understood that the MBA is presently working to achieve the backing of an insurer with a view to obtain approval under section 102A of the Home Building Act.
**TENDERING WITHIN RAIL ESTATE**—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to an investigation into tendering within the Rail Estate in recent years:

1. Has the Department of Transport, State Rail and/or Rail Estate conducted an investigation into the probity of tendering procedures within Rail Estate?
2. If so, who initiated the investigation, when was it conducted and what were the findings of the investigation?
3. Was the matter referred to the ICAC and if so, when, by whom, what was the outcome, what charges were recommended and against whom?
4. What is the current status of any legal action taken or to be taken against management and/or employees of Rail Estate and if so, what are the charges and against whom?
5. Have any management or employees been suspended or dismissed and if so, who and when?

Answer—

In 2000/2001 ICAC conducted an investigation into dealings between SRA and a contractor with which Rail Estate conducted business. No charges were recommended by ICAC. One Rail Estate employee was suspended with pay during the ICAC investigation.

**MILLENNIUM TRAINS**—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to Millennium Trains:

1. Are all Millennium Trains delivered to date compliant with the original contract specifications?
2. If not, what changes have been made, to which carriages and what was the cost of these changes and the effect on delivery schedules?

Answer—

(1) to (2) I am advised that during the evolution of the train design, a number of improvements were made to the original design to enhance the train’s function based on new developments and advances in technology. These improvements are allowed under the terms of the contract.

**GROUNDWATER DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN—LOWER GWYDIR**—Mr Slack-Smith to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading—

1. Has the Lower Gwydir Groundwater Draft Management Plan been released to members of the Management Committee?
2. Have you directed that the plan not be made available to anyone other than the Committee?
3. If so, why?
4. If you have not given a direction for the report to remain a secret, will you now direct the Moree Office of DWLC to make copies of the report available to those people who have made submissions on the plan as well as the Committee?
5. If you have given the direction to your Department that the report remains a secret, on what grounds was it given?

Answer—

(1) Yes.
(2) No.
(3) Not applicable given the above.
(4) The Committee made some final recommendations to the draft plan. As the amendments to the Water Management Act 2000 have now been finalised, the Plan will be gazetted in the near future.
(5) Not applicable.
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*1082 CROSS CITY TUNNEL REPRESENTATIONS—Ms Moore to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

As the RTA lodged its Cross City Tunnel Representations Report to Planning NSW two weeks ago, could you report on proposed improvements to fix serious traffic, pollution, construction and connectivity problems identified by the local community?

Answer—

I am advised that the RTA has made available a Preferred Activity Report which outlines the alterations made to the Cross City Tunnel proposal, following consideration of submissions received in response to the Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement.

*1083 DOVER HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL—Mr Debnam to Minister for Education and Training—

In relation to the Dover Heights High School Redevelopment:

(1) What is the status of plans and construction schedules for the promised school facilities for Year 7 and 8 students which were to be ready for February 2003?
(2) If a delay is expected, what contingency plans are proposed?

Answer—

(1) to (2) Years 7 and 8 students will commence classes at the Dover Heights campus at the beginning of term 1, 2003 in accordance with previously agreed timeframes.

*1084 HORNSTBY SCHOOL ENROLMENTS—Mrs Hopwood to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) What are the current enrolment numbers for each primary public school (by name) in the Hornsby electorate in the years K,1,2,3,4,5 and 6?
(2) What is the annual donation/fee requested by each school for payment by parents as a contribution towards costs associated with provision of educational requirements for the children?

Answer—

(1) Enrolment figures are publicly available in the annual Department of Education and Training Directory.
(2) Schools can request payment of an annual voluntary school contribution from parents to assist in the provision of resources for students. Contributions are not compulsory. This policy has been in place for 8 years.

*1085 MINI-BUS FUNDING—Mrs Hopwood to Minister for Education and Training—

What advice is provided and what funds are available to schools that want to have use of a permanent mini-bus for transport of students to sporting, cultural or other events?

Answer—

Schools should contact the District Office or the State Office Fleet Manager.
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*1086 HOLBROOK MULTIPURPOSE SERVICE — Mr Maguire to Minister for Health —

(1) Are you aware that the Holbrook Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) does not have Speech Pathology and Physiotherapy services?
(2) What measures is the Greater Murray Area Health Service undertaking to rectify the problem?
(3) When can the community of Holbrook expect a reasonable Speech Pathology and Physiotherapy service?

Answer—

(1) to (3) The Holbrook Multipurpose Service does provide Speech Pathology and Physiotherapy services. However, the Physiotherapy position recently became vacant and Greater Murray Area Health Service is actively undertaking recruitment to fill the position.

*1087 JERRY’S PLAINS WATER SUPPLY — Mr Souris to Minister for Land and Water Conservation, and Minister for Fair Trading —

(1) What is the current position in relation to the proposal to pipe surplus potable water from Bayswater Power Station to the village of Jerry’s Plains?
(2) Why is the Department of Land and Water Conservation opposing the supply of water for the Jerry’s Plains water supply?
(3) If objection by your Department is to prevail, how do you propose to address the need for a quality, secure water supply for Jerry’s Plains?
(4) To the extent that the supply of water for Jerry’s Plains from Bayswater Power Station involves transfer of water between zones within a valley, will you consider exempting the relatively small supply requirements of the village so as to allow the residents of Jerry’s Plains access to a decent water supply?

Answer—

(1) Macquarie Generation, the operator of Bayswater Power Station, has entered into an agreement with Singleton Shire Council to supply potable water from the power station’s desalination plant to the village of Jerry’s Plains. A condition of the agreement requires Council to permanently transfer 50 megalitres of its high security water entitlement to Macquarie Generation.

(2) to (3) The Department of Land and Water Conservation does not oppose the supply of water for the Jerry’s Plains water supply, having recently granted a licence to Singleton Shire Council to pump water from the Hunter River for that purpose. However, it cannot facilitate the agreement between Macquarie Generation and Singleton Shire Council because Macquarie Generation is not a water supply authority and is not entitled to provide Town Water Supply water to Jerry’s Plains from its present licence on the Hunter River. Furthermore, the department cannot process the permanent transfer application for 50 megalitres of high security water entitlement from Singleton Shire Council since a transfer will exceed the current limit of water transfers into Zone 1, as recommended by the Hunter River Management Committee.

(4) The draft Hunter Regulated Water Sharing Plan recommends raising the limit of water transfers into Zone 1. If this recommendation is adopted, the approved water sharing plan may allow the transfer application to proceed. In the meantime, the department continues to discuss legal alternatives with Singleton Shire Council and Macquarie Generation with a view to securing town water supplies to Jerry’s Plains.

*1088 JERRAWA CREEK BRIDGE — Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads —

(1) As Gunning Shire Council has now classified the Jerrawa Creek Bridge as dangerous and introduced a 10 tonne load limit and 40kph speed limit on crossing vehicles will you now reverse your previous decision and immediately allocate the $280,000 required to replace the bridge?
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(2) If not, why will you not act to replace this dangerous bridge that is crossed daily by a local school bus?

Answer—

I refer the Honourable Member to my public statements of 11 December 2002.

*1089 AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION—Ms Hodgkinson to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Are you aware that some interstate farmers who have to access their properties using private level crossings across ARTC leased railway lines are being charged fees to do so?
(2) If the NSW Government approves the lease of NSW Rail Lines to the ARTC will you give a firm and unequivocal commitment that NSW farmers will not be charged a similar fee?

Answer—

(1) to (2) The charging of fees for access to or across the railway corridor in other States where the Australian Rail Track Corporation leases railway lines is a matter for the relevant State jurisdiction to determine. NSW is currently discussing the ARTC proposition and will raise this issue in discussions.

*1090 BULAHDELAH BY-PASS—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Has there been canvassing of the residents of Bulahdelah by the Roads and Traffic Authority or any consultant or agency employed by the Roads and Traffic Authority concerning the location of the proposed by-pass of Bulahdelah?
(2) If so, who carried out the canvassing?
(3) If so, when was it carried out?
(4) If so, what are the results?
(5) If the results have not been published, why not?
(6) If the results have not been published, will they be published?
(7) If not, why not?

Answer—

I am advised that there has been a wide program of consultation with residents and other stakeholders, including a number of Community Focus Group and public meetings, Aboriginal liaison group meetings, staffed displays, community site inspection, as well as discussions with various individuals, property owners and interest groups.

*1091 GREAT LAKES COLLEGE—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) Have teachers been allocated to the senior campus of the Great Lakes College on seniority rather than recent teaching experience in their original discipline?
(2) If so, how many such teachers allocated to the Senior Campus of the Great Lakes College have not had recent experience in their accredited discipline?
(3) Have teachers who are actually teaching certain disciplines at the existing Forster High School been excluded from teaching such disciplines at the Great Lakes Senior Campus because they lack seniority?
(4) Will the teachers referred to in (3) above be confined to the junior campus?
(5) If so, will this impinge on their professionalism and advancement?
(6) Was there a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Education, the Teachers Federation and/or teachers at Forster High School that provided for teachers to be able to teach across more than one campus of the college?
(7) Is this still the case?
(8) If not, why not?
(9) If not, how and by whom was the Memorandum of Understanding changed and what does it now provide?
(10) Did the Minister advise in a letter to the Member for Myall Lakes, that teachers who presently teach senior students at Forster High School but will no longer be able to teach at Great Lakes College because of seniority appointments, could “seek special priority transfer to schools in up to four districts across the state. Any transfer will depend upon a suitable vacancy existing for which the applicant has priority”?
(11) What consideration did the Minister give when making the above comments to teachers who presently teach senior students at Forster High School but will no longer be able to teach at Great Lakes College because they lack seniority, who are married to non-Department of Education and Training people?

Answer—

(1) Teachers have been appointed according to the ‘Resourcing and Staffing Framework for College Groups’ (the MOU).
(2) All teachers will be teaching subjects for which they are accredited.
(3) Teachers have been allocated in accordance with the MOU.
(4) These matters are also covered in the MOU.
(5) Not applicable.
(6) Yes.
(7) Yes.
(8) Not applicable.
(9) Not applicable.
(10) No.
(11) Initial appointments have been made in accordance with the MOU.

*1092 SMOKING AREAS—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) Has the Department of Education compiled a glossy brochure promoting the establishment of the Great Lakes College as an “adult learning area” for senior students?
(2) Was this done because the senior and junior campuses of the college were supposed to be discrete areas?
(3) Are they discrete?
(4) Will classrooms and facilities be shared between the senior and junior colleges?
(5) If so, why has the Department of Education stated that there would be discrete “adult learning areas”?
(6) Will there be a negotiated “smoking area” on the campus grounds?
(7) If so, is this contrary to Department of Education and Training policy?
(8) If it is intended to provide such an area for TAFE students, doesn’t a designated “smoking area” send the wrong message to junior students?

Answer—

(1) A brochure has been published which lists ways in which learning at Great Lakes College will be strengthened for both junior and senior students.
(2) The senior and junior campuses were established within a single college framework.
(3) See (2).
(4) There are separate classroom blocks for senior and junior classes. There are also shared facilities.
(5) I am not aware of this statement.
(6) No.
(7) Not applicable.
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(8) Not applicable.

*1093 ABALONE FISHING INDUSTRY—Mr Webb to Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs, representing the Minister for Mineral Resources and Minister for Fisheries—

(1) Do you agree that Abalone are a good indicator species for water quality and healthy ecologies?
(2) What reasons were given to support the recent further abalone fisheries closures due to presence of the disease Perkinsus?
(3) What would be the benefits of closing a fishery to the industry, given the history of Perkinsus Disease?
(4) Has your department done any research, or are you aware of any research on the impact that Sydney City sewerage ocean outfalls have on the abalone fisheries between Port Stephens and Kiama?
(5) If so, where and when were the research results published?
(6) If not, why not?
(7) Why has industry input been ignored by your department, when surely they are best placed to carry out ground surveillance to monitor impacts of the disease’s spread and containment?
(8) Why does revenue from the ‘community contribution’ go into the consolidated fund, rather than, as the industry asked, into research into diseases like Perkinsus and the long-term sustainability of the Abalone Fishing Industry?

Answer—

(1) Abalone are susceptible to a range of environmental variables including water temperature, pollution and salinity.
(2) The recreational and commercial harvest of abalone between Port Stephens and Jervis Bay has been banned for five years to allow abalone stocks to recover from the Perkinsus outbreak.
(3) Abalone stocks need sufficient time to recover from the outbreak.
(4) to (5) I am advised that there is no evidence that the Perkinsus problem is directly linked to deep ocean outfalls. The Government is funding research on the possible links between the spread of Perkinsus and environmental variables.
(7) Industry, through their elected management advisory committee, was consulted.
(8) I refer the Honourable Member to section 77 of the Fisheries Management Act 1994 which was written by the Coalition Government.

*1094 REPAIR/CONSTRUCTION WORKS—ALPINE WAY—Mr Maguire to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Have you programmed repair works or reconstruction works to the section of the Alpine Way between the southern border of Kosciuszko National Park and the NSW border of Bringenbrong Bridge?
(2) Are you aware that the road is used by motorcyclists who are in danger due to the poor state of the road?
(3) How much money has been spent on that particular section of road in the last 10 years?
(4) Do you have budget estimates and cost benefit analyses for repairing or replacing the 11 kilometre section of road?
(5) When will the Department repair the section of road the residents refer to as a “death trap”?
(6) How many accidents have occurred on the 11 kilometre section of the Alpine Way referred to above by way of:
(a) Fatalities?
(b) Injuries?
(c) Minor accidents?
(d) Motorcar accidents?
(e) Motorbike accidents?
(f) Heavy vehicle accidents?

Answer—

I am advised that the section of the Alpine Way in question (Main Road No 627) is a Regional Road, which is the responsibility of Tumbarumba Shire Council. It is a matter for Council to determine its roadwork priorities on Regional Roads using the funds available to it.

*1096 SUICIDE RATE—Mr Maguire to Minister for Health—

(1) How many people committed suicide in the years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 up to 30th June?
(2) Has your department recorded an increase in the suicide rate in the last 6 months?
(3) To what does your department attribute this increase?
(4) How are you addressing the increase?
(5) What extra resources and funding have you allocated to suicide prevention and after-suicide counselling for families?

Answer—

(1) For NSW the available figures are 853 deaths for 1999 and 737 in the year 2000. Australian Bureau of Statistics data are not yet available for 2001 and 2002.
(2) No.
(3) Not applicable.
(4) Not applicable.
(5) $15 million has been allocated to support the NSW Government Suicide Prevention Strategy. Additional resources of $127.5 million in recurrent funding have been allocated to improve mental health services in general. Care and support packs for families and friends bereaved by suicide have been disseminated and a Supporting Children After Suicide Booklet has been developed.

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(Paper No. 58)

*1097 HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES (HACC)—Mr Webb to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney representing the Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Juvenile Justice, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth—

(1) Will you confirm that a HACC client who is a DVA pensioner in Berridale has been informed as a result of a recent review of services that in the future he and his wife will only be receiving HACC services such as house cleaning etc on a fortnightly basis rather than weekly?
(2) Why did an officer of your Department based in Nowra inform him that the federal government had cut the budget, when in the fact the federal government has increased funding in this area?
(3) How many people in the Southern Highlands/Monaro district are currently on a waiting list for services?
(4) How many clients in the Southern Highlands/Monaro district have had their hours of service reduced since 1 July 2002 because of a shortfall in funds rather than due to the client’s health or situation improving?
(5) How many clients (a) receive daily services (b) receive weekly services (c) receive fortnightly services (d) receive a monthly service.
(6) What is the average number of hours service per client?
(7) What steps is your Government taking to address the shortfall in availability of services to the lengthening list of clients requiring home help services?
(8) When can the constituents of Monaro receive an increase in funding from the state Government to provide more hours of service from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care?

Answer—

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care is aware that the DVA pensioner from Berridale, who is referred to in the above question, is a client of the Veterans’ Home Care (VHC) program. The VHC program was established by the Commonwealth Government in 2000/01. The program is administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs and provides a wide range of home care services designed to enable veterans and war widows/widowers to improve their health and well being and remain living longer in their own homes. The services include domestic assistance, personal care, home and garden maintenance and respite care.

Veterans who are concerned about recent changes in their service levels should either:
- contact their assessment and coordination agency; or
- direct their concern to the Commonwealth Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, the Hon Danna Vale MP.

All other concerns related to the level of service and funding under the VHC program should also be addressed to the Commonwealth Minister for Veterans Affairs.

MORUYA HEADS PROJECT—Mr Webb to Minister for Public Works and Services, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Citizenship—

(1) What was the closing date for the submission of tenders, the timetable for the consideration of the submissions and the appointment of the successful tenderer for the Moruya Heads project?
(2) On what basis did the department accept an increased tender price from Allied Constructions?
(3) Did that revised tender increase the price by $791,578?
(4) How is the department’s Contractor and Consultant Review list regulated?
(5) Who has access to this list?
(6) Does it effectively restrict those on the list from being awarded departmental tenders?
(7) Does inclusion on the review list affect a contractor’s ability to be a sub-contractor for a successful tenderer?
(8) How does this process work?
(9) Who outside the department has access to the list and for what purpose?
(10) Why did Mr Hetherington, formerly of your department, advise Allied Constructions not to use Eden Constructions as a sub-contractor?
(11) Why was Allied Constructions subsequently permitted to significantly increase its tender price beyond what could reasonably be expected to be due to costs associated with changing the subcontractor for the particular aspect of the work?

Answer—

(1) The closing date for the submission of tenders was 17 June 1999. There was no timetable for the consideration of the submissions and the appointment of the successful tenderer.
(2) The revised tender by Allied Constructions Pty Limited was accepted for consideration by the Department’s Board of Advice and Reference as the most acceptable at a reasonable price.
(3) Yes.
(4) The Contractor and Consultant Review List is regulated by the Department’s Contracts Manual.
(5) The Contractor and Consultant Review List is distributed on a ‘need to know basis’ to senior Departmental executives and managers who are responsible for the pre-qualification, tender panel selection, tender assessment and performance management of contractors and consultants.
(6) Contractors on the Contractor and Consultant Review List may only be offered tendering opportunities or be awarded a contract after further consideration and approval by the General Manager, Procurement Systems, Strategic Procurement Services Group of the Department.
(7) That the subcontractor is on the Contractor and Consultant Review List is a factor to be considered in awarding a contract.
(8) If the subcontractor is identified either before or during tender review, consideration is given to the capacity and capability of proposed key subcontractors.

(9) This is answered by the answer to Question 5.

(10) It is not known that Mr Hetherington, since retired, gave advice as suggested.

(11) Allied Constructions informed DPWS it would withdraw its tender unless DPWS was prepared to accept an increased tender price based on using another sub-contractor for pipe laying. The revised Allied Constructions tender price was reasonable and represented value for money when compared with the DPWS pre-tender estimate and the tenders received which were all priced in excess of the revised tender price from Allied Constructions.

*1099 RURAL FIRE SERVICES EQUIPMENT—Mr Webb to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

(1) Have some local Rural Fire Services been told to cap Personal Protection Equipment and maintenance allocations?

(2) Why have they been requested to reduce spending on equipping and training volunteers and maintaining vehicles?

(3) How can Rural Fire Services expect to be prepared for this coming season after incurring heavy costs last year if they have had their general allocations slashed?

(4) Are you aware that some FCO vehicles are currently replaced through South Coast car dealers every 40,000 km at no net cost?

(5) If it is more cost effective to replace vehicles through local dealers every 40,000 km rather than keep them for an additional 20,000 which means more registration, wear and tear, tyre replacement, additional service costs and lower change-over value, why are some FCOs being directed to keep vehicles for 60,000?

(6) Are you aware that some FCOs have been told that they must return vehicles to headquarters for replacement rather than trade them locally?

(7) Why has this directive been issued?

Answer—

(1) to (4) During the two terms of this Government more than $670 million has been allocated to the NSW Rural Fire Service, compared to just $197 million allocated during the two terms of the Coalition. Of this, more than $180 million has been allocated to purchase almost 2,100 new and refurbished tankers. This year the Rural Fire Fighting Fund increased by $7 million over last year to $120.7 million. To suggest that allocations have been slashed is ludicrous. The Commissioner for the NSW Rural Fire Service advises me that any adjustments made to district funding levels for personal protective equipment are done so in full consultation with council and are made on the basis of existing stock levels held by the district. Vehicles are only returned to Headquarters when it can be clearly demonstrated that savings can be achieved by a centralised replacement and fit-out program. If the trade-in value offered locally is higher than the expected return from auction, replacement can be arranged locally, depending on the terms of the State Government motor vehicle contract. If the Member for Monaro could provide specific details rather than generalisations, I would be in a position to address his concerns directly.

*1100 FISHING INSPECTORS—Mr Webb to Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Rural Affairs, representing the Minister for Mineral Resources and Minister for Fisheries—

(1) How many fishing inspectors are currently assigned for duty in the Snowy Mountains area?

(2) Are all these officers available for duty at this time?

(3) How many were there prior to the introduction of the Fresh Water Fishing Licence?
(4) How many fishing inspectors are currently assigned for duty on the South and Far South Coast?
(5) How many were there prior to the introduction of the Salt Water Fishing Licence?
(6) Is the current number of fishing inspectors adequate to enforce fishing regulations such as licensed
fishers, catch sizes, bag limits etc?
(7) How often do fishing inspectors work alone?
(8) Does this satisfy Occupational Health and Safety requirements?

Answer—
(1) to (8) I refer to the NSW Fisheries Annual Report. I would point out that this Government has
increased fishing inspector numbers by 30 per cent since we came to office.

*1101 PERISHER SEWERAGE TREATMENT WORKS—Mr Webb to Attorney General, Minister for the
Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

(1) Can you report on the operational integrity of the Perisher Sewerage Treatment works during the
2002 winter?
(2) Were there any failures associated with the holding pond?
(3) Were there any other failures?
(4) If so, what were they and why did they occur?
(5) What was the maximum capacity reached during the peak periods of the 2002 ski season?

Answer—
I am advised that inflows recorded at the Perisher Sewage Treatment Plant for the month of June 2002
were up 50% from the previous season and that, as a result, the Plant exhibited operational difficulties on
two occasions. The National Parks and Wildlife Service took prompt action to resolve the difficulties in
each case

*1102 AUTISM CLASSES—Ms Seaton to Minister for Education and Training—

1) When will you address the questions raised by Southern Highlands families of children with autism
about the possibility of local specialist autism classes being provided?
(2) Will you agree to conducting a survey of local parents to get a detailed understanding of the nature
and extent of local needs?
(3) Will you ensure specialist classes for these children?

Answer—
(1) to (2) Autism classes are established by the Department of Education and Training (DET) when a
school district identifies a sufficient number of students in a particular area with autism who require
an intensive level of support and where the parents/caregivers of those students are seeking such a
specialist placement. I understand that the Shellharbour District, which encompasses the Southern
Highlands area, has not received any requests from schools in the Southern Highlands area to
establish a specialist class for students with autism.

*1103 SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS—Ms Seaton to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) When will a decision be made on funding (a) a new and larger hall (b) upgraded classrooms for
Picton Public School?
(2) When will a decision be made on funding for the upgrade of Bargo Public School facilities including
a permanent library and hall?
(3) What is proposed to be done with the surplus school facilities at Renwick at Mittagong, not being
used as a “behaviour” school?
(1) to (3) In relation to the construction of new facilities at Picton and Bargo Public Schools, I am advised that all funds have been allocated for the 2002/03 financial year. The issue you have raised will be considered along with other priorities across the State when finalising next year’s Capital Works Program.

The 8.41-hectare site in Bong Bong Road, Mittagong is being retained.

*1104 ALPINE WAY—Mr Maguire to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Have you and your department reached agreement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the Road Transport Authority to assume responsibility for the Alpine Way from March 2003?

(2) Have you reached agreement to reclassify the Alpine Way outside the National Park from Regional Road 627 to the Bringenbrong Bridge?

Answer—

(1) No. Negotiations are continuing.

(2) I am advised that as the relative significance of the Khancoban-Bringenbrong Road does not justify a change in classification, Regional Road remains appropriate.

*1105 REGINA V PAK LUN CHAN—Mr Tink to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

(1) Has an appeal been lodged on behalf of the Crown in Regina v Pak Lun Chan?

(2) If an appeal has been lodged, who lodged it?

(3) If an appeal has not been lodged, why hasn’t one been lodged?

Answer—

(1) to (3) The Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr NR Cowdery QC has advised me that there was no reasonable prospect of a Crown appeal succeeding in this case, given the matters that were taken into account by the Court, including psychiatric evidence.

*1106 CORRECTIVE SERVICES INDUSTRIES—Mr Richardson to Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Corrective Services—

How much has the Department of Corrective Services paid in compensation to joint venture partners in Corrective Services Industries at the Long Bay prison complex who have not been provided with a reliable supply of labour, as guaranteed in their contracts with CSI?

Answer—

Corrective Services Industries (CSI) has not been, and is not now, involved in inmate-work joint venture partnerships with the private sector at the Long Bay Correctional Complex. CSI has been involved in a number of arrangements covering private sector involvement in the delivery of correctional industry programs. Contract disputes have arisen in two cases; however each was settled on the basis that terms of settlement were not to be disclosed.
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*1107 FIREBREAK CLEARING—Mrs Hopwood to Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts—

(1) What methods of firebreak clearing and maintenance are employed in the National Parks and Wildlife Service and on Crown land?
(2) Who carries out this hazard reduction in NPWS and Crown land in the electorate of Hornsby?

Answer—

(1) The National Parks and Wildlife Service employs a number of methods in the maintenance of firebreaks as part of its fire mitigation activities for the protection of life and property. These methods include slashing, mowing, clearing using brush cutters, weed removal and the maintenance of fire trails. The establishment of fuel reduced (or radiation) zones is also achieved through a further range of techniques, such as vegetation pile burning and chemical weed spraying.
(2) The electorate of Hornsby is an excellent example of cooperation between the Rural Fire Service, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the NSW Fire Brigades. In over 80 percent of the hazard reduction burns on any tenure, including National Parks and Wildlife lands and Crown Land, in the Hornsby electorate at least two of the three authorities are in attendance to assist in these mitigation activities.

*1108 BONG BONG STREET BOWRAL—Ms Seaton to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

How much has the RTA spent on maintenance of Bong Bong Street, Bowral between Victoria Street and Funstone Street in each year between 1990-2002?

Answer—

I am advised that Bong Bong Street forms part of Main Road No 260, which runs between the Illawarra Highway at Moss Vale and the Hume Highway north of Mittagong.
While the RTA’s records show expenditure for the upkeep of pavement and traffic facilities on Main Road No 260, it does not hold specific expenditure information on the section between Victoria and Funston Streets, Bowral.

*1109 PRIVATE BUS COMPANIES—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to the acquisition of private bus companies:

(1) Is the Government currently investigating the acquisition of any private bus companies and if so, which companies are they and what areas do they currently service?
(2) What performance and financial criteria does the State Transit Authority use when deciding to purchase a private bus company?
(3) What consultants have been used by the Government in respect of acquiring private bus companies, what fees have been paid to those consultants and did they provide written advice in each case?

Answer—

(1) to (3) The Government is not currently investigating the acquisition of any private bus company.

*1110 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS ON TRAINS—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to radio communication on trains:

(1) As announced by a State Rail spokesman on 13 July 2002, following the Hexham train accident, was a $6 million radio upgrade of the State Rail fleet completed by the end of September?
(2) Does the completion of this upgrade mean that all trains using the section of track on which the Hexham accident occurred are fitted with compatible Metronet radios and if not, which trains will not be fitted with the Metronet radios?

(3) Was the $6 million upgrade actually the final phase of an existing program and if so, why was it announced as a response to the Hexham accident?

(4) Are other contracts to be signed for the provision of radio communications equipment and if so when, for how much, with whom and when will the new equipment be available?

Answer—

I am advised that the upgrade involved the fitting of radios to 75 trains, 12 of which were the 620 and 720 class that operate in the Hunter Valley. As a result of this upgrade, these trains are now fitted with both Countrynet and Metronet radios. The section of track at Hexham uses the Countrynet radio communications system, not Metronet.

*1111 CITYRAIL SERVICE—TASCOTT—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to CityRail service at Tascott station:

(1) Are you aware of complaints by the Central Coast Commuters Association that passengers in certain carriages have to jump onto the tracks at Tascott station if they want to get off the train?

(2) At what other stations does this occur?

(3) Are you aware of complaints by the Central Coast Commuters Association that this safety problem is exacerbated by the fact that doors between carriages are frequently locked?

(4) What action have you taken to address these complaints and ensure passenger safety at Tascott station?

Answer—

(1) to (4) I am advised that in keeping with appropriate standards, announcements are made to advise passengers intending to travel to any station with shorter platforms to travel in specific carriages that will align with the platform. Doors between carriages are only locked when there are Driver’s Cabins in the middle of the train. This is to prevent vandalism or interference with the operation of the train.

*1112 INSTALLATION OF DATA LOGGERS—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to the installation of data loggers:

(1) As at 21 November 2002, has the entire CityRail fleet been fitted with data loggers and if not, how many trains are yet to be fitted?

(2) What is the total cost of fitting data loggers to the CityRail fleet?

(3) How and where is information recorded by data loggers stored and for how long is it stored?

(4) What information is recorded by data loggers?

Answer—

(1) to (4) I am advised that work is progressing and installation is scheduled to be completed by 31 March 2003, with trials continuing into April for final commissioning in May 2003. Stored data from the loggers may be analysed in the event of an incident to determine relevant facts.

*1113 REVENUE PROTECTION OFFICERS (RPOs)—Mr Debnam to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

In relation to Revenue Protection Officers (RPOs):

(1) Is State Rail permitting RPOs to retrain as Transit Police?
(2) If so, what criteria are used to select suitable candidates to retrain as Transit Police?
(3) Have any officers of the Wyong Revenue Protection Unit been selected to be retrained as Transit Police and if so, have any of these officers been reprimanded or disciplined in recent years for work they performed as RPOs?

Answer—
(1) to (3) The State Rail Authority does not employ Transit Police. They are employed by the NSW Police.

*1114 BOOM GATES—Mr Maguire to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) How many sets of boom gates have been installed since June 2001 in New South Wales (at which location by name)?
(2) How many minor upgrades have been completed and what nature of upgrade was implemented?
(3) How many sets of lights only have been installed in New South Wales since 2001?
(4) How many level crossings are identified for boom gate upgrades in the next 12 months by name and location?

Answer—
(1) Eight as follows:
The Rock (Old Trunk Rd)
Dubbo (Buniyong Rd)
Dubbo (Eulomogo Rd),
Robertson (Fountaindale Rd)
Robertson (Meryla St)
Marinna (Public Rd)
Bomen (DampierSt)
Wagga (Fernleigh Rd).
(2) 10 advanced warning sites (signage or additional lights);
8 LED lamp units; and
Removal of non-breakable structures and establishment of RTA standard safety clearances at approaches to 3 sites.
(3) Five
(4) Over 100 level crossings across NSW will receive safety upgrades worth over $4 million in the 2002-3 financial year, ranging from flashing lights, bells and boom gates to improved road signs.

*1115 STATE FORESTS FIREBREAK CLEARING—Mr Maguire to Minister for Information Technology, Minister for Energy, Minister for Forestry, and Minister for Western Sydney—

(1) What methods of firebreak clearing and maintenance are employed by State Forests?
(2) Do State Forests use slashing and grading among the methods used in firebreak clearing and maintenance?
(3) How many kilometres have been cleared in preparation for the current fire season and what method was used?
(4) How much hazard reduction has been carried out in state forests in the Electorate of Wagga Wagga?

Answer—
(1) I am advised that, in an operation sense, “firebreaks” can vary from the roadside widening of fire trails through to cleared perimeter breaks of varying length and width
The methods used to maintain firebreaks/fire trails include:
- bulldozing/grading
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- slashing, mowing and pruning
- grazing of grassed breaks
- herbicide spraying

(2) Yes.

(3) Maintenance of firebreaks and fire trails conducted as part of a cycle of fire maintenance operations across State Forests’ estate. In the 2001-2002 the distance of trail maintenance across all State Forest areas in NSW was estimated at 8652 kilometres (out of over 30,000km in total). In the same period, about 2,200kms of firebreaks and fire trails on State forests were accessed for maintenance in the Tumbarumba, Holbrook and Wagga Wagga local government areas.

(4) Hazard reduction is any planned technique that aims at reducing fuel loads across the state Forests’ estate. Two management regions are responsible for the management of State forests within the Wagga Wagga electorate. Hazard reduction activities have been reported separately below for each region to avoid confusion.

State Forests’ Hume Region
Within that part of Hume Region in the Wagga Wagga electorate, the following operations were undertaken:
- Grazing: 6969 hectares to reduce fine fuels
- Hazard reduction burning: 234 hectares
- Window burning 120 hectares

The Honourable Member would be aware that the State forests managed in the Wagga Wagga electorate are dominated by Pinus radiata plantations which are fire sensitive. This limits the ability to employ burning as a hazard reduction tool within the plantation estate. All available areas within the plantations are being grazed, and all significant areas of native forests surrounding plantation areas are incorporated into fire management plan and are planned to be hazard reduced on a 5-10 year cycle, depending on seasonal conditions and fuel accumulation.

Approximately 7000ha of native forest are managed as part of State Forests’ plantations in the Wagga Wagga electorate. Of this approximately 500ha is planned to be hazard reduced each year between March and May.

State Forests Riverina Region
State Forests’ Riverina Region is responsible for the management of native forests only. In the native forests within the Wagga Wagga electorate (around Tumbarumba), over 29,600 hectares is hazard reduced by being grazed under grazing permits. This reduces fine fuels.

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*1116 SCHOOL HOSTELS — Mr Torbay to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) Is the Minister aware that there are now only 5 school term hostels left in NSW that provide a safe, lower cost boarding facility?

(2) Is the Minister aware that there has been no operating funding since the late 1970s provided to the school term hostels by the NSW Government (apart from emergency operating funding provided last year)?

(3) Is the Minister aware that at the MCEETYA meeting in July 2001 a resolution was passed and agreed to by the State/Territory Ministers that funding of School Term Hostels is the responsibility of the States?

(4) Is the Minister aware that the cost of providing assistance to the school term hostels at the cost of $2000 per resident student will cost only $212,000 per annum based on current enrolled numbers at the school term hostels and this will provide on-going viability to these “access to school” providers?

(5) Has the NSW Government met this requirement and dealt appropriately with funding requirements of that sector by providing recurrent operating funds to the school term hostels and if not, why not?
(6) Is the Minister aware that other States provide recurrent per capita funding to school term hostels to enable them to provide access to the school gate for rural and isolated students?

(7) Can the Minister advise how the students using hostels will access the classroom if a hostel closes because of lack of funding?

Answer—

(1) to (7) The MCEETYA School Term Hostel Report (July 2001) clearly states that any financial assistance to private school term hostels should be considered in the context of long term economic viability and ongoing regional need. The Department of Education and Training has undertaken a review of school term hostels in NSW consistent with the recommendations of the MCEETYA report.

*1117 TEACHER EMPLOYMENT—Mr Webb to Minister for Education and Training—

(1) Did the Department of Education conduct a recruitment drive earlier this year in Canberra aimed at graduating students with a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Canberra?

(2) How many graduates of the University of Canberra lodged applications with the Department of Education and Training for teaching positions in NSW?

(3) In what other states and cities did the Department conduct recruitment campaigns?

(4) How many applications were received from prospective teachers at each of those other recruitment drives?

(5) How many graduates from each of those locations have been accepted and/or employed by the Department?

(6) Why are the applicants from the University of Canberra still awaiting advice or acknowledgement of their application from the Department?

(7) Were those graduates from the University of Canberra who lodged applications for employment with the Department informed that they could expect to be advised of the result of their application by no later than October 2002?

(8) When will those applicants be informed of the success or otherwise of their application with the Department for employment?

(9) How many new graduate teachers is the Department seeking to employ for commencement of duties in 2003?

(10) Why has it taken so long for the Department to process these applications when there is an acute shortage of teachers in NSW?

Answer—

(1) to (7) The Department of Education and Training undertakes an annual Graduate Recruitment Program to recruit outstanding teaching graduates from all NSW universities as well as targeted ACT and interstate universities. The program progresses in stages from preliminary visits to the universities to promote the program and distribute application forms, to panel interviews of targeted applicants and, finally, to selection of the successful candidates. This year more than 4,000 applications were received. The University of Canberra is one of the universities in the program and a total of 141 graduates lodged applications, with 128 presenting for interview. I wrote to graduates selected for employment through the program. Of these 20 were graduates from the University of Canberra. The program employs rigorous processes to choose successful applicants including two reference checks for each applicant, checking of criminal records, assessment of academic results and ranking of the applicants based on these and their performance in interview.
(1) Local government does have additional responsibilities arising from amendments to the Rural Fires Act 1997 and the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 during 2002. These include ensuring consistency of Local Environmental Plans with bushfire protection guidelines, mapping of bushfire prone areas, ensuring that bushfire prone areas are identified on planning (s.149) certificates and managing hazard reduction. Where a rural fire district service agreement is concluded between the Commissioner and local authorities, the agreement may specify functions that are to be exercised by the commissioner during a period, if any, specified.

(2) No additional funding has been allocated to local government to implement the changes stemming from the 2002 amendments to the Rural Fires Act 1997. For councils below their rate pegging level, funding may be derived from increasing ordinary rates. For those councils at their rate pegging level, the Local Government Act 1993 allows for applications to make a special rate that may be approved by the Minister for Local Government. Such special variation applications for particular activities must be demonstrate community support, no other possible sources of funding and specify a fixed period of time.

(3) Refer to the answer to (2) above.

(4) The capacity of councils to carry out the requirements will vary across the State. Additional resources will be provided for the Rural Fire Service, PlanningNSW and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Some of these will be dedicated to assisting councils and communities to implement the new regime.

(5) I am advised that the Rural Fire Service has undertaken to exercise certain functions that would otherwise have been the responsibility of local government. These include issuing hazard reduction certificates for private land, undertake bushfire mapping, manage bushfire hazard complaints for public and private land, give advice on development applications and issue bush fire hazard notices under s. 66 of the Rural Fires Act. The power to act in this regard is conferred on the Commissioner by s. 12A of the Act that allows for rural fire district service agreements to be entered into with local authorities.

(6) As outlined above, councils will have differing capacities in regard to the elements listed. Resources are being directed to improving the information base available.
*1119 WOODENBONG AND LEGUME ROAD—Mr J. H. Turner to Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads—

(1) Does the Roads and Traffic Authority or the government have any intention of carrying out any work on a road known as the Woodenbong to Legume Road being a stretch of road approximately 44 kilometres between aforementioned villages?
(2) If so, what work is carried out?
(3) If so, when will such work be carried out?
(4) If not, why not?
(5) What is the average daily vehicular movement on this section of road?
(6) What is the average daily movement of heavy vehicles on this road?
(7) Does this road connect to areas that are now being used widely for produce and supermarket distribution to the coastal regions of New South Wales?

Answer—

(1) to (7) I am advised that the Woodenbong to Legume Road is a Regional Road, which is the responsibility of both Tenterfield and Kyogle Shire Councils. As such priorities for works to be carried out on the Woodenbong to Legume Road are the responsibility of Tenterfield and Kyogle Shire Councils. The NSW Government provides funding assistance to both Councils for maintenance and improvement on regional roads through Block Grants and REPAIR Programs.