

**Adequacy of the funding allocation of the NSW Electoral Commission for the
2023 State General Election**

TREASURY

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Response due: 2 June 2022

| QoN # | Responsible Person | Transcript Page | QUESTION | RESPONSE |
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| 1 | Cassandra Wilkinson | 3 | <p>The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I am just quoting from the Premier's statement to the House on 10 May. He stated, "... which is codified in a charter of independence issued under a Treasurer's direction". That actually has not been issued yet. That is correct, isn't it?</p> <p>CASSANDRA WILKINSON: In order to make sure that you have got exactly the correct answer, I will take that on notice. I am not aware that it has been completed yet, but I will take it on notice and get you a proper response.</p> | <p>Treasury will work towards developing the Direction in 2022, in consultation with the integrity agencies. Treasury has sought to implement the intent of the new process for the 2022-23 Budget, ahead of this being codified in a Charter of Independence, issued under a Treasurer's Direction.</p> |
| 2 | Cassandra Wilkinson | 9-10 | <p>The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I think these questions are probably best addressed to Ms Wilkinson, and please feel free to take them on notice. I am going to ask the same questions of the Electoral Commission this afternoon. If I go to the Electoral Commission's submission at page 27 on box 7, they go through their budget submissions. There are five categories listed, specifically for financial year 2023 as well as the cost over 10 years. I was wondering if you could take it on notice and go through each of those five, which total, in terms of financial year 2023, up to \$80.5 million, and list beside those what changes have occurred, particularly in relation to the Premier's recent announcement that will affect those particular bids. These bids were formally lodged with Treasury by the Electoral Commission on 25 February, and there have been a number of changes announced subsequently. I am interested in finding out, in relation to each of those categories, which are affected by the most recent announcements, which are affected by any other</p> | <p>Treasury considers the implementation of a new funding model and the cost of a budget proposal as two separate issues.</p> <p>The cost of a budget proposal will be driven by the specific input elements associated with that proposal.</p> <p>The announcement of a revised process instead details how funding decisions are to be made and communicated to agencies.</p> <p>This announcement has no bearing on what a proposal would cost to implement, which is a matter for the NSW Electoral Commission to advise on.</p> <p>Such costs should be detailed in a business case, prepared consistent with Treasury business case guidelines.</p> <p>Where applicable, these should also be considered and assessed through relevant investment assurance processes.</p> |

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| | | <p>public announcements by Treasury or any other agency, and how that will affect the bid that is being put in as Treasury and other agencies assess them. Is that possible to do?</p> <p>CASSANDRA WILKINSON: Broadly, of course, yes. I would just like to understand the question properly. I think what I am hearing is that you are asking did we have a position and did Treasury's position change after the Premier's negotiated change in arrangements with the agencies. Is that correct?</p> <p>The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: The aspects of the Electoral Commission's budget submission, totalling up to \$80.5 million for the next financial year, are detailed and listed for us on page 27 of its submission.</p> <p>CASSANDRA WILKINSON: Yes.</p> <p>The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: We have been hearing that there are a number of changes, including the Premier's recent announcements, which will presumably affect those bids in the deliberations of Treasury and, ultimately, the Treasurer and Cabinet. I am interested in how those public announcements will impact on the costs that were assessed by the Electoral Commission in its bid—each of those five items that make up its bid.</p> <p>CASSANDRA WILKINSON: I would not say that the new arrangements affect any particular bids. I would say that each of the bids you have seen detailed has been assessed by us with regard to the Premier's commitments. It would not be correct to suggest that we had a view, we became aware of the Premier's position</p> | |
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| | | | <p>and changed it. It is the case that we have been working collaboratively with them throughout the budget process, understanding that they were also in a process of negotiating new arrangements. We have done our best effort to make sure that this year's process aligns as closely as possible to where the intended future process will place us. I am very happy to see what additional detail I can give you in writing as an on notice, but I do not think that you will find that our advice that has been changed necessarily by the new approach.</p> <p>The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: For instance, when you are assessing any of those bids and you now find that iVoting will not apply for the next election, do you believe that that will not affect the quantum of any particular bid?</p> <p>CASSANDRA WILKINSON: I do not think the new arrangements change the way the business cases are assessed. I think that is quite a different proposition than the way adequacy of funding is assessed. The question of adequacy is covered by the new arrangements. The question of appropriate technology and value for money item by item will still come under the business case policies of the Government. The ICT Assurance process will not change under these arrangements.</p> <p>The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Just to clarify, then, when they ask for \$50.4 million in additional funding to conduct the New South Wales State election and subsequently iVoting is now not going to be included as part of that, that will not affect the bid?</p> <p>CASSANDRA WILKINSON: I think you know I cannot discuss advice that is going to Cabinet to inform budget</p> | |
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| | | | <p>decisions, but I can certainly take it on notice and discuss with my general counsel what I can share of how this process will be run.</p> <p>The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I understand. If I can stress, Chair, it is very difficult for us to consider the adequacy of the funding allocation of the New South Wales Electoral Commission for the 2023 State general election when we have from the Electoral Commission the bids that they formally lodged with Treasury on 25 February. Now there have been a number of changes subsequent to that, but we do not know how that affects the actual quantum that the Electoral Commission now requires. Without continuing this, I would simply ask that Treasury give us some idea of how these various changes have affected the quantum that the Electoral Commission will require. For example, if they are no longer required to fund efficiency dividends, that will clearly affect the quantum of funding that they receive. I just want to know how much they are now asking for so we can assess the adequacy of what eventually comes out in the budget process.</p> <p>CASSANDRA WILKINSON: Thank you. I will take that on notice. I think you are aware, though, that Treasury's advice to the Expenditure Review Committee is Cabinet in confidence, so I will need to consult our general counsel before getting the detail question on notice</p> | |
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