



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4

Budget Estimates 2023-2024

Report 57

June 2024

4



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Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Budget Estimates 2023-2024

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Report no. 57.**

Budget Estimates 2023-2024

"June 2024"

Chair: Hon Mark Banasiak MLC



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Terms of reference

The Budget Estimates resolution and schedule was agreed to by the House on 12 September 2023, referring the Budget Estimates and related papers for 2023-2024 to the Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report and is reproduced, as amended on 11 October 2023 and 30 November 2023, as follows:

Initial hearings

1. That, upon tabling, the Budget Estimates and related papers for the financial year 2023-2024 presenting the amounts to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund be referred to the Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report.
2. That, further to the resolution of the House of 10 May 2023 adopting the 2023 sitting calendar,¹ the 2023-2024 initial budget estimates hearings be scheduled as follows:

Day One: Tuesday 24 October 2023

PC 3 Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney
PC 4 Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport

Day Two: Wednesday 25 October 2023

PC 1 Premier
PC 4 Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

Day Three: Thursday 26 October 2023

PC 2 Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast
PC 1 Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research

Day Four: Tuesday 31 October 2023

PC 1 Treasurer
PC 8 Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice

Day Five: Wednesday 1 November 2023

PC 2 Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth, the North Coast
PC 6 Regional Transport and Roads
PC 3 Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

Day Six: Thursday 2 November 2023

PC 7 Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage
PC 1 Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural Resources

¹ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 10 May 2023, pp 64-65.

Day Seven: Friday 3 November 2023

PC 7 Planning and Public Spaces
 PC 5 Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Day Eight: Tuesday 7 November 2023

PC 1 The Legislature
 PC 6 Transport
 PC 5 Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter

Day Nine: Wednesday 8 November 2023

PC 1 Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety
 PC 8 Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections

Day Ten: Thursday 9 November 2023

PC 6 Special Minister of State, Roads, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy, Jobs and Tourism
 PC 5 Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion

Day Eleven: Friday 10 November 2023

PC 5 Attorney-General
 PC 8 Local Government

3. That the remainder of the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 hearings be held during the first half of 2024, as determined by further resolution of the House.
4. That for the purposes of the 2023-2024 initial budget estimates hearings:
 - (a) each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, and, if required, by Government members only from 10.45 am to 11.00 am, 12.45 pm to 1.00 pm, and 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm
 - (b) the portfolio of The Legislature be examined by Opposition, Crossbench and Government members from 2.00 pm until 5.30 pm.
5. That for the purposes of the 2023-2024 initial budget estimates hearings:
 - (a) the committees must hear evidence in public
 - (b) the committees may ask for explanations from ministers, parliamentary secretaries or officers of departments, statutory bodies or corporations, relating to the items of proposed expenditure
 - (c) ministers be invited to appear for the morning sessions only unless requested by committees to appear also for the afternoon session
 - (d) witnesses, including ministers, may not make an opening statement before a committee commences questions

- (e) members may lodge supplementary questions with the committee clerk by 5.00 pm within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript
- (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, except those answers for which confidentiality is requested, after they have been circulated to committee members.

6. That the committees report by 28 June 2024.²

Supplementary hearing

1. That, further to the resolution of the House of 12 September 2023 referring Budget Estimates 2023- 2024 to the Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report, as amended 11 October 2023, and the resolution of the House of 10 May 2023 adopting the 2023 sitting calendar, Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Regional NSW hold a supplementary hearing in 2023 to examine the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales.
2. That for the purposes of the 2023-2024 supplementary budget estimates hearing:
 - (a) each portfolio be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, and from 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, then from 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm, and from 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, with 15 minutes reserved for Government questions at 10.45 am, 12.45 pm and 5.15 pm, if required
 - (b) the committee must hear evidence in public
 - (c) the committee may ask for explanations from the minister, parliamentary secretaries or officers of departments, statutory bodies or corporations, relating to the items of proposed expenditure
 - (d) the minister be invited to appear for the morning session only unless requested by the committee to appear also for the afternoon session
 - (e) witnesses, including the minister, may not make an opening statement before a committee commences questions
 - (f) members may lodge supplementary questions with the committee clerk by 5.00 pm within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript
 - (g) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, except those answers for which confidentiality is requested, after they have been circulated to committee members.³

² *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 12 September 2023, pp 446-450; amended, *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 11 October 2023, p 558.

³ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 22 November 2023, pp 692-693.

Additional hearings

1. That, further to the resolution of the House of 12 September 2023 referring Budget Estimates 2023-2024 to the Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report, as amended 11 October 2023, and the resolution of the House of 21 November 2023 adopting the 2024 sitting calendar,⁴ the 2023-2024 additional budget estimates hearings be scheduled as follows:

Day One: Tuesday 20 February 2024

PC 3 Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney
 PC 4 Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport

Day Two: Wednesday 21 February 2024

PC 1 Premier
 PC 4 Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

Day Three: Thursday 22 February 2024

PC 2 Health, Regional Health, the Illawarra and the South Coast
 PC 1 Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Gaming and Racing, Veterans, the Central Coast, Medical Research

Day Four: Friday 23 February 2024

PC 6 Transport
 PC 5 Police and Counter Terrorism, the Hunter

Day Five: Tuesday 27 February 2024

PC 7 Planning and Public Spaces
 PC 5 Women, Seniors, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Day Six: Wednesday 28 February 2024

PC 2 Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth, the North Coast
 PC 8 Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth Justice

Day Seven: Thursday 29 February 2024

PC 1 Industrial Relations, Work Health and Safety
 PC 6 Regional Transport and Roads

Day Eight: Friday 1 March 2024

PC 1 Treasurer
 PC 8 Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Industry and Trade, Innovation, Science and Technology, Building, Corrections

Day Nine: Monday 4 March 2024

PC 5 Families and Communities, Disability Inclusion
 PC 1 The Legislature

⁴ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 21 November 2023, pp 666-667.

Day Ten: Tuesday 5 March 2024

PC 6 Special Minister of State, Roads, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy,
Jobs and Tourism

PC 3 Skills, TAFE, Tertiary Education

Day Eleven: Wednesday 6 March 2024

PC 5 Attorney-General

PC 8 Local Government

Day Twelve: Thursday 7 March 2024

PC 7 Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage

PC 1 Finance, Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, Natural
Resources

2. That for the purposes of the 2023-2024 additional budget estimates hearings:
 - (a) each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, and from 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, then from 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm, and from 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, with 15 minutes reserved for Government questions at 10.45 am, 12.45 pm and 5.15 pm, if required
 - (b) the portfolio of The Legislature be examined by Opposition, Crossbench and Government members from 9.15 am to 11.00 am, and from 11.15 am to 1.00 pm.
3. That for the purposes of the 2023-2024 additional budget estimates hearings:
 - (a) the committees must hear evidence in public
 - (b) the committees may ask for explanations from ministers, parliamentary secretaries or officers of departments, statutory bodies or corporations, relating to the items of proposed expenditure
 - (c) ministers be invited to appear for the morning sessions only unless requested by committees to appear also for the afternoon session
 - (d) witnesses, including ministers, may not make an opening statement before a committee commences questions
 - (e) members may lodge supplementary questions with the committee clerk by 5.00 pm within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript
 - (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, except those answers for which confidentiality is requested, after they have been circulated to committee members.⁵

⁵ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 30 November 2023, pp 787-788.

Committee details

Committee members

Hon Mark Banasiak MLC	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	<i>Chair</i>
Hon Emma Hurst MLC	Animal Justice Party	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Hon Greg Donnelly MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Aileen MacDonald MLC*	Liberal Party	
Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC	The Nationals	
Hon Cameron Murphy MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Peter Primrose MLC	Australian Labor Party	

Non-substantive members who attended the hearings

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	The Greens
Dr Amanda Cohn MLC	The Greens
Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC	The Greens
Hon Wes Fang MLC	The Nationals
Hon Scott Farlow MLC	Liberal Party
Hon Sam Farraway MLC	The Nationals
Ms Sue Higginson MLC	The Greens
Hon Mark Latham MLC	Independent
Hon Stephen Lawrence MLC	Australian Labor Party
Hon Taylor Martin MLC	Independent
Hon Tania Mihailuk MLC	Pauline Hanson's One Nation
Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC	The Nationals

Contact details

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Telephone	(02) 9230 2809

* The Hon Aileen MacDonald MLC replaced the Hon Taylor Martin MLC as a substantive member of the committee on 8 May 2024. ⁶

⁶ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 20 June 2023, p 188.

Chair's foreword

I am pleased to present this report on the inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024. The annual inquiry into the Budget Estimates ensures parliamentary oversight of the Budget, and provides an important mechanism for the accountability of the executive government to the Legislative Council.

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW is responsible for the scrutiny of the following portfolio area:

- Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales
- Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport.

The primary evidence gathering mechanism of this inquiry is through the conduct of public hearings. This report lists the key issues raised during the hearings. Transcripts, tabled documents and additional answers provided after the hearings are published on the [inquiry's webpage](#).

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the ministers and their officers who assisted the committee during this important inquiry. I am grateful to my fellow committee members and the secretariat staff for their contributions to the inquiry process.

Hon Mark Banasiak MLC
Committee Chair

Chapter 1 Introduction

The inquiry into Budget Estimates is one of the key mechanisms for parliamentary committees to scrutinise government expenditure, performance and effectiveness. It holds ministers and government officials to account and provides a greater level of transparency to the public.

The inquiry is conducted annually by the Legislative Council's Portfolio Committees. Each committee examines the budget estimates of its responsible portfolios, with ministers and senior public servants as the primary witnesses. The evidence taking process of the inquiry consists of answers provided during public hearings, including answers to questions on notice, and answers to post-hearing written questions (known as supplementary questions). There is no provision for written submissions.

Budget Estimates 2023-2024

- 1.1 On 12 September 2023, the Legislative Council referred the Budget Estimates for the 2023-2024 financial year to the portfolio committees for inquiry and report.⁷
- 1.2 On 10 May 2023, the Legislative Council resolved that initial hearings for Budget Estimates 2023-2024 be held over 12 days from 24 October to 26 October and 31 October to 10 November 2023.⁸ The hearing schedule was amended by the House on 12 September 2023 to provide that initial hearings for Budget Estimates 2023-2024 be held over 11 days from 24 October to 26 October, 31 October to 3 November, and 7 November to 10 November 2023.⁹ The hearing schedule was further amended by the House on 11 October 2023 to add an additional hearing and make consequential amendments.¹⁰
- 1.3 On 22 November 2023, the Legislative Council resolved to hold a supplementary hearing for the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, and Western New South Wales in 2023.¹¹
- 1.4 On 30 November 2023, the Legislative Council resolved that additional hearings for Budget Estimates 2023-2024 be held over 12 days from 20 February to 23 February, 27 February to 1 March, and 4 March to 7 March 2024.¹²
- 1.5 The Budget Estimates resolution establishing the inquiry, which sets out the rules for the inquiry, is reproduced on page iv-viii.

⁷ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 12 September 2023, pp 448-450.

⁸ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 10 May 2023, p 64.

⁹ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 12 September 2023, p 449.

¹⁰ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 11 October 2023, p 558.

¹¹ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 22 November 2023, pp 692-693.

¹² *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 30 November 2023, pp 787-788.

Hearings

1.6 The committee held five public hearings as follows:

- Tuesday 24 October 2023 and Tuesday 20 February 2024: Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport
- Wednesday 25 October 2023, Wednesday 13 December 2023 and Wednesday 21 February 2024: Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales.

Transcripts, questions on notice and supplementary questions

1.7 Transcripts of the hearings, questions taken on notice, supplementary questions and answers to these questions are available on the Budget Estimates webpage at: www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/budgetestimates.

Chapter 2 Issues raised during hearings

This chapter provides a brief summary of key issues raised during the hearings.

Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport

2.1 A hearing examining the portfolios of Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport was held on Tuesday 24 October 2023. The following issues were raised during the committee's examination of these portfolios:

- sale of golf courses across Sydney and New South Wales, including the proposed repurposing of Moore Park Golf Course
- grants and programs conducted in the last year by Multicultural NSW
- appointment process of Venues NSW executive staff and board members
- property sales information that Valuations NSW sells to authorised information resellers
- the use of synthetic turf in New South Wales sports fields
- upgrades to various stadiums and clubs in New South Wales, including Penrith Stadium, WIN Stadium and Bondi Bowling Club.

2.2 An additional hearing examining the portfolios of Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport was held on Tuesday 20 February 2024. The following issues were raised during the committee's examination of these portfolios:

- progress of land audit identifying available sites for housing development, integrity of the audit questioned due to previous corruption allegations
- use of Crown land, including redevelopment of Sydney Fish Markets, greyhound racing lease at Wentworth Park and recreational fishing on Cooper Island
- multicultural investment, including Safe Places for Faith and Community program, community language schools, GROW program and funding for multicultural media
- the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust audit, raising questions about transparency and accountability, and uncertainty about the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust status as a State-owned entity
- review of the 'hate speech' provision of the *Crimes Act 1900* (section 93Z) to reform anti-discrimination laws
- Sydney Speedway, Sydney International Dragway and Wollongong Kart raceway, operational status, licensing, and application progress
- sports facilities, including stadium and sporting precinct development and upgrades, asbestos contamination in facilities and health and environmental impacts of synthetic turf

- equity in sport, including gender equality, inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals in sport, 'Level the Playing Field' program, defibrillator program eligibility and 'Her Sport Her Way' program
- Sydney International Equestrian Centre at Horsley Park.

Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

2.3 A hearing examining the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales was held on Wednesday 25 October 2023. The following issues were raised during the committee's examination of these portfolios:

- site of Bungendore High School
- government support for farmers and drought affected regions
- staffing levels in the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Department of Regional NSW
- shark nets and other deterrence measures at Garie Beach
- fisheries management and sustainability and Recreational Fishing Trusts
- funding for regional airstrips
- koala hubs in the Great Koala National Park
- flood recovery assistance for local government areas.

2.4 A supplementary hearing examining the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales was held on Wednesday 13 December 2023. The following issues were raised during the committee's examination of these portfolios:

- appearance of Minister and departmental officials before committee
- funding for Local Land Services
- animal cruelty offences in the *Crimes Act 1900*
- forestry operations in Tallaganda State Forest
- Dolphin Marine Conservation Park
- proposed Great Koala National Park
- appointment of Cross-Border Commissioner
- Marine Park Advisory Committees
- management of fire ants
- forced swim and smoking tower experiments in medical research
- management of white spot disease
- pest control programs facilitated by Local Land Services

- management and prevention of regional crime.

2.5 An additional hearing examining the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales was held on Wednesday 21 February 2024. The following issues were raised during the committee's examination of these portfolios:

- the termination of Mr Scott Hansen, former Director General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries
- the status and potential outcomes of the functional review of the NSW Department of Primary Industries
- the various impacts of budget cuts on the NSW Department of Primary Industries, such as the ability of staff to travel to regional areas for meetings, and the intention to maintain research stations
- the 12-month trial ban on all forms of fishing blue groper in New South Wales
- the Country Mayors Association of New South Wales's concerns regarding crime in rural and regional areas
- progress on a trial of alternatives to shark nets
- concerns regarding the use of Recreational Fishing Trust funds and status of funded projects
- animal welfare matters such as the review of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* and Regulation and the Rodeo Code of Practice; aerial culling of feral pigs; and how audits of animal facilities are prioritised
- extension of the proposed assessment area for the Great Koala National Park
- priorities and timelines for the Orange Sport Stadium and Precinct.

Appendix 1 Witnesses at hearings

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
Tuesday 24 October 2023 Preston Stanley Room Parliament House, Sydney	Hon Stephen Kamper MP	Minister for Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport
	Ms Kiersten Fishburn	Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment
	Ms Melanie Hawyes	Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces
	Mr Leon Walker	Deputy Secretary, Property and Development NSW
	Ms Jennifer Hickey	Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW
	Mr Stewart McLachlan	Chief Executive Officer, Valuation NSW
	Ms Janine Lonergan	Executive Director, Corporate Services, Infrastructure NSW
	Mr Tom Gellibrand	Chief Executive, Infrastructure NSW
	Mr Joseph La Posta	Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW
	Ms Karen Jones	Chief Executive, Office of Sport
	Ms Kerrie Mather	Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW
	Mr Kevin Thompson	Chief Executive Officer, NSW Institute of Sport
	Mr Greg Wells	Chief Executive Officer, Service NSW, Department of Customer Service
	Ms Cassandra Gibbens	Executive Director, Department of Customer Service

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Mr Chris Lamont	Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Commission
	Ms Emma Hogan	Secretary, Department of Customer Service
Wednesday 25 October 2023 Preston Stanley Room Parliament House, Sydney	Hon Tara Moriarty MLC	Minister for Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales
	Ms Rebecca Fox	Secretary, Department of Regional NSW
	Mr Scott Hansen	Director General, Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
	Mr Steve Orr	Chief Executive Officer, Local Land Services (LLS)
	Mr Jonathan Wheaton	A/Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Programs
	Mr James Bolton	Deputy Secretary, Regional Precincts Group
	Mr Anshul Chaudery	Chief Executive Officer, Forestry Corporation
	Mr Sean Sloan	Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries
	Dr John Tracey	Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
	Ms Kim Filmer	Chief Animal Welfare Officer, DPI
	Mr David McPherson	Deputy Director General, DPI Forestry and Land Reform
	Mr Rob Kelly	Executive Director, LLS Regional Delivery
	Mr Liam Hogg	Director, Land Management Policy
	Mr Drew Varnum	Executive Director, NSW Public Works

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Mr Daniel Brown	Executive Director, Soil Conservation Service
Wednesday 13 December 2023 Macquarie Room Parliament House, Sydney	Hon Tara Moriarty MLC	Minister for Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales
	Dr Jacqui Tracey	Executive Director, Policy
	Mr Jonathan Wheaton	A/Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Programs
	Ms Rebecca Fox	Secretary, Department of Regional NSW
	Mr Scott Hansen	Director General, Department of Primary Industries
	Mr Steve Orr	CEO, Local Land Services (LLS)
	Mr James Bolton	Deputy Secretary, Regional Precincts Group
	Mr Anshul Chaudery	CEO, Forestry Corporation
	Mr Sean Sloan	Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries
	Dr John Tracey	Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
	Ms Kim Filmer	Chief Animal Welfare Officer, DPI
	Mr David McPherson	Deputy Director General, DPI Forestry and Land Reform
	Mr Rob Kelly	Executive Director, LLS Regional Delivery
	Mr Drew Varnum	Executive Director, NSW Public Works
Tuesday 20 February 2024 Preston Stanley Room Parliament House, Sydney	Hon Stephen Kamper MP	Minister for Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Ms Kiersten Fishburn	Secretary, NSW Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure
	Ms Melanie Hawyes	Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces
	Mr Leon Walker	Deputy Secretary, Property and Development NSW
	Ms Jennifer Hickey	Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW
	Mr Stewart McLachlan	Chief Executive Officer, Valuation NSW
	Mr Tom Gellibrand	Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW
	Mr Joseph La Posta	Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW
	Ms Karen Jones	Chief Executive, Office of Sport
	Ms Kerrie Mather	Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW
	Mr Kevin Thompson	Chief Executive Officer, NSW Institute of Sport
	Mr Greg Wells	Chief Executive Officer, Service NSW, Department of Customer Service
	Ms Cassandra Gibbens	Executive Director, Department of Customer Service
	Mr Chris Lamont	Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Commission
	Mr Graeme Head	Secretary, Department of Customer Service
Wednesday 21 February 2024 Preston Stanley Room Parliament House, Sydney	Tara Moriarty MLC	Minister for Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Ms Rebecca Fox	Secretary, Department of Regional NSW
	Mr Steve Orr	CEO, Local Land Services
	Mr Jonathan Wheaton	A/Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Programs
	Mr James Bolton	Deputy Secretary, Regional Precincts Group
	Mr Anshul Chaudhary (<i>via videoconference</i>)	CEO, Forestry Corporation
	Mr Ross Dickson	A/CEO, Forestry Corporation
	Mr Sean Sloan	A/Director General, Department of Primary Industries
	Dr John Tracey	Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
	Dr Kim Filmer	Chief Animal Welfare Officer, DPI
	Mr David McPherson	Deputy Director General, DPI Forestry and Land Reform
	Mr Rob Kelly	Executive Director, LLS Regional Delivery
	Mr Peter Turnell	A/Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries
	Ms Kate Lorimer-Ward	Deputy Director General, DPI Agriculture
	Mr Liam Hogg	Director Policy, LLS Policy

Appendix 2 Minutes

Minutes no. 5

Monday 18 September 2023

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Room 1043, Parliament House, Sydney at 2.01 pm

1. Members present

Mr Banasiak, *Chair*

Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair*

Mr Donnelly

Mr Martin

Mrs Mitchell

Mr Murphy

Mr Primrose

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Mitchell: That draft minutes nos. 3 and 4 be confirmed.

3. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024 – procedural resolutions

The committee noted that the Budget Estimates timetable for 2023-2024 was agreed to by the House, with hearings generally commencing at 9.15 am and concluding by 5.30 pm. Below is a table of Portfolio Committee No. 4 hearings:

Date	Portfolio
Tuesday 24 October 2023	Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport
Wednesday 25 October 2023	Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

3.1 Allocation of question time and total hearing time

The committee noted that under the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 resolution, each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, and, if required, by Government members only from 10.45 am to 11.00 am, 12.45 pm to 1.00 pm, and 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm.

3.2 Witness requests

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Hurst: That:

- the secretariat write to the ministers of the relevant portfolios being examined by the committee to request that they nominate witnesses to appear at each hearing, for the committee's consideration
- upon receipt, the nominated witnesses be circulated to the committee
- members be given two days from when the nominated witnesses are circulated to make amendments or nominate additional witnesses
- the committee agree to the witness list by email, unless a meeting of the committee is required to resolve any disagreement.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That the committee not invite parliamentary secretaries to appear as witnesses at the hearings.

3.1 Witness appearance time

The committee noted that under the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 resolution Ministers are invited to appear for the morning sessions only, 9.15 am to 1.00 pm, unless requested by the committee to appear also for the afternoon session.

4. **Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 2.06 pm until Tuesday 24 October 2023, 9.00 am, Parliament House (public hearing – Budget Estimates 2023-2024).

Arizona Hart

Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 6

Tuesday 24 October 2023

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Preston Stanley Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.02 am

1. **Members present**

Mr Banasiak, *Chair*

Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair*

Dr Cohn (participating from 9.15 am until 12.48 pm)

Mr Donnelly

Ms Faehrmann (participating via videoconference from 9.38 am until 10.45 am)

Mr Fang (substituting for Mrs Mitchell)

Mr Farlow (substituting for Mr Martin)

Mr Murphy

Mr Primrose

2. **Previous minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Hurst: That draft minutes no. 5 be confirmed.

3. **Correspondence**

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 3 October 2023 – Email from Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales to Budget Estimates secretariat, providing witness list for hearing on 25 October 2023
- 3 October 2023 – Email from Zoi Tsardoulis, Office of the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport to Budget Estimates secretariat, providing witness list for hearing on 24 October 2023
- 10 October 2023 - Email from Zoi Tsardoulis, Office of the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport to Budget Estimates secretariat, confirming additional witnesses will appear at hearing on 24 October 2023
- 11 October 2023 – Email from Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales to Budget Estimates secretariat, stating that additional witnesses are not available for hearing on 25 October 2023
- 23 October 2023 – Email from Liz Crosby, Sr Executive Assistant to the CEO, Infrastructure NSW to Budget Estimates secretariat, advising of position title changes for Tom Gellibrand and Janine Lonergan for hearing on 24 October 2023.

Sent

- 18 September 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, issuing request to nominate witnesses for hearing on 24 October 2023
- 18 September 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, issuing request to nominate witnesses for hearing on 25 October 2023
- 9 October 2023 - Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, requesting additional witnesses appear at hearing on 24 October 2023
- 9 October 2023 - Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, requesting additional witnesses appear at hearing on 25 October 2023
- 10 October 2023 - Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Zoi Tsardoulis, Office of the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, confirming witnesses for hearing on 24 October 2023
- 19 October 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, accepting response regarding additional witnesses and confirming witnesses for hearing on 25 October 2023.

4. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024**4.1 Amended resolution**

The committee noted the resolution of the House of 11 October 2023 amending the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 terms of reference.

4.2 Order for examination of portfolios

The committee noted that under the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 resolution each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, and, if required, by Government members only from 10.45 am to 11.00 am, 12.45 pm to 1.00 pm, and 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm.

4.3 Public hearing: Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport was admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding parliamentary privilege and other matters. The Chair noted that Members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Ms Kiersten Fishburn, Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)
- Ms Melanie Hawyes, Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces
- Mr Leon Walker, Deputy Secretary, Property and Development NSW (PDNSW)
- Ms Jennifer Hickey, Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW (CCNSW)
- Mr Stewart McLachlan, Chief Executive Officer, Valuation NSW
- Ms Janine Lonergan, Executive Director, Corporate Services, Infrastructure NSW
- Mr Tom Gellibrand, Chief Executive, Infrastructure NSW
- Mr Joseph La Posta, Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW
- Ms Karen Jones, Chief Executive, Office of Sport
- Ms Kerrie Mather, Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW
- Mr Kevin Thompson, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Institute of Sport

- Mr Greg Wells, Chief Executive Officer, Service NSW, Department of Customer Service (DCS)
- Ms Cassandra Gibbens, Executive Director, Department of Customer Service (DCS)
- Mr Chris Lamont, Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Commission
- Ms Emma Hogan, Secretary, Department of Customer Service

The Chair declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport open for examination.

The Minister withdrew at 12.48 pm.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 5.17 pm. The public and the media withdrew.

5. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.18 pm until 9.00 am, Wednesday 25 October 2023, Preston Stanley Room, Budget Estimates 2023-2024 hearing, Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales.

Frances Arguelles

Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 7

Wednesday 25 October 2023

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Preston Stanley Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.02 am

1. Members present

Mr Banasiak, *Chair*

Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair*

Ms Boyd (participating from 11.20 am until 11.48 am, and from 2.31 pm until 2.51 pm)

Mr Donnelly

Ms Faehrmann (participating via videoconference from 10.10 am until 10.46 am, and from 11.15 am until 11.48 am)

Mr Fang (participating from 10.16 am until 1.00 pm, and from 2.22 pm until 3.48 pm)

Mr Farraway (substituting for Mr Martin)

Ms Higginson (participating from 9.15 am until 10.43 am, from 2.31 pm until 2.51 pm, and from 2.11 pm until 5.20 pm)

Mr Lawrence (substituting for Mr Primrose)

Mr Murphy

Mrs Taylor (substituting for Mrs Mitchell from 9.00 am until 9.40 am, and from 10.15 am until 2.30 pm)

2. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 20 October 2023 – Email from the Office of the Secretary, Department of Regional NSW to Budget Estimates secretariat, requesting that a witness attend the hearing on 25 October via Webex for medical reasons
- 23 October 2023 – Email from the Office of the Secretary, Department of Regional NSW to Budget Estimates secretariat, advising that a witness cannot attend the hearing on 25 October for medical reasons and that another witness will attend instead.

Sent

- 24 October 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Office of the Secretary, Department of Regional NSW, accepting alternate witness to appear at hearing on 25 October.

3. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024

3.1 Order of examination of portfolios

The committee noted that under the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 resolution each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm and 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, and, if required, by Government members only from 10.45 am to 11.00 am, 12.45 pm to 1.00 pm, and 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm.

3.2 Public hearing – Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales was admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding parliamentary privilege and other matters. The Chair noted that Members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Ms Rebecca Fox, Secretary, Department of Regional NSW
- Mr Scott Hansen, Director General, Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
- Mr Steve Orr, CEO, Local Land Services (LLS)
- Mr Jonathan Wheaton, A/ Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Programs
- Mr James Bolton, Deputy Secretary, Regional Precincts Group
- Mr Anshul Chaudery, CEO, Forestry Corporation.

The Chair declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales open for examination.

Mr Farraway tabled the following documents:

- Media release, Yasmin Catley MP, Member for Swansea, ‘Stronger Country Communities Fund’
- Media release, Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore, ‘MP welcomes Stronger Communities Fund Round 5 Success’, 6 February 2023
- Media release, Jenny Aitchison MP, Member for Maitland, ‘Maitland Electorate Achievements’
- James O’Doherty, ‘“Absurd” staffing levels in Regional NSW Secretary’s office sparks review’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 August 2023
- Map of drought affected regions
- Riley Krause, ‘NSW Minister for Agriculture Tara Moriarty ducks drought questions while in Orange’, *Central Western Daily*, 11 September 2023.

The Minister withdrew at 12.47 pm. The evidence concluded and the witnesses, public and media withdrew.

Mrs Taylor tabled the following document:

- ‘Informal advice: Recruitment of Cross Border Assistant Commissioner role’, Briefing note to Minister Moriarty, 4 August 2023.

Mr Farraway moved: That Minister Moriarty be invited to attend a further half day hearing on a date to be determined.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Banasiak, Mr Farraway, Ms Hurst, Mrs Taylor.

Noes: Mr Donnelly, Mr Lawrence, Mr Murphy.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Mr Sean Sloan, Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries
- Dr John Tracey, Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
- Ms Kim Filmer, Chief Animal Welfare Officer, DPI
- Mr David McPherson, Deputy Director General, DPI Forestry and Land Reform
- Mr Rob Kelly, Executive Director, LLS Regional Delivery
- Mr Liam Hogg, Director, Land Management Policy
- Mr Drew Varnum, Executive Director, NSW Public Works
- Mr Daniel Brown, Executive Director, Soil Conservation Service.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 5.20 pm. The public and the media withdrew

Mr Farraway moved: That the Chair move a motion in the House seeking to amend the Budget Estimates resolution to authorise Portfolio Committee No. 4 to hold a supplementary hearing in 2023 for the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales, to which the Minister will be invited to appear.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Banasiak, Mr Farraway, Ms Hurst, Mrs Taylor,

Noes: Mr Donnelly, Mr Lawrence, Mr Murphy.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

4. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.20 pm, *sine die*.

Beverly Duffy
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 9

Thursday 23 November 2023

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 12.41 pm

1. Members present

Mr Banasiak, *Chair*

Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair*

Mr Donnelly

Mr Martin

Mrs Mitchell

Mr Murphy

Mr Primrose

2. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024

2.1 Supplementary hearing

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Mitchell: That:

- the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 supplementary hearing for the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales be held on Wednesday 13 December 2023
- if the Minister is not available on Wednesday 13 December 2023, the Chair propose an alternative date for the supplementary hearing, to be agreed by the committee over email, unless a meeting of the committee is required to resolve any disagreement.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That:

- the secretariat write to the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, to invite her to the supplementary hearing
- the following witnesses be invited to accompany the Minister at the supplementary hearing:
 - Ms Rebecca Fox, Secretary, Department of Regional NSW
 - Mr Scott Hansen, Director General, Department of Primary Industries
 - Mr Steve Orr, CEO, Local Land Services
 - Mr Jonathan Wheaton, A/ Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Programs
 - Mr James Bolton, Deputy Secretary, Regional Precincts Group
 - Mr Anshul Chaudery, CEO, Forestry Corporation
 - Mr Sean Sloan, Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries
 - Dr John Tracey, Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
 - Ms Kim Filmer, Chief Animal Welfare Officer, , Department of Primary Industries
 - Mr David McPherson, Deputy Director General, DPI Forestry and Land Reform
 - Mr Rob Kelly, Executive Director, LLS Regional Delivery
 - Mr Liam Hogg, Director, Land Management Policy
 - Mr Drew Varnum, Executive Director, NSW Public Works
 - Mr Daniel Brown, Executive Director, Soil Conservation Service
- the Minister be required to respond to the invitation by 5.00 pm, Monday 27 November 2023.

3. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 12.58, *sine die*.

Arizona Hart

Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 10

Wednesday 13 December 2023

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.01 am

1. Members present

Mr Banasiak, *Chair*

Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair* (until 4.30 pm)

Mr Donnelly

Mrs Mitchell

Mr Murphy

Mr Primrose

Mrs Taylor (substituting for Mr Martin)

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Hurst: That draft minutes no. 9 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 27 November 2023 – Letter from Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, accepting invitation to appear at supplementary hearing on 13 December 2023
- 28 November 2023 – Email from Mr Troy Wilkie, Senior Manager of Government Relations, RSPCA NSW to secretariat, advising that RSPCA NSW's Annual Report and Financial Report for FY22/23 have been published
- 29 November 2023 – Email from Ms Lisa Ryan to committee, asking when the next inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* will be held
- 8 December 2023 – Email from Ms Jessica Walker, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services, Office of the Secretary, Department of Regional NSW to secretariat, advising that several witnesses will attend hearing on 13 December via videoconference
- 11 December 2023 – Letter from Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales to secretariat, advising she will attend hearing on 13 December via videoconference until 10.30 am.

Sent

- 23 November 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, issuing invitation to appear at supplementary hearing on 13 December 2023
- 4 December 2023 – Email from secretariat to Ms Lisa Ryan, advising that the committee will commence its inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* shortly.

4. ***

5. **Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024**

5.1 Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions

The following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, received 22 November 2023
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, received 22 November 2023.

5.2 Order for examination of portfolios

The committee noted that under the resolution of the House of 22 November 2023, each portfolio is to be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, and from 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, then from 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm, and from 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, with 15 minutes reserved for Government questions at 10.45 am, 12.45 pm and 5.15 pm, if required.

5.3 Public hearing – Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding parliamentary privilege and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Dr Jacqui Tracey, Executive Director, Policy.

The following witnesses were examined on their former oath:

- Mr Jonathan Wheaton, A/ Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Programs

- Ms Rebecca Fox, Secretary, Department of Regional NSW
- Mr Scott Hansen, Director General, Department of Primary Industries
- Mr Steve Orr, CEO, Local Land Services
- Mr James Bolton, Deputy Secretary, Regional Precincts Group
- Mr Anshul Chaudery, CEO, Forestry Corporation
- Mr Sean Sloan, Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries
- Dr John Tracey, Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
- Ms Kim Filmer, Chief Animal Welfare Officer, DPI
- Mr David McPherson, Deputy Director General, DPI Forestry and Land Reform
- Mr Rob Kelly, Executive Director, LLS Regional Delivery
- Mr Drew Varnum, Executive Director, NSW Public Works

The Chair noted that Members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales was admitted and examined.

The Chair declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales open for examination.

Mr Banasiak tabled the following document:

- Letter from the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage to Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, Environment Protection authority, dated 11 September 2023.

The Minister withdrew at 10.33 am.

Mr Chaudhary and Mr McPherson withdrew at 2.11 pm.

Mr Kelly withdrew at 3.31 pm.

Mr Orr and Dr Jacqui Tracey withdrew at 3.50 pm.

Mr Wheaton withdrew at 4.26 pm.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 5.16 pm. The public and the media withdrew.

5.4 Tendered documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Mitchell: That the committee accept and publish the following document tabled during the public hearing:

- Letter from the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage to Mr Tony Chappel, Chief Executive Officer, Environment Protection authority, dated 11 September 2023, tabled by Mr Banasiak.

6. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.20 pm until Thursday 14 December 2023, 6.30 am, Execujet Flight Lounge, 394 Ross Smith Avenue, Mascot (site visit – inquiry into veterinary workforce shortage in New South Wales).

Arizona Hart

Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 12

Tuesday 20 February 2024

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Preston Stanley Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.01 am

1. Members presentMr Banasiak, *Chair* (until 3.52 pm, and from 4.06 pm)Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair* (until 12.50 pm, and from 2.07 pm)

Mr Donnelly (from 9.22 am)

Ms Faehrmann (participating from 11.58 am until 12.42 pm)

Mr Fang (substituting for Mr Martin)

Mr Farlow (substituting for Mrs Mitchell)

Ms Higginson (participating until 12.42 pm, from 2.15 pm until 3.24 pm, and from 3.57 pm until 5.24 pm)

Mr Latham (participating from 9.12 am until 12.32 pm)

Ms Mihailuk (participating from 10.10 am until 10.18 am, and from 11.36 am until 11.55 am)

Mr Murphy (until 2.25 pm, and from 4.37 pm until 5.07 pm)

Mr Primrose

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Murphy: That draft minutes no. 10 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 22 January 2024 – Email from Ms Siri Gamage to the secretariat, concerning the Northern railway line between Armidale and Queensland
- 30 January 2024 – Email from Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC to secretariat, responding to the witness invitation for the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales additional hearing on 21 February 2024
- 2 February 2024 – Email from the Department of Regional NSW, requesting that Mr Anshul Chaudhary, CEO of Forestry NSW Corporation, appear via videoconference at the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales additional hearing on 21 February 2024
- 5 February 2024 – Letter from Mr Scott Hansen, to the Chair, advising that he is no longer Director General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries, and thanking members of the committee for advice, guidance and support
- 6 February 2024 – Email from Zoi Tsardoulis, Office of the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, confirming the attendance of all invited witnesses to the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport additional hearing on 20 February 2024
- 9 February 2024 – Email from the Department of Regional NSW to the Budget Estimates secretariat, requesting an update on whether the committee has finalised the witness list for the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales additional hearing on 21 February 2024
- 13 February 2024 – Email from Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC to secretariat, requesting that Mr Anshul Chaudhary, CEO of Forestry NSW Corporation, appear via videoconference at the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales additional hearing on 21 February 2024.

Sent

- 20 December 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, issuing uncorrected transcript, questions on notice, and supplementary questions from hearing on 13 December 2023

- 21 December 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Tara Moriarty MP, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, inviting witnesses to the hearing on 21 February 2024
- 21 December 2023 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, inviting witnesses to the hearing on 20 February 2024
- 5 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, requesting response to the witness invitation for the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport additional hearing on 20 February 2024
- 7 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Ms Zoi Tsardoulis, Office of the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, attaching confirmed witness list and hearing information for the Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport additional hearing on 20 February 2024
- 9 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Department of Regional NSW advising the committee is finalising the witness list for the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales additional hearing on 21 February 2024
- 13 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, advising the committee is considering the request that Mr Anshul Chaudhary, CEO of Forestry NSW Corporation, appear via videoconference at the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales additional hearing on 21 February 2024.

4. ***

5. **Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024**

5.1 **Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions – supplementary hearing**

The committee noted the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, received 24 January 2024.

5.2 **Resolution for additional hearings**

The committee noted the resolution of the House on 30 November 2023 to conduct additional hearings for the inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024

5.3 **Order for examination of portfolios**

The committee noted that under the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 resolution on 30 November 2023 each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, and from 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, then from 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm, and from 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, with 15 minutes reserved for Government questions at 10.45 am, 12.45 pm and 5.15 pm, if required.

5.4 **Witness list**

The committee noted that as agreed via email, arrangements for the additional hearings were agreed to over email in the first instance, rather than holding a meeting (unless a meeting was required to resolve any disagreement).

In addition, it was agreed that:

- the confirmed witness lists from the initial round of hearings (October-November 2023) be the proposed witness lists for the additional round of hearings (February 2024),
- committee members be given two days following receipt of the proposed witness lists to provide any feedback or additional witnesses, as per the practice adopted for the initial round of hearings,
- responses from ministers' offices to witness invitations be due by 31 January 2024.

5.5 Public hearing – Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding parliamentary privilege and other matters.

The Chair noted that Members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport was admitted and examined.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Graeme Head, Secretary, Department of Customer Service
- Ms Kiersten Fishburn, Secretary, NSW Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure
- Ms Melanie Hawyes, Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces
- Mr Leon Walker, Deputy Secretary, Property and Development NSW.

The following witnesses were examined on their former oath:

- Ms Jennifer Hickey, Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW
- Mr Stewart McLachlan, Chief Executive Officer, Valuation NSW
- Mr Tom Gellibrand, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW
- Mr Joseph La Posta, Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW
- Ms Karen Jones, Chief Executive, Office of Sport
- Ms Kerrie Mather, Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW
- Mr Kevin Thompson, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Institute of Sport
- Mr Greg Wells, Chief Executive Officer, Service NSW, Department of Customer Service
- Ms Cassandra Gibbens, Executive Director, Department of Customer Service
- Mr Chris Lamont, Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Commission.

The Chair declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport open for examination.

The Minister withdrew at 12.50 pm.

Mr Kevin Thompson and Mr Tom Gellibrand withdrew at 3.48 pm.

Mr Greg Wells, Ms Cassandra Gibbens, Mr Chris Lamont, Mr Graeme Head, and Ms Kerrie Mather withdrew at 4.19 pm.

Mr Stewart McLachlan withdrew at 4.27 pm.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 5.24 pm. The public and the media withdrew.

6. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.25 pm until 9.00 am, Wednesday 21 February 2024, Preston Stanley Room, Parliament House (public hearing - Budget Estimates 2023-2024).

Jessie Halligan and Teneale Houghton
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 13

Wednesday 21 February 2024

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Preston Stanley Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.00 am

1. Members present

Mr Banasiak, *Chair*

Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair*

Ms Boyd (participating from 2.39 - 3.24 pm)

Mr Donnelly

Ms Faehrmann (participating from 9.18 until 10.08 am, from 11.36 am until 12.36 pm, from 3.01 - 3.24 pm)

Mr Fang (participating from 2.00 pm until 2.30pm)

Mr Farraway (substituting for Mr Martin)

Ms Higginson (participating from 10.21 am until 12.47 pm, from 2.05 pm until 3.27 pm, from 3.45 pm)

Mr Lawrence (substituting for Mr Primrose)

Mr Murphy

Mrs Taylor (substituting for Mrs Mitchell, from 9.00am until 1.00 pm, from 2.29 pm)

2. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 14 February 2024 – Email from Ms Zoi Tsardoulas, Office of the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, correcting the title of Ms Kiersten Fishburn to Secretary of the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, witness for the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport hearing on 20 February 2024
- 15 February 2024 – Email from Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, requesting an additional witness attend the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales hearing on 21 February 2024.

Sent

- 15 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Ms Zoi Tsardoulas, Office of the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, confirming the corrected title of Ms Kiersten Fishburn to Secretary of the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and attaching final confirmed witness list for the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport hearing on 20 February 2024
- 15 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to Ms Jessica Malnersic, Office of the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, advising the committee has accepted the Minister's proposed changes to the witness list, attaching confirmed witness list and hearing information for the Budget Estimates Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales hearing on 21 February 2024.

3. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024**3.1 Order for examination of portfolios**

The committee noted that under the Budget Estimates 2023-2024 resolution on 30 November 2023 each portfolio, except The Legislature, be examined concurrently by Opposition and Crossbench members only, from 9.15 am to 10.45 am, and from 11.15 am to 12.45 pm, then from 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm, and from 3.45 pm to 5.15 pm, with 15 minutes reserved for Government questions at 10.45 am, 12.45 pm and 5.15 pm, if required.

3.2 Public hearing – Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding parliamentary privilege and other matters.

The Chair noted that Members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales was admitted and examined.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Sean Sloan, A/Director General, Department of Primary Industries
- Dr Kim Filmer, Chief Animal Welfare Office, DPI
- Mr Liam Hogg, Director Policy, LLS Policy
- Mr Peter Turnell, A/Deputy Director General, DPI Fisheries
- Ms Kate Lorimer-Ward, Deputy Director General, DPI Agriculture
- Mr Ross Dickson, Acting CEO, Forestry Corporation.

The following witnesses were examined on their former oath:

- Mr Jonathan Wheaton, A/ Deputy Secretary, Regional Development and Programs
- Ms Rebecca Fox, Secretary, Department of Regional NSW
- Mr Steve Orr, CEO, Local Land Services
- Mr James Bolton, Deputy Secretary, Regional Precincts Group
- Mr Anshul Chaudhary, CEO, Forestry Corporation
- Dr John Tracey, Deputy Director General, DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety
- Mr David McPherson, Deputy Director General, DPI Forestry and Land Reform
- Mr Rob Kelly, Executive Director, LLS Regional Delivery.

The Chair declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales open for examination.

Ms Hurst tendered the following document:

- Brief by Detective Senior Constable Les Wallace, Oxley Rural Crime Unit, dated 7 September 2022 regarding feral pig hunting and the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 No. 200*.

Mr Faraway tabled the following document:

- Denis Howard, 'The future of the NSW DPI is still no clearer', *The Land*, 21 February 2024, <https://www.theland.com.au/story/8528260/clarity-sought-on-nsw-dpi-director-general-dismissal/>.

The Minister withdrew at 12.47 pm.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 5:24 pm. The public and the media withdrew.

3.3 Tendered documents

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Hurst: That the committee accept and publish the following document tendered during the public hearing:

- Brief by Det. Snr Constable Les Wallace, Oxley Rural Crime Unit, dated 7 September 2022 regarding feral pig hunting and the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 No. 200*.

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Hurst: That the committee accept the following document tendered during the public hearing:

- Denis Howard, 'The future of the NSW DPI is still no clearer', *The Land*, 21 February 2024, <https://www.theland.com.au/story/8528260/clarity-sought-on-nsw-dpi-director-general-dismissal/>.

4. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 5.35 pm. *Sine die*.

Beverly Duffy and Stewart Smith
Committee Clerk

Draft minutes no. 18

Tuesday 11 June 2024

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

Room 1136, Parliament House, Sydney, at 11.32 am

1. Members presentMr Banasiak, *Chair*Ms Hurst, *Deputy Chair*

Mr Donnelly

Mrs McDonald (via videoconference)

Mrs Mitchell (via videoconference)

Mr Murphy (via videoconference)

Mr Primrose

2. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Donnelly: That draft minutes nos. 12 and 13 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following items of correspondence:

Received

- 22 April 2024 – Letter from the Hon Mark Latham MLC to the Chair, discussing evidence provided by Ms Karen Jones, Chief Executive, Office of Sport, during the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport hearing on Tuesday 20 February 2024
- 10 May 2024 – Letter from Ms Karen Jones, Chief Executive, Office of Sport to the Chair, regarding evidence given at the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport hearing on Tuesday 20 February 2024.

Sent

- 26 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, issuing uncorrected transcript, questions on notice and supplementary questions from the hearing on 20 February 2024
- 27 February 2024 – Email from Budget Estimates secretariat to the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, issuing uncorrected transcript, questions on notice and supplementary questions from the hearing on 21 February 2024
- 26 April 2024 – Letter from the Chair to Ms Karen Jones, Chief Executive, Office of Sport, regarding evidence given at the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport hearing on Tuesday 20 February 2024.

The committee noted that:

- the correspondence from Ms Karen Jones, Chief Executive, Office of Sport received 10 May 2024, has been published.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Primrose: That the committee authorise the publication of correspondence from Mr Mark Latham MLC, discussing evidence provided by Ms Karen Jones, Chief Executive, Office of Sport, during the Budget Estimates Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport hearing on Tuesday 20 February 2024, dated 22 April 2024.

4. Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2023-2024**4.1 Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions – additional hearings**

The following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from the Hon Stephen Kamper MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, received 18 March 2024
- answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions from the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, received 19 March 2024.

4.2 Consideration of Chair's draft report

The Chair submitted his draft report entitled *Budget Estimates 2023-2024*, which, having been previously circulated, was taken as being read.

Resolved, on the motion of Mrs Mitchell: That:

The draft report be the report of the committee and that the committee present the report to the House;

The transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, correspondence and answers to questions taken on notice and supplementary questions relating to the inquiry be tabled in the House with the report;

Upon tabling, all unpublished transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, correspondence and answers to questions taken on notice and supplementary questions related to the inquiry be published by the committee, except for those documents kept confidential by resolution of the committee;

The committee secretariat correct any typographical, grammatical and formatting errors prior to tabling;

The secretariat is tabling the report at 2.00 pm on Thursday 13 June 2024;

The Chair to advise the secretariat and members if they intend to hold a press conference, and if so, the date and time.

5. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 11.34 am, until 10.00 am on Tuesday 25 June 2024, Room 1043, Parliament House (report deliberative – veterinary workforce shortage in New South Wales).

Kara McKee
Committee Clerk

