

SENSITIVE: NSW GOVERNMENT

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES
INQUIRY INTO CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

QUESTION (page 7)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: That would be great. Are you able to provide the Committee with a list of the schools across New South Wales where there are kitchen gardens, and the level of funding that is provided to them, please?

Ms BALE: I can take that question on notice.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Terrific. Thank you.

ANSWER

The Department of Education does not collect data on schools that establish a kitchen garden. These decisions are made at the local level.

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QUESTION (page 9)

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Have you found any instances where carbonated soft drinks are being sold?

Ms BALE: I have not personally, no.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Would you like to take it on notice?

Ms BALE: Sorry?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: You have not personally but could you take that on notice to see if there have been any reports?

Ms BALE: Yes, I can take that on notice.

ANSWER

Carbonated drinks are not banned from sale in NSW public schools. Rather, it is beverages with more than 300 kilojoules per serve or more than 100 milligrams of sodium per serve that are not permitted for sale in schools.

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QUESTION (page 10)

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Have there been any reports of fried food and fried chips being sold in schools that you are aware of?

Ms BALE: I do not have any reports.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Can you take that on notice?

Ms BALE: I can take that on notice.

ANSWER

Under the current Fresh Tastes at School strategy for school canteens, any restricted food, including fried food, may be served occasionally, for example at a special school event.

The Department of Education does not collect data in relation to food being provided through school canteens in public schools.

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QUESTION (page 10)

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: And you have no capacity, at the moment, to collate data with respect to high schools or primary schools about whether or not the red-orange-green methodology is being properly applied and is working well in those schools.

Ms BALE: We have not collected that data; no.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It is not possible to collect that data—is that right?

Ms BALE: I would have to take that question on notice.

ANSWER

Collection of this data would be administratively burdensome on schools.

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QUESTION (page 11)

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Could you take on notice, please, the question of the numbers of public high schools and public primary schools, and the numbers of schools which have canteens.

Ms BALE: I certainly can. One of the other issues that schools advise us is a challenge is that in many of the schools that have a canteen, the canteen does not operate full time. Canteens may operate between one and five days a week. Many of the canteens have great challenges in terms of the workforce of the canteens. Apart from a relatively small number that are leased out, the workforce are volunteers. Dr Chant referred to the challenges with the existing strategy, and that is why we are reviewing it to try and make it much more simple for people to interpret and respond to the strategy appropriately.

We need to ensure that we can provide materials that are suitable for volunteers who have no nutrition expertise or background. They have no expertise in putting a menu together apart from the fact that they prepare food in their homes for their families. They are volunteers so we need to ensure that we have materials that are suitable for them and also suitable for those who may have some nutrition expertise and can develop menus and plans and put them together themselves.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Can you give me a list of the leased-out canteens in public high schools and primary schools in this State. What is contained within the contract that those concessions have with the Department of Education which outlines, prescribes or details what is to be sold in canteens?

Ms BALE: I do not have that on me. We can take that question on notice, as well.

ANSWER

Department of Education data indicates that in 2015, 134 canteens in NSW public schools were operated by the school and 387 canteens were operated by an external organisation.

There are also many canteens not listed in the total above that are run by the local Parents and Citizens (P&C) organisations. The department does not hold data in relation to school canteens operated by the local P&C.

The list of externally operated public school canteens is provided as an attachment.

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QUESTION (Continued page 11)

What is contained within the contract that those concessions have with the Department of Education which outlines, prescribes or details what is to be sold in canteens?

ANSWER

The Canteen Licence Agreement between the Department of Education and the Licensee requires the provision of "School Canteen Services". The Licence Agreement states:

"School Canteen Services" means the provision and sale of food and drinks which meet the Fresh Tastes NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy as published from time to time by the Licensor and the NSW Department of Health and in particular in compliance with the food spectrum published with that strategy.

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QUESTION (page 12)

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: There is a big problem with overcrowding in primary schools and the desire for the Government to put in more demountables and thus lose green space in primary schools. Are you able to provide the Committee with information on whether any work has been done on loss of green space for demountables across the State?

Mr MIEZIS: I will have to take that on notice in terms of some of that detail but what I can say as a former principal of a large school in a very high growth area where we did have significant increases in enrolments is that principals have the duty of care to ensure that there is ample opportunity for children to participate in playground activities and sports activities, et cetera, through variations including staggered play times in some schools. There might be some schools that have recess at different times from the K-2 children right up to 3-6. At a local level principals have the responsibility to identify the opportunities that exist around those sorts of matters.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am just interested in the number of schools that are having to modify their activities as a result of overcrowding in open space. Are you able to provide that? You can take it on notice.

Mr MIEZIS: Yes.

ANSWER

Principals, in consultation with the school community, make decisions that best suit the school and their students in managing the use of open space.