

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 – LEGAL AFFAIRS

Thursday, 31 August 2017

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

UNCORRECTED PROOF

The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. R. Borsak (Chair)

The Hon. D. Clarke

The Hon. R. Colless

The Hon. C. Cusack

The Hon. S. Moselmane

The Hon. M. Pearson

Mr D. Shoebridge

The Hon. L. Voltz

PRESENT

The Hon. Troy Grant, [*Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services*]

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

The CHAIR: Welcome to the public hearing for the inquiry into Budget Estimates 2017-18. Before I commence, I acknowledge the Gadigal people, the traditional custodians of this land. I also pay respect to the elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aborigines present. I welcome Minister Grant and the accompanying officials to this hearing. Today, the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Police and Emergency Services.

Today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the parliamentary website. In accordance with broadcasting guidelines, while members of the media may film or record committee members and witnesses, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. Guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat.

There may be some questions that a witness could answer if only they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In those circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. Any messages from advisers or members of staff seated in the public gallery should be delivered through the Committee secretariat. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to your advisers seated at the table behind you.

Transcripts of this hearing will be available on the internet tomorrow morning. Would everyone please turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing. All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

ANDREW CAPPIE-WOOD, Secretary, Department of Justice, sworn and examined

ARTHUR DIAKOS, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Justice, sworn and examined

SHANE FITZSIMMONS, Commissioner, NSW Rural Fire Service, sworn and examined

MICHAEL FULLER, Commissioner, NSW Police Force, sworn and examined

JAMES HAMILTON, Acting Commissioner, Fire and Rescue NSW, sworn and examined

ADRIAN MCKENNA, Executive Director, Office for Police, Department of Justice, sworn and examined

FEARGUS O'CONNOR, Executive Director, Office of Emergency Management, Department of Justice, sworn and examined

MARK SMETHURST, Commissioner, New South Wales State Emergency Service, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Police and Emergency Services open for examination. The questioning of the portfolios of Police and Emergency Services will run from 2.00 p.m. until 4.40 p.m.. As there is no provision for a Minister to make an opening statement before the Committee commences questioning, we will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Welcome, Minister.

Mr TROY GRANT: Thank you. Good afternoon to you.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Does the Government have any plans to merge the Middle Eastern crime squad with the Asian crime squad?

Mr TROY GRANT: Thank you for the question. The NSW Police Force is currently undergoing a reengineering process. This body of reform is giving the NSW Police Force the opportunity to shape the organisation not only from an organisational point of view but also by giving it the opportunity to respond to crime and the ever-changing landscape of crime, both operationally and from a specialist point of view. The Commissioner is leading a whole-of-organisation process in consultation with the Police Association and the broader community to simply make sure that the NSW Police Force has every capability for future changing needs.

Obviously, to deal with your question of the two current squads that exist within the State Crime Command, the body of work has not been completed. It is still under review with a task force led by Commissioner Fuller with the association, and that work is ongoing. I will invite the Commissioner to add to my comments. It is important that whatever structure is ultimately adopted it is doing what it is set up to do and that is to increase public safety, reduce crime and to prevent crime by the best possible means.

Mr FULLER: The re-engineering of State Crime Command is about ensuring that the command itself is flexible and has the ability to meet the needs of the community through changing crime types. If you go back 20 years, criminals stayed in their lanes—if you stole only cars then stealing cars was your job. We know that different cultures would often stay within their own culture regarding crimes. That is certainly not the case now. What State Crime Command will look like after re-engineering will be dictated by the leadership group at State Crime Command, the Police Association, and a number of other stakeholders. But you could expect to see some consolidations of commands, being that criminals now do not stay within their lanes. They will sell guns one day and sell drugs the next. The Vietnamese will deal with Middle Eastern groups one day and then they will shoot each other the next. For mine, it is about ensuring that we have a group of people who are flexible and who can move in and out of different crime types to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the community, particularly in relation to organised crime.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Do you agree there is a link between criminal associations and terrorism?

Mr TROY GRANT: If I could start and then I will hand over to the Commissioner. Evidence that is coming across not only from those within our State and our country but also from across the world as I have met with counterparts in New York and London—and I am about to do so again—suggests as the Commissioner alluded to in his description that people are not operating within lanes. Plenty of crossover is occurring between ethnic groups, crime types, people from different age groups, organised crime groups and individuals who are dealing in crime. That is the international experience. Their methodology and the way that they are operating is also not as traditional as it once was. That is why the Government is keen to support the police in its re-engineering, to make it as dynamic as possible; to adapt to any of those potential crossovers that occur, case by case, incident by incident, or crime type by crime type.

Mr FULLER: Terrorism needs to be funded, and organised crime is one of those funding streams. This year we merged the State Crime Command and our Counter Terrorism Command. One of the reasons for that was that we know there is synergy between organised crime and terrorism. It was an important structural change to bridge that gap.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What discussions have you had with the Minister for Counter Terrorism about your review?

Mr TROY GRANT: My discussions with the Minister for Counter Terrorism are ongoing on a broad range of measures that government agencies can take. The Minister for Counter Terrorism also works closely with the Minister for Education, the Minister for Multiculturalism, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, and other Ministers within the Government, given that he has an important role to play from a policy perspective to ensure that the policy and legislative opportunities for government and other relevant agencies are as strong as they possibly can be to help us prevent terrorism. The Minister for Counter Terrorism does not participate in the intelligence, operational intelligence, or operations of any of the measures towards countering terrorism or legislatively; those responsibilities sit with me.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: At the same time as we are dealing with tackling gun crime why has the Government cut the number of authorised staff in the State Crime Command firearms squad—down from 49 to 35?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to check your figures. That is not my understanding.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I obtained information through the Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] and you provided us with the figures. Under the figures that were provided by your office, the numbers have dropped from 49 to 35.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that on notice to check. There may have been a realignment. Some realignments have occurred, and have always occurred, across the NSW Police Force on reporting structures and roles, and functionalities. There has been some misreporting in the media that there has been a drop in police numbers from the frontline which is completely incorrect. The officers were transferred from their highway patrol duties attached to local area commands. They were simply transferred to the traffic and highway commands. They are still doing the same job in the same locations regarding traffic management and road safety. I will take that question on notice to give you a clear and accurate answer.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I have a letter from L. Mufale, the team leader at the External Information Access Unit. On 31 December 2010 the number in the State Crime Command firearm squad was 49 for the authorised strength and the actual strength. On 30 June 2017 the authorised strength was 35 and the actual strength was 37. So it is pretty clear that the numbers have been reduced.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Point of order: The Minister has agreed to take the question on notice. Can I suggest that the member provide the document to the Minister to assist him?

The CHAIR: There is no point of order.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The Minister has taken the question on notice. It would be beneficial for him to be provided with a copy of the documentation to give his answer.

Mr TROY GRANT: I am happy with the question, Mr Chair. I am happy to take it on notice and give the member a more fulsome answer. I just used that example of the relocation of traffic highway patrol officers.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But the firearm squad would not be reallocated. They work in a specific unit.

Mr TROY GRANT: There are many units across the NSW Police Force that do duties in relation to firearms.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But these are the authorised strengths.

Mr TROY GRANT: But there are multiple organisational units within the NSW Police Force that deal with the issue of guns and firearms. I am happy to take that on notice and check it for you and give you a fulsome answer.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In your opening statement you said that you are going through a process of re-engineering. In going through this process of re-engineering which police stations will be closing?

Mr TROY GRANT: Re-engineering is not about an attempt to close police stations. As I said, in the NSW Police Force the current local area command structure has been in place for 20 years. This is an attempt by the Government to support the NSW Police Force to re-engineer, which means to look at what potential organisational structures, if any, are changed, and/or what police do, where they do it and how many are required to do the job in the ever-changing crime environment in the ever-changing diversity of the communities we serve. By way of example, the policing response that is required in Walgett is very different from what is required in Fairfield in a metropolitan area.

There are differences in metropolitan areas. The policing effort, resourcing and the organisational structure in Bankstown may be very different from what is required in Bondi, just as Tweed would be very different from what is required in Wagga Wagga. There is no intention or no attempt to close police stations as part of this review. It is about simply improving effectiveness particularly in relation to crime prevention and making sure that each community has the policing resources it requires that reflect the policing needs in each area across this very diverse State.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Outside this review are there any plans to shut down police stations?

Mr TROY GRANT: No closures are planned that I am aware of. My notes just have the significant number of new stations that we have built.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Having said that, will you guarantee that there are no plans, for example, for Bankstown Local Area Command to have any of its stations closed such as Bass Hill and Revesby? Are you guaranteeing that there will be no closures of those stations?

Mr TROY GRANT: The Government has made no plans to close any police stations.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What about you as Minister? Do you have any plans?

Mr TROY GRANT: As Minister I have made no plans to close any police stations.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What about St Marys police station?

Mr TROY GRANT: I have made no plans to close St Marys police station.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What about merging St Marys police station with the Penrith LAC?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am not sure how you would merge stations.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Are there any plans to shut St Marys police station and merge it with Penrith Local Area Command?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am just seeking some advice from the Commissioner of Police. There are no plans to shut or merge police stations. There have been mergers of police commands in the metropolitan area when eight commands went into four in 2013-14. That is being examined as part of the re-engineering process to see whether it is an appropriate part of the broader re-engineering and whether it is beneficial.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: There may be more local area commands merged. Is that what you are saying?

Mr TROY GRANT: There may be and equally there may not be. That is something that the task force will need to reconsider.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What is the name of that task force, by the way?

Mr TROY GRANT: The NSW Police Force Re-engineering Taskforce.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How often do police undertake firearm testing?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will get the Commissioner to confirm this. It is mandatory training on an annual basis in addition to other competencies of training that are required to be conducted on an annual mandatory level. That is tied to their award. Depending on the duty type of officers in particular squads or different units there are additional requirements as well as additional training that may be relevant to firearm safety and/or gun appointments.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Police officers are trained every year. Are they tested every year in their proficiency?

Mr TROY GRANT: Proficiency is tested annually as part of their training.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Is the training only once a year or do they have training on other occasions? I know some units will have additional training but across the board is it just once a year or more often?

Mr TROY GRANT: It is a mandatory annual training requirement for firearm proficiency that is tested.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is for testing. On other occasions is that standard across the board for all officers?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will let the Commissioner clarify that, but it is my understanding that there is training and proficiency testing on an annual basis.

Mr FULLER: That is correct. Once a year you have to pass a test at police ranges across New South Wales and there is a benchmark set in terms of your proficiency. But at the moment we have active armed offender training as well, which has increased training to four days. That will not be forever but at the moment police are all going through four days of training in relation to including firearm proficiency in those dynamic situations where you are faced with an armed offender. But shooting is an annual event where you practise and have to pass a shooting exam.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Obviously not every police officer will pass because some of them will not be on active service, but what percentage of officers pass the proficiency test?

Mr FULLER: I would have to take that on notice but if you do not pass the test you have to re-sit it before you get your firearm back.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How often is training being conducted regarding terror threats? Is there a set standard of training to respond to terror events across commands?

Mr TROY GRANT: The active armed offender training is a direct training regime that is targeted at that type of threat which is inclusive. Then there is additional training for units such as the State Protection Support Unit, the Tactical Operations Unit and the additional sniper componentry of that training.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Not every police officer will receive it; only those in the response units?

Mr TROY GRANT: They will receive the active armed offender training.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is the four-day training?

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes, which has the componentry relevant to your question.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That is mandatory for all police officers at the moment?

Mr FULLER: The Active Armed Offender training?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Yes.

Mr FULLER: Absolutely.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Is that being done at the local area command level?

Mr FULLER: Every police officer will receive that training. That is in addition to exercises that we run at State and regional level in terms of emergency management and terrorism events.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I refer you to the suggestion of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull that New South Wales would require the Army to be called on to intervene in the event of a terror threat in New South Wales. What do you think the NSW Police Force lacks so that we would require the Army's presence?

Mr TROY GRANT: I do not think it lacks anything in relation to the Prime Minister's suggestion. Sadly, as we all very well aware, we are not immune to terrorism. Our relationship with the Federal Government is such as when the resources in New South Wales have been exhausted. The legislative and operational arrangement provisions are well established and were obviously recently reviewed, but I have every confidence in the capability of the NSW Police Force.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: That was the existing regime—when you had expended your capabilities you could always request the Federal Government for assistance?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is correct, but even before that occurs there are arrangements that the NSW Police Force has with other policing jurisdictions for specialist officers to provide assistance, who are

sworn in as special constables, during an incident. Likewise, we provide that support to other States and Territories in Australia—longstanding arrangements.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I take you to the \$17 million mystery police station at Queanbeyan. What has happened to that police station?

Mr TROY GRANT: The commitment in relation to the police station at Queanbeyan is a police property that was well overdue for some investment. It has been allocated in the budget—I am just checking my notes for you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It was announced in 2015.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In 2016 and 2017.

Mr TROY GRANT: The Queanbeyan council—sorry, Queanbeyan-Palerang is the new title of that council—approached the NSW Police Force to examine a joint occupancy project or model, which has been explored, to find out if it was going to be functional, whether it provided for the needs of the NSW Police Force and also what the council was looking for. That project is well and truly underway. That project is progressing. Commissioner, do you wish to add anything?

Mr FULLER: I do not have an exact time frame on where that is at, but I can certainly try to get one for you as soon as possible.

The CHAIR: I refer you to your plan to amalgamate the Upper Hunter Local Area Command with the Central Hunter Local Area Command. Why are you merging these rural local area commands?

Mr TROY GRANT: That has been reported in the past couple of days. No decision has been taken in relation to any potential mergers, as I indicated earlier. That reporting in the media is incorrect. The consultation with both those commands, the officers within them, the local government areas and the community has commenced through Deputy Commissioner Worboys and all options are being examined—as they should be—as to whether the local area command model is still appropriate for the deployment of resources right across regional New South Wales and relative to that area, whether it is still relevant there, or what opportunities there are to look at other types of models for the deployment of police and resourcing thereof to make sure that there are more police doing the work that is required in the Upper Hunter, given the specific needs of the Upper Hunter area.

The CHAIR: There were reports on 2NM that your National Party colleague, the member for Upper Hunter, Michael Johnsen, only came out against the proposal yesterday. When did he speak to you about this?

Mr TROY GRANT: I rang him the day before on this specific issue. He did not answer my call. I eventually spoke to him the next morning and reassured him that no decisions had been made, that he had heard second-hand that it was being considered. He put his view to me. I explained the situation to him, exactly as I have to the Committee, that no decisions have been taken. Deputy Commissioner Worboys is simply doing his role as part of the re-engineering process and examining all options to make sure that we have the best policing response and the best numbers of resources relevant to every area of regional New South Wales—that process is ongoing—and he, along with the community and everybody else, will be kept abreast of the process and any decisions that will be taken in due course.

The CHAIR: Has the member for Upper Hunter, Mr Johnsen, ever spoken to you about police numbers in that local area command?

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes, he has.

The CHAIR: What has he asked you to do?

Mr TROY GRANT: He has made me aware that there are concerns about inadequate numbers within the Upper Hunter Local Area Command. It has been part of some broader commentary, particularly through the radio station that you mentioned. I have done a number of interviews on that radio station explaining the re-engineering process, acknowledging the community and the police view point—that they believe additional resources are required there. That is exactly the sorts of conversation I want to be occurring as part of the re-engineering process so that we can get it right and the Commissioner can make the appropriate resource allocations once the re-engineering process reaches that point.

The CHAIR: You increased the Upper Hunter Local Area Command numbers by three. Why did they not get the increase of 10 that the Police Association was looking for?

Mr TROY GRANT: Was that an increase in their authorised strength or an allocation of three probationary constables in the last class?

The CHAIR: I think that was an increase of three probationary constables coming into the system. They asked for an increase of 10.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will handover to the Commissioner to explain that. I do not allocate the resources; the resources are allocated by the Commissioner. There is a workforce optimisation program that helps to inform the decision-making. Obviously there is a number in each class that needs to meet the needs right across the various commands in New South Wales, and with each class that goes through there is a request for a certain number for various reasons—whether it is operational capacity, ability for training during the probationary period and capability as well, all those factors—as well as the crime demands, the resource. It is my understanding that those are all taken into account.

Mr FULLER: The consolidation of commands is about reducing expensive senior management teams; it is not about reducing the frontline services. If you look at the St George and Hurstville consolidation, that returned around 28 police back to operational areas such as general duties and Target Action Group type activities. When you hear about those consolidations it is not necessarily about closing police stations; it is certainly about reducing the number of expensive senior management teams and having ratios that are reasonable in terms of the cost for those teams.

Consolidation is about putting more troops on the ground, and I have said that a number of times. We also have a workforce optimisation model, which is not an exact science but it is a starting point tool that helps us work out where we need to move the workforce. In moving the workforce there will be some winners, but in theory there will also be some commands that may lose staff—they are commands, perhaps, that have a shrinking environment or do not have the same needs as they did 20 years ago. One of the many challenges in re-engineering is having a flexible workforce and having a value-for-money senior management team concept.

The CHAIR: I hear what you are saying, but do you not think that people in the bush have a special requirement in relation to response times?

Mr FULLER: Yes, I do.

The CHAIR: Especially with the focus that has been on rural crime recently?

Mr FULLER: What I am saying to you, Mr Borsak, is I am only talking about consolidating the superintendents and inspectors. I am not talking about consolidating the doers; I am talking about by doing that I can have more doers—the people who actually respond to the crimes. So consolidation is not about eroding the doers; it is about putting more police on the ground that actually respond to the calls for service.

The CHAIR: Minister, in relation to firearms appearance laws in this State, what empirical evidence was examined before determining that the Desert Tech Arms SRS A1 bolt-action was substantially similar in appearance to the Chicom QBU-88 machine gun and, as a result, has now been banned in New South Wales?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: They look the same if you have got one pointed at you.

The CHAIR: A machine gun that looks the same as a bolt-action a rifle?

Mr TROY GRANT: That firearm has not been banned; it is in relation to its classification. The NSW Police Force ballistics unit has recently determined that that particular firearm falls within the definition of a prohibited firearm in that it substantially duplicates in appearance a rifle that is designed or adapted for military purposes, and as a result of that determination these firearms will only be able to be acquired with a prohibited firearm permit. The New South Wales law includes that this definition is regardless of the calibre or manner of operation of the rifle. So a bolt-action rifle may be captured in that definition.

I understand that the Firearms Registry has taken steps to contact the relevant licence holders and dealers who possess these firearms. In some cases this may result in seizure of the firearm. I appreciate that this decision may impact on some dealers who did not ascertain the status of these firearms prior to their acquisition. The ballistics experts have to make such determinations within the confines of the existing law. I have confidence in the Commissioner and his officers to weigh up the law as it stands and the rightful possession of these firearms. The ability to threaten people through the appearance of a firearm remains a key component of the definition of a prohibited firearm.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Whilst we are on that theme, Minister—and probably to you, Commissioner—why was the Pardus LAX12 magazine-fed action 12 gauge shotgun, which has a five shot

detachable magazine and has all the appearance of an assault rifle, not similarly placed in the list of prohibited weapons or weapons that cannot be obtained without a prohibited weapons licence?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am not as familiar with that firearm as the previous one. I can take that on notice for you and give you a fulsome answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Perhaps the Commissioner is aware of the significant numbers of this extremely dangerous-looking thing, which largely simulates an assault rifle. Are you aware of that and the numbers being imported into New South Wales?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Point of order: I think it is important to clarify that all questions are to the Minister and it is the Minister's right to determine how he will answer them, whether he refers it to the Commissioner or takes it on notice, as he has just done. It is important that the questions be addressed to the Minister.

Mr TROY GRANT: Mr Shoebridge, as I answered the previous question regarding what considerations are deemed, I have every confidence that that determination and consideration was given. I will take that on notice to give you a fulsome answer as to why that particular firearm that you have identified was not considered the same as the previous one.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many of these shotguns are there registered in New South Wales?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that on notice. I do not have that information off the top of my head.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Through you, Minister, to the Commissioner. Commissioner, you said that the consolidation of local area commands was about reducing expensive higher-ranked officers largely—was that how I was to read your answer?—so as to be able to redeploy those resources.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will let the Commissioner answer that question but I do not think that is how he phrased the answer. It was that he is looking at opportunities in relation to consolidation of superintendent positions to free up the ability to put more boots on the ground.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Commissioner can speak for himself. He said they were expensive resources and you are reallocating that to frontline staff. That was the Commissioner's answer.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The question is to the Minister and the Minister is answering.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It definitely was not to you, Catherine. So, Minister?

The CHAIR: Are you talking a point of order?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes.

The CHAIR: You need to say that.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Point of order.

The CHAIR: What is the point of order?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The point of order is that the questions were all to be directed to the Minister and that the member is interrupting the Minister trying to say he was not asking the Minister the question.

The CHAIR: He said "through the Minister".

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: But in fact the question is directed to the Minister. I think it is an important part of procedure that should be upheld.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There is no rule in budget estimates that questions have to be directed through the Minister. The Minister can choose to take them if he wishes, but there is no rule of budget estimates that goes the way the member says.

Mr TROY GRANT: I am trying to satisfy everyone with both myself and the Commissioner answering for you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am comfortable with that. Until we got the interruption it was all going well.

Mr TROY GRANT: Re-engineering the potential consideration of any consolidation is not based on a premise of any efficiency or expense in relation to one rank of police officer being more costly than another. He

was making the point that there are superintendents and whether the number of them in a particular area is the most efficient way for the policing response to occur, or better utilisation of more constables for that policing response if any consolidations occur. I will hand over to the Commissioner.

Mr FULLER: I spoke about consolidations, I spoke about proper ratios for senior police to manage, and at the moment we do not have a consistent approach to what a senior management team—a superintendent and six inspectors and a senior unsworn officer—manages. The ability of merging and deleting one of those teams notionally is that we turn all of those positions back into constable positions. So you will have a superintendent and a team running on average around 250 police, which is a suitable number. At the moment some of those teams are running under 100 staff and I do not think that that is value for money. If there is an opportunity to put more police on the beat essentially, I think that is a good outcome for everybody.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So, Commissioner, do I take it from that that local area commands which have constable numbers of 100 or less are the ones that are being targeted with potential amalgamations?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that question first of all and then hand to the Commissioner. The Commissioner is outlining that that is just one consideration that he is looking at in the factors. There are other factors, that the majority of the smaller commands—Mudgee, in my own electorate, would be one; it has a superintendent with around 80 staff; Darling River, which is the Bourke area, would be another one with around the same if not slightly more; Castlereagh, which is like Walgett, they are similar, but there are then other factors—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It was not a request for a list, Minister.

Mr TROY GRANT: I am giving you examples to help put context to my answer. They are some examples where there are additional issues—distance, that Mr Borsak referred to, geography, specialist issues within the commands. Darling River and Castlereagh obviously have high Aboriginal populations and are remote areas, so there are a number of factors. This re-engineering and any considerations about consolidation are not a cost-saving measure; it is about an effective and appropriate police response and trying to get the balance right from a command level as well as an operational level.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many deputy commissioner positions are there now in the force—substantive positions?

Mr FULLER: There are currently five, and one of those at the moment is a civilian level position. So four sworn deputies and there will soon be one civilian deputy level.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Were there not plans to have six under the prior commissioner?

Mr FULLER: My understanding was, reflecting back on the budget papers, that it was always five—certainly from last year. I am not sure what the previous commissioner had in mind, however.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So if you are anxious about getting more frontline staff, how does expanding the number of extremely expensive deputy commissioner positions with all of their attendant staff marry with the reduction of senior staff at a more grassroots local area command?

Mr TROY GRANT: The construct of the executive was done in consultation with world's best practice for the way that the executive is structured. Previous to the chain you had deputy commissioner for field operations; he had direct reports of approximately 12,000 out of the 16,000 police in New South Wales, which was not the most effective way to provide that direct reporting to realise best outcomes for policing. When you talk about the add-on staff for the executive, it is a perception that they have a lot of staff but they do not—that is a fallacy; they do not have a big office of—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You might give us the cost of all those Deputy Commissioner officers and staff.

Mr TROY GRANT: Absolutely; happy to take that on notice. Each deputy does not have a Chief of Staff, executive officer?

Mr FULLER: And a personal assistant.

Mr TROY GRANT: So three.

Mr FULLER: A number of those positions have been downgraded.

Mr TROY GRANT: They have three.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: In a recent case, the Police v Delforce, which was struck out last week, police conducted a two- to three-year investigation into alleged uses of surveillance cameras and publication of animal cruelty footage that was obtained. The investigation included obtaining much telephone metadata, many bank records, an interstate search warrant, and submitting evidence for forensic analysis by private experts, among other things. How many investigations into animal cruelty have been so thorough and involved the elements just mentioned?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that question on notice, Mr Pearson, I do not have that information at hand.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: Why did the police not investigate and prosecute the animal cruelty offences that were exposed and documented by the surveillance in their own brief of evidence against Delforce, just as the Queensland police did with evidence that was gathered in a similar way, that is, without permission regarding live baiting.

Mr TROY GRANT: Again, that specific matter is not familiar to me. I will take that part of the question on notice. I am happy to inform you that the RSPCA is responsible for initiating court proceedings and arranging its own legal representation at court when prosecuting defended animal cruelty matters relating to breaches of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012. It is my understanding, and I am informed, that towards the end of 2016 the RSPCA requested assistance from the NSW Police Force in prosecuting animal cruelty matters.

I am advised that the NSW Police Force considered that request and discussions are ongoing, and have been held between the NSW Police Force and the RSPCA, being the lead agency. Police prosecutors, once a matter is brought, undertake the bulk of the work in our local courts and have a statutory authority to appear in these court proceedings on behalf of police informants, being the RSPCA in the examples that you cite. Despite this, I am confident that the NSW Police Force and the RSPCA will continue to work together to investigate these types of matters.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: The police have exactly the same powers, if not more, than the RSPCA, has including being able to obtain a warrant. But I will ask a question that relates to the importance of the police taking animal cruelty matters very seriously. Research in psychology and criminology shows that many people who commit acts of cruelty to animals, then move on to fellow humans. For example, Robert Ressler said, "Murderers ... very often start out by killing and torturing animals as kids." Clearly, this is a marker for what is called the "cycle of violence". There are often situations where police have been called or officials have been called to a property in regard to cruelty to animals and yet later it is divulged that crimes against children and women occurred in the same dwelling. Given the proven strong links between animal abuse, child abuse, domestic violence and homicides, including serial killing, what education and awareness training is provided to police at the Police Academy in relation to this?

Mr TROY GRANT: In general terms, to answer the first part of your question, the NSW Police Force works with a range of agencies—Fire and Rescue, and the Rural Fire Service [RFS] in relation to arsonists, for example. The RSPCA is the lead agency in the investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty matters, but it does have a strong relationship with the NSW Police Force and that is continuing. If there is intelligence and/or facts that become known by the police prosecutors who usually take these matters before the court, there is already a relationship for that intelligence to be shared and for it to be factored into police intelligence and any relevant criminal investigations and public safety issues. The second part of your question regarding the training component, I am happy to take that on notice and provide you with a fulsome answer.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: Considering that the police have the same powers, if not more powers under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and that it is the only criminal Act where the main administration is a charitable organisation, does the Minister agree that it is time that the police became the major administrator, investigator and prosecutor of animal cruelty matters, rather than a poorly resourced charitable organisation?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am satisfied with the arrangements that are in place, with the strong support of the RSPCA by the NSW Police Force in appropriate cases and circumstances.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The strength figures, authorised and actual, as of 31 May 2017 show that in the south-west metropolitan region all sections were under strength with 10 of them being more than 10 under strength, including 15 at Bankstown and 15 at Macquarie Fields. Given these figures, are you not concerned with what is happening in the south-west region?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am concerned with every region in New South Wales to ensure they have the staffing and resources that they need. The Commissioner has the role for the allocation, not I, but I have every

confidence in the Commissioner that he is deploying his resources where they are needed. But in addition to that, as we have articulated, the re-engineering process with the utilisation of the workforce optimisation model are the greatest tools and opportunity that the Commissioner has to get the staffing right in every area of New South Wales, and the south-west metropolitan area is a very important one, given the diversity of policing challenges that exist there. The authorised strength for the Police Force is 16,757 police officers as of August this year. We are very proud to have added 951 positions to the NSW Police Force since December 2011 and will continue to make that investment.

The Government's commitment is to boost the authorised strength of the police force to 16,795 over the term of this Government and the re-engineering process, and the Workforce Optimisation Solution for Policing [WASP] will help us determine the appropriate additional resources above and beyond that into the future. The simple fact is that some of the major crime types are at their lowest levels in two decades. We are very proud of the NSW Police Force and the broader community in achieving that outcome. But the reality is that there are still many challenges out there, and police resourcing will always be the best it can be and the Commissioner, I know, is actively looking at all opportunities, all the time, to continue to resource the areas you have mentioned.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You say that resources are going where they are needed and major crime is at an all-time low. I count 17 incidents with firearms in that region and St George. And St George is also 17 under. Given that the South West Metropolitan Region is 131 under strength and St George is 17 under and there would appear to be major crime going on in the region. Why is that happening in those regions and not replicated, on the figures I am looking at, in the other metropolitan regions?

Mr FULLER: It is fluid and the reality is that people transfer out, people get promoted, people retire—there is a myriad of reasons why one sees churn and this is why, in some years, places are at 95-plus per cent occupancy and in other years that goes down. Every time a new position comes on from Government it creates another vacancy in itself. We recruit three times a year and one is always trying to forecast, as best as possible, to hit the magic 16,757, but to keep 100 per cent occupancy at commands would mean that one would have to stop transfers, stop promotions and stop people getting sick or resigning. I acknowledge those statistics and I guess it will be an ongoing challenge for me with re-engineering, in trying to reduce those as much as possible.

Mr TROY GRANT: The areas that you refer to also have access to significant numbers of specialist resources within the metropolitan region—specialist domestic violence and/or crime squad personnel, specialist police from within easy reach—and those resources are quite significant. That is not the only access to numbers as they ebb and flow, as the commissioner referred to; there are additional resources accessible to those commands when these crime issues occur.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Let us go to the argument about churn. You have 10 of those sections in south-west region. If you go to North West Metropolitan Region there is two. There is a consistency in south-west metropolitan—not just churn—but every single section, other than head office, is under strength. That is not reflected in other metropolitan regions. Local knowledge would tell you that South West Metropolitan Region and St George are areas where major crime is a serious issue.

Mr FULLER: If you look at the size of those commands and the number of probationary constables those commands are allocated, the metropolitan gets the lion's share of the probationary constable allocations. There are region enforcement squads on their doorstep such as State Crime Command and counterterrorist command. It is not a lack of resources. If you summed up the police in metropolitan Sydney, including mounted units, dog units, and other assets, you will note that local area commands do not have walls around them and it is much more fluid than that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I accept the argument that there are other specialist units—for example, Flemington has the homicide squad. They would deal with homicides across a wide range. In terms of policing on the street you have, 1,975 in South West Metropolitan Region, yet North West Metropolitan Region has 2,026. It includes areas such as Ku-ring-gai, Hawkesbury, Holroyd and a range of other areas. The argument you propose that they are going where they are needed, how do you justify that based on those figures?

Mr TROY GRANT: What must also be factored in is, despite the ebb and flow of the numbers and the representation that you allude to in south-west Sydney, the work is outstanding by the police in that area regarding the crime being either stable or falling. No crime, particularly gun-related crime, is acceptable but the reason they are able to keep the crime categories stable or falling is the great work of the local police supported by additional resources available to each of those commands. We will continue to support the commissioner in those resource allocations and that will continue to drive outstanding crime results. I am proud of the efforts and achievements of the police in south-west Sydney.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Fire and Emergency Services Levy [FESL] has been a complete disaster for the Government. How will emergency services be funded now that the Government has backflipped on the FESL policy?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It saw some sense.

Mr TROY GRANT: The Fire and Emergency Services Levy is a question best directed to the Treasurer. It sits within his Ministerial portfolio and responsibilities. Each of the emergency services have been given assurances regarding their budgetary position and the arrangements for each of their agencies.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Did you have any input into the design of the FESL policies as the emergency services Minister?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is a matter for the Treasurer to answer in detail. As part of the Cabinet obviously the information that is Cabinet in confidence was brought to me in my role in that forum.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: When can the community expect to hear about the introduction of a new Fire and Emergency Services Levy?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is a question you need to direct to the Treasurer. It is not in my ministerial portfolio.

The CHAIR: Isn't that lucky.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I will ask a question for clarity regarding Queanbeyan. Minister, you indicated that there is a discussion with the local council to house the police in the local council building. When will the people of Queanbeyan know whether they will get the police station in the council building or a separate police station in Queanbeyan?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will clarify. In relation to Queanbeyan, a non-binding heads of agreement has been signed for the location of 50 Lowe Street, a multistorey development. Council will be responsible for the construction. That is the surety. NSW Police Force has agreed to lease the two lower floors of the building and fund the specialist fit-outs associated with the police station. An architect has been appointed to review and communicate base building requirements regarding that project.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is there a completion date?

Mr TROY GRANT: As soon as possible.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: A year, two years?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that on notice and get back to you when I have specific advice.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Initially there was \$15 million followed by a further \$2 million allocated. Why was the extra \$2 million needed?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will get a full answer. It is my understanding that it is in relation to the scope. We get an indicative figure of what is required, then assessment is made, there is consultation with the officers, future consideration of office space is factored in and the request comes back when the detailed discussions are understood, and an additional \$2 million was required. I will take that on notice and submit a full answer.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Alstonville police station has no permanent police officer. When are they going to get that permanent police officer?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It goes back to Labor.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr TROY GRANT: I do not have that information. The commissioner has indicated he will take that on notice and provide you with a fulsome answer.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It has been going on for some time.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Well before 2011.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The Hon. Catherine Cusack is interjecting.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that on notice, I do not have full details today. It has been a long-running issue, as pointed out by the Committee member.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I turn now to the power bills. Minister, are you aware that the State Emergency Service [SES], Rural Fire Service [RFS] and Marine Rescue NSW units have concerns regarding the increase in power prices?

Mr TROY GRANT: That issue has not been directly raised with me.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The SES, RFS and Marine Rescue NSW have not raised that they are having trouble meeting their power costs?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am happy to check but I do not believe that specific issue has been raised directly with me.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Minister, when will Oran Park and Marsden Park fire stations be operational?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will refer the question to Acting Commissioner Hamilton.

Mr HAMILTON: The land has been purchased at both of those locations, but given that growth has not occurred as quickly as originally thought the project has been deferred for a number of years. That is projected to commence in approximately two years.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: So they would not be operational for at least a few years?

Mr HAMILTON: The program will be a build of at least two years for those two locations.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have you purchased any land at Badgerys Creek for a fire station near the airport?

Mr HAMILTON: No, Oran Park is—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Oran Park is the site, is it?

Mr HAMILTON: At this point in time, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Are the fire stations at Neutral Bay, Mascot and Redfern going to stay open and operational?

Mr HAMILTON: There are no plans at this point in time to close any of those three locations.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Okay.

Mr HAMILTON: No.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: If you have no plans, that is fine, you are committing to keeping them open. Minister, how many high-rise buildings in New South Wales have been identified to contain flammable cladding?

Mr TROY GRANT: I do not have those specific figures with me. Fire and Rescue NSW are represented by a task force in relation to the cladding issue. Commissioner, do you have those figures?

Mr HAMILTON: At this point in time we have been working very closely with the parliamentary task force to deal with this. We have been given a list of 1,041 locations across New South Wales which potentially have cladding located on them. That is not to say that they do have cladding, and that is not to say that if they do have cladding they are at risk.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Of that 1,041, how many have been audited?

Mr HAMILTON: We are approaching it through a risk-based model, so through the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, which has provided a priorities listing. For us, the priority listing that we are looking at is class two and class three buildings under 25 metres. Those are residential buildings, so residential occupancy and under 25 metres. The concern is that they do not have sprinklers or there is no mandatory requirement for sprinklers in those locations.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How many of those have been audited?

Mr HAMILTON: We are ground-truthing the locations. I have not got an approximate figure for you, so I will have to take that on notice.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: If you could provide that on notice. You are saying only buildings under 25 metres?

Mr HAMILTON: At the present time we are prioritising our ground-truthing in relation to buildings and those are the ones we want to prioritise first, given that they are potentially at higher risk, that they are less than 25 metres and do not have sprinklers fitted.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Have the residents of those 1,041 properties been notified that an audit will be undertaken?

Mr HAMILTON: The task force, which is under the Minister for Planning, has notified the councils and also the individual building owners.

Mr TROY GRANT: That is a question best directed to the Minister for Planning for those details. If I can assist, Ms Voltz, in addition to Fire and Rescue NSW, the assessments are the responsibility also of other professional bodies such as the Fire Protection Associations, Engineers Australia and the Fire Protection Industry, Australasia as well.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Can you tell me how many audits they have undertaken?

Mr TROY GRANT: I cannot, because that is a question for other Ministers. I am just making you aware there are other bodies in addition to Fire and Rescue NSW.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Thank you. How many Brontos are available for an emergency response?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is a resourcing question I will ask the Acting Commissioner to answer. My understanding is that it is a fleet of 29 in aerial firefighting.

Mr HAMILTON: We have a network of aerial appliances across New South Wales, some in regional locations, some in Sydney, Newcastle, the Central Coast and the Illawarra. When you talk about Bronto appliances, we are talking now about the cherrypickers, if you like. So we have them ranging from 27 metres through to 44 metres. We also have a network of minor aerial appliances that have a reach of 15 metres. The network itself covers predominantly Sydney—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: We are really talking about the ones used for high-rise, the 40 metre ones.

Mr HAMILTON: For high-rise we have 14.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Where are they located?

Mr HAMILTON: They are located at City of Sydney, Darlinghurst, Glebe, Kogarah, Manly, Parramatta, Crows Nest, Newcastle and Wollongong. We also have service exchange vehicles, so that makes up the rest. We also have turntable ladders, which would be classed as a major as well, at Woollahra.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Are turntable ladders used for high-rise as well?

Mr HAMILTON: All of these are for high-rise. Bear in mind also that when we talk about high-rise firefighting we are talking about the internal fittings and the arrangements that are in place with the built environments. So buildings over 25 metres, such as the Docklands fire in Melbourne, are fitted with sprinkler systems. The ones under 25 metres are the ones that are not fitted with sprinklers.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Moving on to another area, Minister, how many Council of Australian Governments [COAG] counterterrorism meetings have you attended since the new Minister for Counter Terrorism was appointed?

Mr TROY GRANT: Those meetings are attended by the Minister for Counter Terrorism with the Deputy Commissioner for Counterterrorism—previously Burn, now Hudson. They then report to me.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Acting Commissioner Hamilton, how many building products have been withdrawn from sale, or have been directed to be withdrawn from sale as a result of the work of that task force?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is a question for the Minister for Fair Trading and/or the Minister for Planning.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Commissioner, are you satisfied that no new buildings are being built with flammable aluminium cladding which your staff and your team may have to deal with as a future risk? Are you satisfied no sales are being carried out as a result of the work of your task force?

Mr HAMILTON: Our task force work is to determine whether or not cladding is on the building. A technical expert needs to determine whether the cladding meets the compliance or does not meet the compliance. We have not got the skill set within our organisation to determine that and it is not a requirement.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Has it happened at the task force level?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is a question best directed to the Minister leading the task force, which is the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. They have prepared a list of priority actions and they are being implemented as we speak. The task force comprises Fire and Rescue NSW as one part, the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, the Department of Planning and Environment, the Office of Local Government, and other representatives to investigate the issue further.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Commissioner Fitzsimmons, the Central West, particularly around Bathurst, has some of the driest soil and driest vegetation conditions on record. The fire season is commencing again at a record early point, on 1 September. What additional resources have been allocated to that region and across the State more generally to deal with what might be a catastrophic fire season? I hope not, but it may be.

Mr FITZSIMMONS: Thank you, Deputy Chair. We are looking at very dry conditions across New South Wales at the moment. As you say, we have had one of the driest Julys. We have had a very dry winter. The landscape conditions are particularly dry. The Central West is not alone. We are looking at a fairly widespread geographic nature of that risk. Dynamically, as you know, we assess seasonally where the risks are and we start targeting, preparing the strategies and the ongoing investment statewide around things like improving capital infrastructure, mobile infrastructure and communications infrastructure, and technological advances have continued. There are a number of contracting arrangements, particularly in relation to high capacity aircraft that have been brought on early.

As a matter of point, we will be identifying the arrival of one of the large air tankers this week, coming online at the end of this week—tomorrow—which is indicative of the investment we have been able to have with the funding going forward. Again, this year we have got another \$20 million-odd going into buildings and over \$30 million going into new and refurbished firefighting appliances around New South Wales. In particular, beneficiaries in the Central West include a big investment in relation to appliances and infrastructure projects and, going to the heart of the appliances in the Region West area, we are looking at at least 27 new appliances at a value of more than \$6.5 million. There are an additional four vehicles. We have 28 used and/or refurbished appliances going into Region West this year. More than \$4 million worth of building programs are going on across 19 projects. Some of the particular areas include 12 new brigade stations, toilet facilities, upgrades, and all sorts of things.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Commissioner, I am happy for that sort of list to be provided on notice, but the nub of it is this: given the tinderbox conditions across the State that we are now seeing, are you satisfied that there are adequate resources in the Rural Fire Services (RFS) to meet the looming threat?

Mr FITZSIMMONS: I think it is fair to say that resourcing and capability for the RFS and, indeed, the constituent players in the firefighting effort across New South Wales, principally Fire and Rescue NSW and National Parks and Wildlife Service, under the coordinated fire fighting arrangements, collectively, has never been better than it is today.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We have an increasingly drying climate, and climate change is going to make these matters worse. Are you satisfied that now, notwithstanding the fact that you might have the largest amount of resources available, you will have adequate resources available; and have all of your reasonable requests been met?

Mr FITZSIMMONS: Yes, that is fair to say.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, there was a tragic shooting death in the last 24 hours out of Kelso, which is the third fatal police shooting in just the last month. How many fatal shootings have there been in the last 12 months, and have you spoken with the Commissioner about what strategies and reviews are in place to ensure that these deaths are minimised?

Mr TROY GRANT: Every one of those shootings is tragic, Mr Shoebridge. I would like to express my sympathy for all involved, and, obviously, my thoughts are with not only those who are connected to those who have lost their lives, but also with the police officers involved in each of those tragic events.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is the view of the Committee as well, but there have been three fatal shootings in the last month. That is distressing.

Mr TROY GRANT: I am happy to answer your question. I am trying to answer your question. It is very distressing, and I give you the insight that, having been a police officer for 22 years myself, I can very confidently say that I have never met any police officer who has ever wanted to find themselves in the situation where they have had to take somebody's life. Each of the incidents is being investigated appropriately through the critical investigation framework. The three that we are talking about in the last five weeks are also, in addition, being overseen by the newly formed Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. I am advised that the commission has been present at Kelso, fulfilling the legislative role that I created when I introduced the body into the Parliament. Each of the incidents needs to run its course with the independent critical investigation, and then with the subject coronial matters, and I do not think it is appropriate, until each of the matters is resolved, to comment specifically about each of them.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I did not ask you to comment specifically on them, but I did ask you how many fatal shootings there have been in the last 12 months.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You do not have to hand the figure of how many people have been killed through shooting in the last 12 months by the NSW Police Force?

Mr TROY GRANT: No, I do not. I am happy to take that. I want to give you an accurate and fulsome answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Given the fact that the Central Station shooting was almost 20 years to the day after the fatal shooting of Roni Levi on Bondi Beach, and given that, at least at first appearance, it looks like mental illness was a factor in the Central Station shooting, with a mentally ill man in not totally dissimilar circumstances to Roni Levi, what additional training has there been and what additional attention has there been amongst the NSW Police to ensure that mentally-ill people are not tragically shot by police in similar circumstances to Roni Levi?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will answer the question and then I will ask the Commissioner to provide commentary. I do not accept the premise of your question that the recent shooting at the train station mirrors the Levi one.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I accept your point. There are substantial differences.

Mr TROY GRANT: Substantial differences.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I accept that. The only commonality that I am aware of is the appearance of mental illness. I accept that.

Mr TROY GRANT: Specifically to your question on the mental illness components of these police shootings, police are commonly first on the scene when there is a crisis situation, and, too often, mental illness is a factor in these incidents. Having the education and awareness required to deal with these incidents is essential, and it is recognised in improving the outcomes for people suffering with a mental illness, and in ensuring community safety. That is only heightened in some of the circumstances that you refer to. We do take very seriously the need for our police to have the appropriate education and awareness required to deal with these incidents, but even with the best training, operational police sometimes must make difficult decisions about managing an individual's behaviour when they are threatening the safety of others, the officers, and, at times, even themselves. Our dedicated officers do their very best. I have been in circumstances myself, and I can tell you that it is extremely difficult.

In relation to the training, since February 2014 the NSW Police Force has been rolling out mental health intervention workshops for all front-line police. As of 30 June 2017, 15,960 officers have completed this training package. The course will continue to be delivered to every subsequent new recruit class that goes through the police academy, so as to maintain 100 per cent training capability. The workshop is in addition to a more intensive, specialised mental health training package that police have pioneered and have been delivering now for some years. Over 2,100 officers have completed the course, in which police are educated to identify behaviours in the field indicative of mental health, and provides them with additional tools and understanding, and, in particular, communication strategies, which, in my experience, is the key component. The course also has elements of risk assessments and teaches skills to de-escalate, and intervention techniques.

I am pleased to advise the Committee that we have also had other jurisdictions acknowledging the training that I have outlined to you. It is certainly innovative, and the NSW Police Force has been working with the Australian Capital Territory, New Zealand, and, most recently, Western Australia in their adoption of our four-day training course. I am very proud of that and I am grateful to the Commissioner for doing that. While much has much been achieved, we recognise there is still much more to do.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The concern that has been raised is that the workshop, which you said some 15,000 police have done, is a very narrow, summary process; but the four-day intensive course, which only some 2,100 police have done, is the critical resource. What proportion of frontline police have done the four-day intensive course?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that on notice and give you a fulsome answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is it the plan of the NSW Police Force to ensure that all frontline police do the four-day intensive course, particularly given that we have this repeating theme of people with mental illness being shot?

Mr FULLER: We will continue to roll out the four-day course. It is an important course. We also have a mental health unit, where police work closely with Health, which is important. Looking at some of the new strategies around the fixated-persons unit, again, it is about early intervention with other agencies, not just taking the response to the issue. I am also looking at strategies where you have early intervention with people with mental illness, rather than waiting for the call that puts us in these challenging situations. I agree that the four-day course is better than the one-day course, but a four-day course for 16,000 people takes some time to roll out. But we are still committed to providing that course.

The CHAIR: Are you aware of the New South Wales Government's model litigant policy? Why does the New South Wales Firearms Registry not comply but maliciously appeals decisions made in favour of firearms owners by the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal and keeps going until it wins?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am aware of that grievance and as I move across regional New South Wales I have had that grievance conveyed to me. I will take that question on notice and give you a fulsome reply.

The CHAIR: Regarding the upcoming review of the firearms regulation, how do you justify a proposal to give the commissioner's delegate at the New South Wales Firearms Registry the additional powers to refuse a licence or permit "whether or not the person has been prosecuted or convicted of an offence"?

Mr TROY GRANT: Would you ask that question again, please?

The CHAIR: Regarding an additional discretionary ground for refusal, how do you justify the proposal to give the commissioner's delegate at the New South Wales Firearms Registry additional powers to refuse a licence or permit "whether or not the person has been prosecuted or convicted of an offence"?

Mr TROY GRANT: We removed a reference to an additional Police Commissioner discretionary power to refuse licences or permits where the applicant has not been prosecuted or convicted of an offence. That is the change we made.

The CHAIR: Would you say that again, please?

Mr TROY GRANT: In relation to the change, we removed a reference to an additional Police Commissioner discretionary power to refuse licences or permits where the applicant has not been prosecuted or convicted of an offence.

The CHAIR: You are saying it has been removed?

Mr TROY GRANT: In that scope.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In the delegation.

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes.

The CHAIR: Regarding monthly reporting, can you explain how, in clause 103, changing the annual reporting to monthly reporting for shooting clubs on each club member's membership status and personal details will lead to a reduction in costs, in red tape and in the administrative burdens to those clubs?

Mr TROY GRANT: It has remained annual.

The CHAIR: That has been removed too?

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes.

The CHAIR: My next question was going to be that if it is done monthly how would the registry cope.

Mr TROY GRANT: That is not required now. For your information, I think it is important to know that we had over 400 submissions and we took a lot of those on board and made the appropriate changes.

The CHAIR: The Bradshaw report on rural crime paints a damning picture of lack of action by current and previous enforcement activities, with over \$11 million worth of sheep and cattle stolen from New South Wales' farmers over the five years to 2015. Why was the report not released for over 12 months?

Mr TROY GRANT: Because we wanted to consider it in full. It was the first time a police Minister initiated this report, and I am proud to be that Minister. For as long as I have been in the job since 1988 through to now, there has been a problem in relation to the under-reporting of rural crime and also the recognition of the impacts of rural crime. I commissioned former Assistant Commissioner Bradshaw to do this report. I am very proud of the fact that this is the first time a Cabinet has acted in response as comprehensively as we have. We are also continuing to work through the rural crime working group that we have established with the NSW Farmers Association, the Department of Primary Industries and the Game Unit.

The review was in two parts essentially. One was legislative options that Mr Bradshaw recommended we should consider from the community feedback and the many consultations that he had. He is not a lawyer, with all due respect. What he was proposing needed to be properly assessed from a legal point of view to make sure that what was being recommended and what was ultimately adopted had standing in law as well as being effective and addressing the issue. The second component of the report was in relation to the resourcing and responses to rural crime from a NSW Police Force point of view. We wanted to establish the re-engineering task force, which a few weeks ago was formally established. Deputy Commissioner Worboys, after his appointment, was given the report to commence that component of the Bradshaw review. That is why it has been released now, because of the two components of the report.

The CHAIR: That leads me to my next question in relation to the Bradshaw report. Will you allocate funds to enable establishment of a fully resourced and dedicated stock squad before March 2019?

Mr TROY GRANT: Deputy Commissioner Worboys, as part of his component of the re-engineering process, is working towards recommendations and options in relation to rural crime that he will present to the Commissioner and the re-engineering task force when that is completed.

The CHAIR: My next question gets back to the regulations that have been reviewed. Regarding transportation of firearms, can you explain how, in clause 148, the proposed requirement to transport firearms in a locked container secured to or within the vehicle is justified when the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data show that there were only six firearms stolen from private motor vehicles in eight years between January 2010 and March 2017?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am pleased to advise you that that was widely brought to my attention during the consultation process and that has been changed.

The CHAIR: Since the Liberal-Nationals Government introduced the infamous ammo bill in mid-2012, it has been widely and justifiably criticised not only by firearms owners but also by the Privacy Commissioner in 2015. Has the information collected on ammunition purchases ever assisted NSW Police in leading to a conviction for a firearms crime?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that question on notice. We did make some recent changes to the Firearms and Weapons Legislation Amendment Bill in relation to the details concerning the purchaser's address.

The CHAIR: That only related to removing the address of the person off the register.

Mr TROY GRANT: Of the purchaser, that is correct. As I said, I will take the rest of the question on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The New South Wales Government accepted all the recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry into the Bowraville murders, and that acceptance was in June 2015. Has Recommendation 1 been implemented? That recommendation was:

That the NSW Police Force review all of its policies, procedures and training programs that relate to Aboriginal people, and update them where necessary to ensure they are consistent with best cultural practice. This should be done in consultation with Aboriginal people and those with relevant expertise, such as Detective Inspector Jubelin, Dr Diana Eades and Dr Tracey Westerman.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will ask the Commissioner to assist with this answer.

Mr FULLER: The information I have indicates that many are underway and some have been completed, but if I could perhaps come back at a later date with a more detailed response?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am happy for that, and could it also address Recommendation 2, which was the case study for training.?

Mr FULLER: Yes.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: At the moment there is a coronial inquiry into deaths after the floods and serious storms that hit Dungog. A woman, Robyn MacDonald, aged 68, drowned after refusing to evacuate because she did not want to leave behind her companion animals. Given that RSPCA Australia estimates that approximately 63 per cent of Australian households own companion animals—one of the highest rates of companion animal ownership in the world—it can be confidently stated that undertaking the responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of a companion animal is a mainstream activity. Given the Minister's responsibilities as set out in section 10 of the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act, you are responsible for ensuring adequate measures are taken by government agencies to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. That includes an actual or imminent occurrence such as fire or flood or storm which endangers or threatens to endanger the safety and health of persons or animals in the State.

Does the department have any policies or procedures in place to ensure that evacuees do not have to abandon their animals due to a lack of facilities provided by emergency services during natural disasters? This is particularly important in terms of people who put themselves at risk of dying or being harmed. If there were a capacity for them to be able to take their companion animals with them we would save not only that person's life but also the lives of the animals. There was an inquiry into this issue when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans when people were arrested and taken against their will. The inquiry came to the finding that is in the best interests of human protection as well as animal protection for emergency vehicles to have the capacity to take animals as well. I do not mean horses at this point in time.

Mr TROY GRANT: There were many parts to the question and I appreciate the question. Given the parts that relate to an individual's death, that assertion obviously has been given in evidence in the coronial inquiry, but the Coroner's findings have not been handed down. I will not be commenting on that until that has been completed, but I take your point. I know Dungog very well. It is the ancestral home of my family. The impact it has had on the community has been immense and those deaths are absolutely tragic. In relation to the broader componentry of your question, I will introduce Fergus O'Connor from the Office of Emergency Management to assist.

Mr O'CONNOR: I probably cannot comment on Dungog specifically.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: The broader issue is fine.

Mr O'CONNOR: The commissioners may wish to talk about particular measures they have in place. I can comment from the perspective of how we design and operate evacuation centres. Evacuation centres operate for a very brief period around the height of an event. We have a range of agencies that we have primed and that are ready to operate in evacuation centres to support the public, whether that is with immediate housing, clothing or food. We have arrangements with Primary Industries to come into the evacuation centres to assist with animals. That goes for local emergency evacuation centres right up to the State level emergency evacuation centre, which is slated to be run out of the Olympic Park facility at Homebush. We chose that particularly because of the Royal Agricultural Society facility that you may be aware of there. Specifically, if we had to move thousands of people from somewhere in Sydney or the Blue Mountains, for instance, there is particular provision there to house quite a large number of animals. That is what we do in terms of evacuation centres. Some of the commissioners may wish to say something as well.

Mr SMETHURST: Obviously the best form of dealing with the situations that you have identified is preparation, with the community understanding what their options are, where they can go and the facilities available. The next stage is obviously the warnings. Given adequate warnings, people have the opportunity to move to those areas in an effective way. As the Minister said, Dungog is ongoing. That will conclude tomorrow and the Coroner will put her findings forward in due course, but when you are dealing with events like flash flooding it becomes particularly difficult. Again, early planning and taking preventative action obviously is going to be the best form.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: Just for clarification, I will not go into the details of the Dungog incident but the issue is the notion or understanding of a person that they cannot take their companion animals with them. They make a decision to remain because of that view or understanding. If that message were different, people would move and evacuate with their animals knowing that the emergency services would assist.

Mr TROY GRANT: Your point is well made. What we will learn out of the Dungog hearings may well inform and help us with additional community education in the preparation for any type of emergencies, as well as through what happens, to give the community reassurance that there are capabilities through recovery centres and other aspects of emergency management as well. Thank you for the question.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Who currently chairs the Cabinet Standing Committee on Counter Terrorism?

Mr TROY GRANT: The Chair is the Premier and the counter terrorism Minister chairs on her behalf while she is present.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: While she is present?

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Who represents New South Wales on the Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee?

Mr TROY GRANT: Deputy Commissioner Dave Hudson.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Deputy Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet no longer goes?

Mr TROY GRANT: Sorry, I thought you meant from the ministry.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The deputy commissioner of special operations attends, yes?

Mr TROY GRANT: Deputy Commissioner Hudson from Investigations and Counter Terrorism from the NSW Police Force attends. I can give you a fulsome list of other attendees, but Department of Premier and Cabinet representation is there, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: According to secureNSW the representation is the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. That is still the case?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is my understanding, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Federal Government Review of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery for a safer Australia makes the point that the lessons that should inform an effective model to counterterrorism are the need for clear and consistent political direction, and ministerial and senior executive accountability. Given that the response across all States is led by police, why would you as Minister for Police not be attending the law and justice meetings?

Mr TROY GRANT: The law and justice meeting I attend, as well as the Minister for Counter Terrorism.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And who attends the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council?

Mr TROY GRANT: I attend, in addition to the Minister for Counter Terrorism. We both attend.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And the Joint Meeting of Attorneys-General, Justice and Police Ministers?

Mr TROY GRANT: I attend with the Attorney General.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: The Review of Australia's Counter Terrorism Machinery for a safer Australia states:

Based on conceptual and structural considerations, the Review concluded that the creation of a new department is not a necessary or practical way to strengthen our coordination of CT activities.

Why did your Government create a separate counterterrorism ministry?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is a question best directed to the Premier, given it was her determination. But my view is that it is an additional resource given the seriousness of counterterrorism and the fact that it impacts across the whole of government. It is not solely a policing issue. There is obviously lots of connectivity with Education. The Minister for Multiculturalism is a stakeholder, as are many other Ministers. It is an additional resource that Premier Berejiklian created in this role to work on a policy level and legislative level with the Attorney General, for example, to ensure New South Wales is best positioned to combat counterterrorism. There is much effort and much work that needs to go across all of government and all of community in this space—education, policy, cooperation between agencies—and Minister Elliott takes a vital role in doing that work. The intelligence and operational component of it sits between the Attorney General and me legislatively. There are many hands doing lots of important work in this space.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: How often do you meet with the Minister for Counter Terrorism in your capacity as the Minister for Police?

Mr TROY GRANT: Regularly. I will take that on notice to give you some exact figures, but I see him at least weekly.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Specifically on the issue of terrorism?

Mr TROY GRANT: We talk all the time. I am obviously a regional member, so we talk on the phone as well as meet face to face. I do not know if I have an exact record, but we talk regularly and all the time.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But I did ask "in your capacity as the Minister for Police".

Mr TROY GRANT: Sorry?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: In your capacity as the Minister for Police.

Mr TROY GRANT: The answer is the same. In my capacity as the Minister for Police, I meet with him regularly and I also talk to him regularly on the phone.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Discussing counterterrorism—that is what the question is about.

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes. I do not have an exact number of times I have had a conversation with him, but it is regular, it is a lot and I talk to Deputy Commissioner Hudson as required and regularly, as does Minister Elliott talk to Deputy Commissioner Hudson.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Are you responsible for the coordination of agencies at such State-significant landmarks as the Opera House?

Mr TROY GRANT: Could you repeat that question?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Are you responsible for the coordination of agencies with regard to counterterrorism around such State-significant landmarks as the Opera House? Are you responsible for that coordination of agencies in terms of counterterrorism measures? Is that your responsibility or is it that of the Minister for Counter Terrorism?

Mr TROY GRANT: Are you talking about the operational response? There are different components to it.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Who is coordinating it?

Mr TROY GRANT: If it is operationally, it is through the NSW Police Force. It is a lead in relation to that, depending on what aspect you are talking about. If it is education or funding, the arts Minister has a role, obviously. If it's a funding-related issue—it depends on what component of it. It is not a—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: In terms of the counterterrorism role.

Mr TROY GRANT: There are many aspects to counterterrorism.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: There are indeed.

Mr TROY GRANT: That is why there are many people. Minister Elliott in his role plays a very important role in that coordination when it comes to policy, legislation and coordinating across agencies from that level. Operationally, through the NSW Police Force under me, we do those levels of coordination with the Sydney council, with the Sydney Opera House Trust, as in that example you have given.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Sorry—who would coordinate with the Sydney Opera House Trust? Would that be you or the Minister for Counter Terrorism?

Mr TROY GRANT: If it is operational, it is me and the NSW Police Force. If it is from a policy or—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What else would it be other than operational for counterterrorism at the Sydney Opera House?

Mr TROY GRANT: Could be a policy or a funding issue.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: For example, if there needed to be a request for the installation of bollards at the Sydney Opera House, that would be made by the Minister for Counter Terrorism? Is that what you are saying?

Mr TROY GRANT: No. That is the asset owner's responsibility regarding that, and they would then talk to City of Sydney council, for example, the Minister for the Arts, the Treasurer. They would talk to the NSW Police Force on the technical advice to the appropriateness or what to do. It is a multiagency effort.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But have you as Minister for Police in New South Wales made any request to Treasury for additional security measures such as bollards in the Sydney metropolitan area?

Mr TROY GRANT: That would be, that entity being the Sydney Opera House—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I am not talking about the Sydney Opera House. In the Sydney metropolitan area, have you made any request to Treasury for additional security measures such as bollards?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is not my role. That is the role of the individual who is in charge of that land or who has tenure over it. So if it is a business or a Sydney council, a metropolitan council or an institution like the Opera House, it is their responsibility to make that application.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But the police complained to the City of Sydney that it had not been approached and consulted. The question is: What role does the police have?

Mr TROY GRANT: That is not true at all. That is a misrepresented view.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What happened?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You can tell us: Why was it a misrepresentation?

Mr TROY GRANT: The NSW Police Force, as it does with lots of agencies and in this case the Sydney city council, was working together in relation to the placement of security bollards and/or measures, and as part of that process there was ongoing discussion in relation to threat levels, what would be appropriate, what would not be appropriate. That work was still ongoing. The decision by the Lord Mayor to place those bollards in that form in that type at that time was not part of that consultation. She did not advise the police of that action. There was broader work going on more holistically.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But you stated before it is a responsibility of the local entity.

Mr TROY GRANT: Which is the Sydney council in that regard.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But then you complained when it took the action. You said, "It should have come and seen us." So what is it? You cannot have it both ways. You cannot complain when they do not come and see you and then say you do not have responsibility.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Anyhow, let us move on.

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Hansard will not get that.

Mr TROY GRANT: I am not sure whether it was a statement or a question. I did—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The answers are inconsistent.

Mr TROY GRANT: No, it is not inconsistent. I got asked a question: Was I or was the NSW Police Force consulted about the Lord Mayor's decision to place those bollards or the concrete barriers in Martin Place at that time? The answer is no, we were not.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: No, that was not the question that was asked.

Mr TROY GRANT: That was a question asked of me when I gave my response: No. The Sydney city council then misled the media and said, "We have been in consultation with the police," and that was on a broader approach and opportunities for additional protection, use of bollards and other items more broadly, but it was not—nor was I informed of the decision.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: To hang the Lord Mayor out to dry with half an answer like that, on such an important thing, was outrageous.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: What other local councils are you discussing the installation of bollards with?

Mr TROY GRANT: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: What other local councils are you discussing the installation of bollards with?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that on notice and ask the counter-terrorism command, which performs that role.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: For my own clarification, the Hon. Lynda Voltz asked a question about who coordinates in instances of potential terrorism. Who initiates the coordination of those agencies?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that on notice and provide you the documentation that clearly articulates that for you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I am curious as to whether it is you as Minister for Police or the Minister for Counter Terrorism.

Mr TROY GRANT: The documentation I will take on notice to provide to you will explain that clearly for you. I have explained it: It depends on what aspect—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: This is a very important question. That is a very important scenario. If there were an incident tomorrow, who will then jump to coordinate? Is it the Minister for Police, the Minister for—

Mr TROY GRANT: If there is an incident? The NSW Police Force.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes. No, not an incident with the NSW Police Force. If there is a potential—

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: No, he is saying the NSW Police Force coordinates it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The NSW Police Force coordinates it, did you say?

Mr TROY GRANT: If there is an incident, yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: So it will initiate—

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes. That is an operational response, as I articulated earlier.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you. I go now to the State Emergency Service's [SES] vehicles. As you know, many of them have now aged. Some are 10 to 15 years old. Will you commit to provision of funding required by the SES to replace its ageing and dangerous fleet of vehicles and protect the SES volunteers and the wider community?

Mr TROY GRANT: I appreciate the question. I have already answered this question and recently updated the Parliament on this issue, but I am very happy to update the Committee today. The New South Wales Government is ensuring NSW SES works with Infrastructure NSW, Treasury and the Department of Justice to develop the next stage of the NSW SES operational fleet replacement strategy. As Minister, I have requested additional support be made available to our SES agency staff to finalise this critical work. A senior officer from the department of financial services and the New South Wales Government's fleet specialist is currently working with SES to assist refining its business case to support the funding bid to support the next stage of its funding acquisition. I have also requested additional support be made available to the SES Commissioner to assist him to develop and implement the SES organisational transformation so as to best ensure it has the framework best for the future.

I took the steps to organise additional support to best ensure the agency has the best support available as it became clear to me that the agency required additional resources to finalise the strategy to the best quality in a timely way and to ensure it has the best framework to work from the future. This followed a five-year transition strategy where the fleet, by way of vehicles, was moved from local government ownership to the ownership of the NSW SES. The strategy going forward is to include the ongoing procurement of vehicles. In the first transition strategy this included the acquisition of 181 new vehicles as well as the existing fleet. The second stage of the strategy will also include the procurement and replacement of vessels and trailers as part of the fleet. Funding has been provided in this budget for the maintenance of all fleet for the SES.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, my time has run out but I will come back to this.

Mr TROY GRANT: I hope I have answered it in full for you.

The CHAIR: Recently we discovered, through an answer received to a Government Information (Public Access)—GIPA—Act application, that the New South Wales Firearms Registry gave advice that the Adler shotgun was "new technology". Can the Minister provide the empirical evidence upon which this opinion was based?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that question on notice.

The CHAIR: Minister, can you advise when the paintball industry regulation will be removed from the Firearms Act and regulations?

Mr TROY GRANT: I acknowledge the Chair's passion and advocacy for the change in regulation, and I support that advocacy. I agree with the concerns that have been raised by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party about whether the Firearms Registry is best suited to the task of regulating the activity of paintball, which is a sport that involves non-lethal paintballs or pellets and does not involve weapons firing live bullets. There is a further concern that the classification of paintball markers as firearms results in the availability of disproportionate penalties under the Firearms Act that do not recognise the inherent and obvious differences between a firearm that fires bullets and a paintball marker. The Government recognises that these are legitimate and reasonable concerns and we intend to remove paintball industry regulation from the Firearms Registry and the Firearms Act.

However, the nature of the alternative regulatory environment will be a matter of ongoing consultation with stakeholders. That is why the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, through Minister Kean, has recently started a consultation process by contacting industry stakeholders to invite them to a workshop, which will involve an initial discussion about an alternative regulatory regime. I would encourage any interested party to contact the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation to make their views known on this issue. I understand that the roundtable workshop or first consultation will be occurring in the first week of September.

The CHAIR: Minister, will you authorise and allow the sport of airsoft to be played in New South Wales?

Mr TROY GRANT: Could you repeat the question?

The CHAIR: Minister, will you authorise and allow the sport of airsoft to be played in New South Wales?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am not familiar with that sport. I will take the question on notice. I am happy to be informed as to what that sport is.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, just one week after the tragic shooting death of Justine Damond—the Australian who was shot in Minneapolis—the Minneapolis police, at the direction of the mayor, changed their policy on-body cameras to require officers to turn on cameras any time they are despatched to a call or when they undertake any self-initiated activity. Why do we not have the same strict protocols for body cameras in New South Wales?

Mr TROY GRANT: The NSW Police Force has started rolling out body-worn video cameras to frontline police as part of our ongoing commitment to improving community and officer safety in New South Wales. The cameras will continue to be rolled out to frontline police as part of the \$100 million Policing for Tomorrow Technology Fund I have provided. This is an important initiative to ensure the protection of the community. Recordings can assist in the gathering of evidence in the investigation of a crime. Local and specialist police will wear the cameras on their uniform, allowing officers to record incidents or events where visual and audio evidence will support an investigation.

Our officers have millions of interactions with the community every year and body-worn video cameras will provide a record of the actions of the officer and individuals they are engaging with. Knowing that a camera is on can help to de-escalate a volatile situation and reduce potential violence. Offenders, bystanders and police officers are all more likely to behave in an appropriate manner if they are aware that everything is being recorded. This funding from the Government will enable police to purchase additional cameras and the necessary infrastructure for the effective management, storage and destruction of video records.

International trials have noted the positive benefits of body-worn video, including the lower incidence and escalation of violence as I have referred to, reduced officer injuries, reduced time spent on paperwork and increased time on patrol, earlier resolution of cases through guilty pleas in court and improved behaviour of both police and the public. We are confident that we will see the same benefits here in New South Wales. Regarding training, I am advised that the police have been trained on the appropriate use of body-worn video, which includes the expected ethical and professional standards of the NSW Police Force.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, I agree with you that when a body camera video is on it improves accountability and compliance. Why is the policy in New South Wales that the police choose when to turn it on? Why do you not adopt the same strict policy that they have adopted in Minneapolis, which requires the cameras to be on at any time officers are despatched to a call or when undertaking any self-initiated activity?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will ask the Commissioner to support me in this answer.

Mr FULLER: The challenge is around letting people know that they are being filmed. Obviously under the Surveillance Devices Act, which is where we get our power to use this, there are some rules around when we use it. That is part of the problem—that is, you let someone know like we do when the Highway Patrol pulls someone over; they let them know that they are being recorded.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You would just have a note on the front of the police officer saying, "This is a camera and it is recording." That would overcome the issue.

Mr FULLER: I do not think that meets the legislation.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Well fix the law. It is a good accountability measure but, unfortunately, the police can now choose when to turn it on and when to turn it off. Why not adopt the measures that Minneapolis has adopted, and they did it a week after a tragic shooting?

Mr FULLER: The challenge is—I am not sure about their laws around the Surveillance Devices Act—obviously people making admissions and a whole range of other problems that come with this. I understand from your point of view taking that singular incident that it would be wonderful if they were on 24/7. I do not fear them being on 24/7 but there is a whole range of other issues around protected admissions, et cetera, that come with filming people.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Will you seek to review the policy that Minneapolis has done—which is not 24/7 but whenever police are dispatched to a call or when undertaking any self-initiated activity—to see if it could be applied in New South Wales and if it would be appropriate? Because it is not just Minneapolis; a whole series of jurisdictions in the United States have moved in that direction with good outcomes.

Mr TROY GRANT: My expectation of police is that they will comply with the law.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But the law now is they can choose when to turn it on and when to turn it off. That is a one-way accountability measure. Do you not understand that, Minister?

Mr TROY GRANT: I understand your point of view. The Commissioner has articulated very well the legislative requirements for the operation under various Acts that the officers are obliged under the law to follow, and that is what they will do.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, the Commissioner has said on a policy point it would be good to have it on and to have a similar rule to Minneapolis. Why do you not fix up the law and make it happen?

Mr TROY GRANT: Just to clarify the Commissioner's comment, he said that he does not fear them being on.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Then why do you allow the police to simply turn them off and to choose when to turn them on? Do you not understand how that is one-sided accountability?

Mr TROY GRANT: I understand that the Commissioner has articulated that the operation of the body-worn videos in New South Wales is to comply with laws, including those within the Surveillance Devices Act and others, and they will continue to comply with the law.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: When police take their tasers out they automatically start to record, do they not?

Mr TROY GRANT: They have got a camera.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: They have a camera that automatically records; when you take a taser out of its holster it automatically records. So what is the difference?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will clarify that for you.

Mr FULLER: In those situations obviously when you have pulled it out to arm it, it is one of our tactical options so you are already in a dynamic situation. But if you turn up with a body-worn camera on 24/7, 99 per cent of what we do is not confrontational; it is just investigation, peacekeeping.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But the point is you do not know before you turn up. The interactions are dynamic and that is why the accountability measure is best served by having it on whenever these interactions are happening.

Mr FULLER: But—

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: What is the difference in the law? Why is the law allowing you to record under a taser and prohibiting from recording when it is on your body?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am happy to take that on notice to give you a fulsome answer, but one is used in normal operations and for additional use in the recording of events. In the use of a taser, the primary role is not to record evidence; it is a tactical option to defuse a situation and that encounter is recorded.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, what is the current program for training New South Wales police officers for responding to reports of sexual assault?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My advice, and maybe the Commissioner could assist here, is that one-day training is given to police and that sessions run only four times a year. So the vast majority of police will not have had adequate training. I am happy for the Commissioner to provide some clarification about how long the training is and what proportion of police have been given sexual assault training.

Mr TROY GRANT: From my experience, I was trained and it was a more fulsome, difficult course than one-day training. So there will be various types of courses. We will take that on notice and provide you with an answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And could it include how many of the current serving police have had the training?

Mr TROY GRANT: Sure.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the current program for training to respond to reports of domestic violence?

Mr FULLER: I was the corporate spokesperson for domestic and family violence, so I am fairly confident in answering this one. From the time that you start as a probationary constable through to those officers that become domestic violence liaison officers there are some 11 courses that you will do. We run more courses in domestic and family violence than we do for any other single crime type.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Commissioner, I do not expect you to have the numbers at your fingertips but could you get back with what proportion of the current serving police have undertaken the most current training program?

Mr FULLER: Absolutely.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And if there is further additional material you can add to that.

The CHAIR: Commissioner, you recently addressed the New South Wales Law Society forum regarding what you were saying was driving legislative change in relation to violence and perhaps the perception of how public policy does change based on what the fear of crime is as opposed to the reality of crime. Can you elucidate what you were trying to say there?

Mr FULLER: It was a discussion around bending the rule of law and there were a number of people on the panel. My point was if you look at BOCSAR's reporting on crime, particularly serious crime, Don Weatherburn says there has never been a safer time to be alive in New South Wales. My broader point was we rarely start that conversation. We will often talk about because news is global and we see terrorism overseas, we see serious crimes overseas, that that impacts on the way we feel. Part of my role is not just about reducing crime, it is about making people feel safe. So my conversation was around that I do not think we talk enough about how safe we are. Yes, we do hear about some terrible crimes that happen, but my proposition was that perhaps if we talked about the fact that 17 crime types are stable or down—some of them are the lowest in 40 years—perhaps the community would feel much, much safer than they do.

So it was not a criticism; it was just an observation that the fear of crime, much as crime does, can have an impact on public policy. The other point of that was saying that police do not just walk into government and get brand new laws every day, that there is a strict process of going through and getting new police powers and the fact that police do not own the legislation, we just enforce it. So it was a broad conversation around whether or not governments are bending the rule of law and there is a very sound parliamentary process in the way that laws are shaped.

The CHAIR: When you say governments are bending the rule of law—

Mr FULLER: I was not—this was the topic the Law Society—

The CHAIR: Okay, I beg your pardon. The way you have just explained it is the way I read it in the article I was reading, that is all. I was just interested in you taking a slightly different tack, sort of looking at why we should not be afraid—that is really what you are saying—especially when you look at the BOCSAR

statistics in all the crime categories, and I think that is an important message that the Minister and you should try to get out from time to time: talk the positive side of the enforcement as opposed to the fact we are being bombarded daily by the negatives from all over the world in this 24-hour news cycle of ours. I applaud you for that particular angle in relation to what you put.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: BOCSAR indicates that we have got the lowest level of violent crime pretty much in the post-war period when we have had reliable statistics. Is that the state of play?

Mr FULLER: It is, and other States and Territories have seen rises in these same crime types. So it is easy to say this is just a global event, but that is not the case. I think as a government we should be proud of that. Yes, if there is one crime, Mr Shoebridge, that is a worry for me; I am not suggesting that we are going to sit on our hands and say we are doing a good job—there is much, much more to be done. BOCSAR is independent—Don Weatherburn writes independently; no-one signs off on his reports.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And, of course, Commissioner Scipione gave evidence to the NSW Industrial Relations Commission that low levels of crime, yes there is an element of policing in it, but economic activity, low unemployment, high levels of equity and social justice, they are the things that drive low levels of crime across New South Wales. It is across the board, is it not?

Mr FULLER: No. Victoria over the last two years has seen increases in some crime types that we are, in theory, percentage-wise, eradicating. So yes, there are good economic times, but I guess over the last 20 years I have heard different people have a position on why crime is up or down, but the reality is it is consistently down at the moment in New South Wales. Obviously my challenge is keeping that trend going.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Through the Minister to the Commissioner, does the NSW Police Force conduct random audits of the COPS database access by NSW Police Force members?

Mr FULLER: Yes, we do.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many random audits were conducted in 2016-17?

Mr FULLER: I will have to take it on notice, but we do set a strict minimum percentage of the workforce that has to be done.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I will also ask you, probably on notice, about how many targeted audits there were in the same period and has the NSW Police Force considered the use of risk assessment algorithms to assist in auditing the database access?

Mr FULLER: Yes, we have. It is very difficult to say that just because an officer has a poor sick leave history then they have a greater propensity for corruption. It is something we are continually looking at. It is a very difficult thing to nail down—you are almost predicting what the next corrupt officer will be. There are many challenges in that, but I am not closing my mind in the future to systems that may help us pinpoint potential areas of corruption.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And, particularly in relation to access to the COPS database, could you advise how many disciplinary actions have resulted from either random or targeted audits regarding access to the COPS database in 2016-17?

Mr FULLER: I could also let you know what legal action has also been taken.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you. Minister, there have been a series of questions on notice regarding the investigation by the NSW Police Security Licensing and Enforcement Directorate—I think SLED—into the unlicensed intelligence officers from C5 Management Solutions who were contracted to Boggabri coal security and infiltrated a non-violent protest camp at Maules Creek. This was the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Barwon LAC and a review by the Barwon LAC. What has happened in relation to that review and when will any charges be laid, if at all?

Mr TROY GRANT: I do not have that information. We will have to take that on notice for you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, there has been recent media commentary regarding the expansion of the mobile drug testing regime to include cocaine as a result of, as I understand it, the high levels of cocaine being found coming out of the sewage treatment plant that comes out of the Commonwealth seat of Wentworth—the Prime Minister's electorate. What is the state of play in relation to mobile drug testing?

Mr TROY GRANT: Crash data shows that in 13 per cent of road deaths illicit drugs are in the driver's system. Obviously that is way too many and those drivers pose a very real threat to the rest of the community. Prior to 2015 we committed to test 100,000 drivers per year, and \$1.7 million over two years has

been allocated in the last budget to achieve this outcome. I am pleased in relation to the testing that 100,748 roadside drug tests have occurred in the 2016-17 financial year. I have recently written—specifically to your question—to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, requesting her assistance in bringing cocaine into the mobile drug testing regime. To do that will require an amendment to the definition of "prescribed illicit drug" in section 4 (1) of the Road Transport Act 2013, which sits under her administration.

When roadside testing of oral fluids was introduced in 2006, suitable equipment for detecting cocaine was not available. Technology has advanced considerably since that time and the testing of oral fluid for cocaine is now feasible. Experts from the NSW Police Force and the NSW Forensic and Analytical Science Service [FAS] will soon commence testing using DrugWipe 3S devices. They will confirm whether they meet the required cut-off level for detectability and will also conduct a control study to see if over-the-counter medications such as throat lozenges and sprays could trigger a false positive result. Assuming that FAS advises that these standards are met and the Parliament passes the necessary legislative changes, police intend to conduct trial mobile drug testing operations involving cocaine detection in Sydney's eastern suburbs.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you getting different advice to the advice that the former roads Minister allegedly said he got, as recorded in *Hansard*, when I asked him the same question about cocaine? He said cocaine could not be tested. I quote:

I am told that cocaine stays in a person's system for about six minutes to one hour, making it difficult to detect within the current New South Wales oral fluid test.

Do you reject his advice and have you got fresh advice or do you stand by the former Minister's nonsense report?

Mr TROY GRANT: The advice I have provided to you is the advice I have received.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you had fresh advice from the Centre for Road Safety that says the former Minister, the Hon. Duncan Gay, was wrong?

Mr TROY GRANT: I do not have any advice in relation to whatever advice the Hon. Duncan Gay had received. I am not aware what advice that was or what format that was in or what it said.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I take you back to your fulsome answer with regard to the State Emergency Service vehicles. You have indicated that 181 vehicles will be rolled out. Can you give us a timeline?

Mr TROY GRANT: They were rolled out over the five-year strategy. I am happy to give you the composition of what they were and where they went.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: No, I will pass on to my colleague.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Minister, who sets the markers for floods and who is responsible for their maintenance? Who sets them and whose job is it to maintain them?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will ask the Commissioner of the NSW State Emergency Service to help.

Mr SMETHURST: It depends certainly what the markers are, and the bureau would be best placed to provide an accurate answer. But certainly there are some gauges that are the responsibility of councils and those that are the responsibility of a broader network managed by the bureau.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that on notice to give a more fulsome answer. Do you mean flood markers at causeways and on roadsides?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Who is responsible for maintaining them? If it is a patchwork, that is fine. We would like to know.

Mr TROY GRANT: I imagine it is a patchwork, given the different waterways across New South Wales. But I will give a fulsome answer on notice.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Minister, in response to the recommendations of the independent review of the northern rivers floods, the State Emergency Service [SES] has stated it will explore the possibility of an increase of approximately \$250,000 in its existing labour expense cap to incorporate the placement of a Bureau of Meteorology representative within the NSW State Emergency Operations Centre. Do you support this and is this going ahead?

Mr TROY GRANT: I do support this. I will invite the Commissioner, NSW State Emergency Service, to brief you more fulsomely.

Mr SMETHURST: I think there has been a great example set in the way the bureau works hand-in-hand with the Rural Fire Service. They have an imbedded forecaster. We have certainly seen a need to have that very close relationship with the bureau and have somebody imbedded and we will be putting in a request to do that in the future. The other part of the answer is it is the bureau's capacity to put somebody in. As an interim arrangement, we have an agreement with the director of the bureau in New South Wales to co-locate to our headquarters on declaration of an event.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: But you will be putting in a request for a budget allocation to be able to incorporate that, if there is a person available?

Mr SMETHURST: As part of the broader work we are working with the Minister on that, yes.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Minister, I ask a question on the Pappinbarra fires that happened recently. I met with you in regard to Pappinbarra.

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes, thank you for doing that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Would you give us an update on that?

Mr TROY GRANT: There were a couple of components. Mr O'Connor of the Office of Emergency Management did some, the Rural Fire Service [RFS] did some, and I did some as well.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It is in particular in relation to the emergency response and the people that are still needing assistance.

Mr TROY GRANT: Yes. Thank you for meeting with us and making us aware. As I told you on the day, I had personally spoken to one of the ladies there with whom you had also spoken. There had been some communication issues in resourcing. Specific to me was in relation to BlazeAid, so I have contacted BlazeAid. I know you had a workforce that you identified was available to help with the erection of fences. Their capacity is not in relation to the provision of materials, it is only the workforce, similar to what you were able to provide. I am having ongoing conversations with them to see what is required and how they can best secure the materials.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: We have secured some materials as well, so there is some there.

Mr TROY GRANT: That is great. They are available to you to assist with the workforce and the labour force. That was my component. I invite a response from Commissioner Fitzsimmons in relation to the RFS component.

Mr FITZSIMMONS: If I heard correctly, we have had discussions offline following that meeting and my understanding is that the matters of resourcing, some draining issues, clarification around appliances and things were clarified.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: They have been resolved.

Mr FITZSIMMONS: I think the question was linked mainly to assistance in the relief area.

Mr O'CONNOR: We can trigger support, not specifically to BlazeAid but we refer to it as an "out-of-area assistance group". So quite a few self-start volunteer groups will come together. It could be like a mud army, it could be BlazeAid, anything of that kind. We are able to defray the costs of their logistics base camp, which we do on a routine basis with BlazeAid where the council will provide a facility such as a sports ground or a showground, an area of public land, and we will underwrite the costs of that logistics base camp—whether that is putting in power, putting in sanitation and supporting with food.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Is not the problem here the actual coordination? There are a lot of agencies that can do things but the council has not come on board to coordinate. So the community has been left with no-one to assist to coordinate. What happens in those situations?

Mr O'CONNOR: This is part of the coordinated recovery operation, so there would be a recovery committee formed. That is usually done at the council level, reinforced by our staff. That is the point at which we reach out to communities and we can identify what is available out there. We are putting out community newsletters saying what we are doing and if people have things they want to offer the recovery committee is the mechanism to do that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I understand that but as the Minister—

Mr TROY GRANT: I can assist you, Ms Voltz. The Office of Emergency Management reached out to the council. The person involved is the general manager who has the role on the local Emergency

Management Committee. His response was that an evacuation order was not issued, however in the fires in February the LEMO—that is the role he performs as the Local Emergency Management Officer—was in constant contact with the Rural Fire Service, which was the lead agency. As the fire progressed he did ensure that if an evacuation centre was required it would be implemented without delay. It is worth noting further that the Emergency Operations Centre [EOC] was not activated in response to the Pappinbarra fire.

I understand where some of the gaps may have occurred on a local level. Much to their credit, following the fires and the ladies you met, the local group was formed. Pappinbarra Unites I understand is their formal name. They were leading the local recovery effort. A debrief meeting was held in the local community the week after the fire and, as the LEMO, he attended. This is the information I have been provided with, reiterating the need for data and reporting to assist the impact assessment. Ultimately, following the impact assessment supported by the Local Emergency Operations Controller [LEOCON] and supported by the LEMO, a State-led recovery was not deemed necessary. That is the information the LEMO has provided to me. I am happy to go through the extensive provision of support that was provided by individuals.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: In small communities and small rural communities such as Pappinbarra and Beechwood where it is obvious the response is mainly done by locals, I am wondering—it is one of those examples of where people are falling through a net because they are perhaps not near a town or in a big area. They are hit by fire or flood, and some of their animals are still not back on their farms because of a lack of fencing and people cannot get back into their homes.

Mr TROY GRANT: I understand. As I committed to you and I recommit today, I look forward to travelling to Pappinbarra to see if we can learn some lessons there. After the Dungog flood I travelled up there and there was a significant local effort that contributed to the community's recovery. That is part of being Australian and living in this wonderful country; people rally around and do so much for each other on a voluntary and local community level. It supports the formal agency and recovery arrangements we have in place.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In Victoria and South Australia they currently require road users to slow down to 40 kilometres an hour when passing emergency vehicles stopped at critical incidents. Are you aware of this and have you spoken to the roads Minister to address this issue?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am aware of this. I have met formally with the Rural Fire Service Association on this issue. They proposed the 40 kilometre an hour speed limit for traffic passing emergency service vehicles attending critical incidents. As you correctly point out, I understand Victoria and South Australia have these restrictions in place to improve the safety of emergency enforcement workers when attending roadside accidents. I have met with them to liaise with the Office of Emergency Management who will now reach out to key stakeholders, which will include Fire and Rescue NSW, the Rural Fire Service, the NSW Police Force, the State Emergency Service and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, on this issue. It is a complex issue that needs close examination but we have started that work.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Have you had discussions with the roads Minister?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am getting information from the perspective of emergency services in order to take something to the roads Minister.

The CHAIR: As part of our extensive submissions in relation to the firearms regulation review, we strongly urged the New South Wales Department of Justice to require all staff in the New South Wales Firearms Registry, including police officers, managers and administrative staff, to undertake ongoing structured training in firearms knowledge, legislation and their responsibilities under the Police Act. Can you advise me whether that particular recommendation was picked up anywhere?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will have to take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In relation to the firearms regulation review, can you take on notice which organisations and which individuals have been consulted in relation to the review and whether that includes Gun Control Australia?

Mr TROY GRANT: I can answer that for you now and take anything in addition on notice. It was an open process. As required under the terminology of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989—which recommends under that law 21 days for consultation—we opened the period for 24 days. We extended that period of consultation but it was an open process. It was not a closed consultation process.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Which organisations did you specifically reach out to?

Mr TROY GRANT: We reached out to the entirety of New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Were there any you sent an individual notice to, or made individual contact with, as opposed to a notice on a website?

Mr TROY GRANT: We followed the requirements of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1989 in relation to consultation and we extended the recommended 21 days to 24 days.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Will you take on notice the detail of which organisations were consulted and engaged with?

Mr TROY GRANT: We ran an open process.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But who, is the question?

Mr TROY GRANT: Everyone.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who did you end up consulting with and speaking to and getting submissions from?

Mr TROY GRANT: We had 400 submissions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Will you provide details to us?

The CHAIR: Do you want to read my data?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Later.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will provide that.

The CHAIR: I did not get an inside track, I submitted a request through the website.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For shame. Minister, what is the current status of the task force looking into police psychological injuries, set up by the previous police Minister? Is it continuing or has it been disbanded?

Mr TROY GRANT: It is a continuing effort.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The task force?

Mr TROY GRANT: In relation to the issue and the investment. I will take on notice the status of the task force.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was about the task force. If there is additional material you wish to produce on notice, I am happy for that to occur.

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take the task force status on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The further detail you can give on notice as well in relation to that.

Mr TROY GRANT: The work they have done is significant. The funding has delivered \$17.1 million and the programs rolling out are extensive.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why is there not a database of the actual drugs seized during general drug dog operations as opposed to drug dog operations that are conducted using a warrant? Why is there no cumulative record kept?

Mr TROY GRANT: We will take that on notice for you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you think that would be a useful internal accountability measure to see if drug dogs actually work, to see if they catch any drugs?

Mr TROY GRANT: I know your viewpoint in relation to the effectiveness and appropriateness of drug dogs is vastly different from mine. Their contribution to public safety and law and order in the State is immense.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you satisfied with them getting it wrong 60 per cent of the time and doing false positives 60 per cent of the time? Are you satisfied with that error rate?

Mr TROY GRANT: I am satisfied they are an outstanding asset to the NSW Police Force that contributes to public safety outcomes and the reduction of crime in this community.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many drug dealing charges have been laid as a result of drug dog operations in the last 12 months?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Would it surprise you that when I asked you this question on notice and similar questions on notice the police response, through you, is the police do not keep that kind of data?

Mr TROY GRANT: The early part of your question was a centralised data set. The data is contained within the Computerised Operational Policing System [COPS] for interaction.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When you give us the answer on notice about how many drug dealers have been caught using drug dog operations, can you indicate what proportion of searches resulted in people being charged with drug dealing offences and how many drugs were seized as a result of drug dog operations not involving a warrant?

Mr TROY GRANT: The definition frame in your question may be difficult to answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: As opposed to a possession charge.

Mr TROY GRANT: You asked us to list the drug dealers and that is determinate on weight and circumstances.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Correct. As opposed to personal possession charges. There are a series of individual charges I will not list. I am talking about not personal possession but anything above possession.

Mr TROY GRANT: I completely understand the question and the purpose of your question, but a detection for someone with one pill does not mean they are not a drug dealer as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am asking about the offences. The job is to apparently find people in breach of the law. I am asking about the breaches of the law that have been identified using drug dog operations and what you are charging people with.

Mr TROY GRANT: We will take that question on notice and do our best to give you a fulsome answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is it true that the standard operating procedure for drug dogs at a music festival requires 12 general duties police to accompany each drug dog and their handler?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will get the Commissioner's assistance.

Mr FULLER: To make the operation effective you need a number of police because the dogs will move quickly through a crowd. If you have one dog and one police officer they would sniff one tenth, or less, of the potential people. The dogs create a reasonable amount of work which means you need a reasonable workforce to support them.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Seriously, 12 police to accompany every drug dog and its handler? What does a drug dog operation cost per hour when you have a dozen general duty police in addition to the dog and its handler?

Mr FULLER: In terms of the harm minimisation strategy, I do not know how you put a price on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the cost per hour of a drug dog operation when they are accompanied by 12 police officers in accordance with the standard operating procedure?

Mr FULLER: I can give you an estimate of that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Indeed, in all other instances, the standard operating procedures say something in the order of eight general duties police are required—as a minimum. Can you also give the average cost of a one-hour operation in those circumstances of the dog, its handler, and eight general duties police?

Mr TROY GRANT: We will take that on notice and in our fulsome answer we will also provide the details of the contribution they make to harm minimisation and deterrence of crime.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If you are interested in harm minimisation, Minister, why do you have amnesty bins at the front of music festivals so that if people are frightened and concerned about the presence of a drug dog operation, rather than ingest the drugs in a panic they can put them in an amnesty bin? If you are interested in harm minimisation, why do you not adopt what most European police forces and the United Kingdom police force do and put in place amnesty bins?

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: They should leave them at home.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Surely you will not adopt that flippant answer. If you were interested in harm minimisation, why do you not put in place amnesty bins?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that question on notice and give you a fulsome answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What, if any advice, have you got on the efficacy of pill testing relating to harm minimisation, and who have you sought advice from on the efficacy of pill testing at music festivals to address harm minimisation?

Mr TROY GRANT: I have made public statements in relation to my view of pill testing, which I stand by. I will take that question on notice and provide you with a fulsome answer.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: I have sent correspondence to the NSW Police Force on a number of occasions raising concerns and requesting investigations of alleged criminal activities regarding animal cruelty. I have been advised that my correspondence regarding these operational police matters are being forwarded to your office as a matter of course. I also note that after nine months I still have not received certain responses from the Minister. My first question is—and I will provide the remaining questions on notice—given that the NSW Police Force is an independent statutory body established under the Police Act 1990, defining the legislative responsibility to provide services for the prevention and detection of crime, can you please explain on what basis the NSW Police Force are directing operational correspondence to your office?

Mr TROY GRANT: I will take that question on notice.

The CHAIR: We will bring this informative session to an end. Thank you, Minister.

Mr TROY GRANT: Thank you.

The CHAIR: You have taken a number of questions on notice. According to the Committee's resolution, answers must be returned within 21 days and you may receive some additional questions on notice.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.