



The Hon. John Barilaro MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW

Minister for Skills and Minister for Small Business

Budget Estimates 2017-18 - Thursday, 31 August 2017

Portfolio Committee No.3 – Education

Skills, Regional New South Wales and Small Business

Questions Taken on Notice

Page 2 of Transcript

QUESTION

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: In relation to the budget figures of total enrolments, can you give us a breakdown on the new enrolments?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: There is no question in the new enrolments area, where we have a focus on our fee-free scholarships, we are almost at the 50,000 mark of students.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Are new enrolments going up or down?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: New enrolments are going up. But it is a mix of qualification—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can you give us a breakdown of enrolments in the biggest region in Western Sydney?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In relation to TAFE?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If you want that detail, I cannot give you that answer.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am happy for you to take it on notice.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: No, I cannot take it on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Do you have a feel for whether they are going up or down?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I need to clarify something. I am the Minister for Skills, responsible for the policy settings for the Skills and VET budget in New South Wales. The Assistant Minister for Skills, Adam Marshall—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: And the Deputy Premier.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: No, the Assistant Minister for Skills is the Minister responsible for TAFE. If you are wanting more detailed operational questions answered, you will have to take these questions to the Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: You are the Minister for Skills. I just want to ask you in this Skills area are enrolments in TAFE in Western Sydney going up or down? I am happy to deal with the detail later with the Assistant Minister, but are enrolments in Western Sydney going up or down?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Across the State we are seeing enrolments going up, there is no question. That is why we have 120,000 extra students. I would assume that in Western Sydney we are seeing more enrolments, but if you want to break it down campus by campus I could not give you that detail.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, sure.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Again, that could be a question on notice. I do want to stress the point that TAFE is the responsibility of Mr Marshall.

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Assistant Minister for Skills, the Hon Adam Marshall MP.

Page 13-14 of Transcript

QUESTION

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I refer to the North Coast floods. Category C funding started flowing to small businesses months after the declaration of a natural disaster. There was significant paperwork, even if some of the paperwork and computers had been washed away. There have been reports that small businesses in some areas were eligible for \$15,000 in funding, some were eligible for \$10,000, some received no funding and some were given grants of \$25,000. Businesses across the border in Queensland were reportedly eligible for \$25,000. Why did businesses in Tumbulgum receive less funding than others?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: The floods were a disaster. Everybody wants to support those communities but often we turn up only during the floods. Emergency services did a wonderful job in getting that community through safely—beyond the natural disaster.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: But why the inequity?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: In relation to category C funding in that area, New South Wales responded more quickly than any other State, which was reflected by the Federal Government.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Funding has been slow to flow to these areas. Why the inequity?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We were on the ground early through the Office of the Small Business Commissioner. All the other agencies were on the ground to make sure we could get necessary information and data. I will ask the Small Business Commissioner to respond as her team did a lot of the heavy lifting up there. Since then we have seen about \$6.5 million in category C recovery grants.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have a number of specific questions. Why are people getting different funding packages?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: A range of different packages were available. We are working with local members, the community and small businesses in relation to the funding.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: When did the first category C payments begin to flow to small businesses?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I do not know. I will refer your question to Ms Hobbs.

Ms HOBBS: I will take that question on notice and come back to you as to when it first happened.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Sure.

Ms HOBBS: It is now approaching six months since this happened. Cyclone Debbie occurred on 30 and 31 March. We were there as soon as emergency services told us we could go there.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am asking specifically about the payment. I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Ms HOBBS: I am happy to take that on notice, but I would like to say that our team helped those businesses complete the applications for category C funding.

ANSWER:

The Category C funding was declared on 13 April 2017 and the first Category C payment to a small business was made on 2 May 2017.

Page 19 of Transcript

QUESTION

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: No, it said the opposite. It said it was driving prices up because people are going to premium and unleaded. Deputy Premier, you said in a previous response that if you had met with Mr Huang Xiangmo it would be in your diary.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I would hope so, yes.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: You would hope that it was in your diary. What if I told you that it was not?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: That is something I would have to talk to my office about. If you want to give me the dates of when it happened I would be more than happy to have a look.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: You would like me to give you the dates of a meeting that I cannot find out about because they are not in your diary?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am more than happy to go back to my office and check those dates in my diary to see when I met with him.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: And then update the diary?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am not sure if I have to update the diary. I will just make sure—

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Why would they not be in the diary?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Let us hope that they are.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: They are not.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: You are saying that they are not. I need to check.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: No, I am not saying they are not. It is a matter of public record that they are not.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I will take that question on notice and come back.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: And do what?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: We will come back and notify you if the diary does not reflect my meetings with stakeholders.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: With Mr Huang Xiangmo?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Yes.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: And you will update the diary to reflect those meetings?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: First we need to find out if what you are saying is correct.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: If what element of what I am saying is correct?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: If the diary does not reflect my meetings.

ANSWER

All meetings are disclosed in accordance with Ministerial Guidelines.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: You are disputing that?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I am not disputing it; I am just saying that I do not have my diary in front of me.

QUESTION

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: When you did meet with Mr Huang Xiangmo? What did you discuss? What was the purpose of those meetings?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: A couple of those were at events celebrating Chinese New Year. Mr Huang Xiangmo is a representative of the Chinese community and he was talking about issues that are affecting the Chinese community. That is what comes to mind.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: He did not talk about any business interests, investment opportunities, or any government policy?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: Not that I can recall, no.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Can you guarantee that it did not happen?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: No, I cannot guarantee because I do not recall. Again, whatever conversations I have with stakeholders may remain confidential. That is the whole purpose of meeting with them, and that is why they meet with Ministers. But at the same time I am more than happy to come back if it has not been.

ANSWER:

All meetings are disclosed in accordance with Ministerial guidelines.