

MONDAY 24 JUNE 2002

(General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5)

Portfolio

Local Government, Regional Development, Rural Affairs'

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING HEARING

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Gay asked the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Harry Woods, MP—

1. How many cats are microchipped and registered on the companion animals register? (Hansard p. 4)
2. (a) Will the Minister provide a copy of the Crown Solicitor's advice concerning the prospects of success of the appeal against the Land and Environment Court decision concerning boundary changes? (Hansard p. 9)

(b) If not, will he undertake to provide a copy of the advice once the appeal is concluded?
2. How many councils does the department currently have under a close watching brief? (Hansard p. 23)

Answers:

1. As at 1 October 2001 there were 15,862 identified and registered cats on the Companion Animals Register. As at 25 June 2002, there were a total of 664,174 cats and dogs recorded on the NSW Companion Animals Register.
2. (a) The advice is subject to legal professional privilege and was prepared to assist the Government in its decision making whether or not to institute an appeal to the NSW Court of Appeal. There are no overwhelming reasons as to why such a document should now be released.

(b) As per (a) above.
3. The Department oversees and monitors the performance and management of all 172 NSW councils. Depending on the issues, be they of a financial or more general nature, in the order of 36 councils are currently subject to a more formal monitoring process.

- Three councils are being monitored as part of a current or post a major investigation and five other councils are being more closely monitored as giving general concern.
- Fourteen councils are subject to a quarterly financial reporting regime and another fourteen are being monitored closely in terms their annual financial statements for 2002.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr M. Jones asked the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Harry Woods, MP -

4. Since the method of accounting in the budget figures has changed, how can the Committee ascertain the amount of money, which is held in abeyance for programs which have a life span of two or more years? (Hansard p14-15)

Answer:

Budget Paper No. 3 provides an analysis of the financial and non-financial performance of general government agencies.

Financial Statements prepared on an accrual basis are presented for each agency within a Minister's portfolio. These include the Operating Statement, Cash Flow Statement and Statement of Financial Position. The information disclosed in the Statements includes the Budget and Revised forecast for the current financial year as well as the Budget for the budget year. This disclosure is consistent with past years.

Financial information for agencies' recurrent programs that extend beyond the budget year, is not disclosed in the Budget Papers. Funding for variations in the cash flow requirements for all programs, is managed through the annual budget process between agencies and NSW Treasury.

Mr Gay asked the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Harry Woods, MP -

5. Have any new industries been established in New South Wales through the Regional Economic Transition Scheme?

Answer:

The Regional Economic Transition Scheme (RETS) helps establish new industries or expand existing industries that can provide future job opportunities. Assistance through RETS has been offered to over 100 projects across regional New South Wales.

Mr Samios asked the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Harry Woods, MP -

6. Which regions and towns have benefited from the Country Lifestyles Program?

Answer:

The Country Lifestyles program provides a comprehensive range of support activities to assist economic development in regional and rural NSW. The program has benefited all regions of the State delivering over 70 major initiatives to 40 different locations.

(MINISTERIAL OFFICE)

Mr Gay asked the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Harry Woods, MP—

7. What was the cost of media monitoring services received by your ministerial office in 2001-2002? (Hansard p 20)

Answer:

All costs incurred were appropriate to the needs identified.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Mr Gay asked the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Harry Woods, MP -

1. What is the total expenditure of the Local Government Boundaries Commission to date on the proposed boundary changes announced by the Minister on 15 November 2001?
2. Was this expenditure budgeted for?
3. What is the total expenditure of the Department of Local Government on the boundary changes proposed by the Minister on 15 November 2001?
4. What areas was money allocated from for this purpose?
5. What key performance indicators and performance measurement systems were developed for this expenditure?
6. What is the total expenditure of the Department of Local Government on the Sproats Inquiry?
7. What areas was money allocated from for this purpose?

8. What key performance indicators and performance measurement systems were developed for this expenditure?
9. What is the total expenditure of the Department of Local Government on the Goran Report?
10. What areas was money allocated from for this purpose?
11. What key performance indicators and performance measurement systems were developed for this expenditure?
12. Upon what basis is expenditure being made to appeal the decision of Justice Talbot in the Land and Environment Court?
13. Where are these funds being allocated from?
14. What budget is allocated to the Boundaries Commission?
15. How much has been spent by the Boundaries Commission?
16. What controls are in place for expenditure of funds by the Boundaries Commission?
17. What delegations of authority are in place for the Boundaries Commission to expend?
18. What is the process to determine these powers of delegation of the Boundaries Commission?
19. What audit framework is in place for the Boundaries Commission?
20. What Department of Local Government Officers are specifically assigned to the Boundaries Commission?
21. What other Departmental Officers (not DLG) are assigned to the Boundaries Commission?
22. What process must the Boundaries Commission undertake to obtain additional resources from the Minister?
23. If additional resources are secured, what other functions and services are displaced?
24. What approvals are obtained to divert resources from other functions and services to the Boundaries Commission?
25. How was the membership of the Boundaries Commission constituted?
26. By what process were members appointed?
27. Where is the documentation associated with their appointment?
28. What skills and competencies were required for membership of the Boundaries Commission?

29. What role has the Director General of the Department of Local Government played in the appointment of members to the Boundaries Commission?
30. What role has the Director General of the Department of Local Government played in the boundary changes proposed by the Minister on 15 November 2001?
31. Is there a register of all Boundaries Commission delegations and expenditure?
32. How does the Boundaries Commission call for tenders for consultants and contractors?
33. How does the Boundaries Commission assess tenders?
34. How does the Boundaries Commission award contracts?
35. How does the Boundaries Commission sign off on completion of contractual obligations?
36. How does the Minister assess and audit the Boundaries Commission's roles?
37. (a) How does the Director General assess and audit the Boundaries Commission's roles?
(b) How does the Department assess and audit the Boundaries Commission's roles?

Answers:

1. \$167,510
2. Yes
3. \$130,485
4. Allocations for legal expenses and salaries
5. Expenditures evaluated in accordance with Department of Local Government's performance indicators and measurement systems
6. \$324,300
7. Treasurer's Advance Account and Departmental allocation
8. Expenditures evaluated in accordance with Department of Local Government's performance indicators and measurement systems
9. Figures not available
10. refer answer to 9

11. refer answer to 9
12. Advice from Crown Solicitor's Office that they believed the Judge had erred in law and on the basis that there was a reasonable chance of an Appeal being successful in overturning his decision.
13. Allocation for legal expenses
14. \$36,850 for retainer fees plus allocations from the contingency budget for inquiries and hearings
15. \$191,683
16. Department of Local Government's internal control systems
17. Delegations are held by Department of Local Government
18. Same as for the Department of Local Government
19. Same as for the Department of Local Government
20. 50% of grade 5/6 officer and 10% of grade 9/10 officer
21. Nil
22. Submit bid for consideration for allocation from contingency fund if funds are available.
23. None
24. refer answer to 23
25. The Boundaries Commission is constituted by the Local Government Act 1993 (section 260)
26. Members of the Boundaries Commission are appointed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 (sections 261 and 262)
27. refer answer to 26
28. refer answer to 26
29. refer answer to 26
30. Provide and receive advice and information, issue or submit for consideration letters and documents, authorize and monitor use of staff resources, authorise expenditure of funds.
31. Yes
32. In accordance with Government Supply policies, procedures and guidelines

33. refer answer to 32

34. refer answer to 32

35. refer answer to 32

36. Same as for the Department of Local Government

37. (a) refer answer to 36

(b) refer answer to 36

Mr Gay asked the Minister for Local Government, Regional Development and Rural Affairs, the Hon Harry Woods, MP—

38. (a) Does your Ministerial Office receive media monitoring services?

(b) If so, what was the annual cost in 2001-02?

(c) If the media monitoring services are sourced from other cost centres, which budgets are they allocated to and what is the annual cost?

(d) How many different suppliers do you have contracts with, either directly, or indirectly through media monitoring services sourced from other cost centres?

(e) Please list all suppliers.

Answers:

(a) Yes.

(b) All costs incurred were appropriate to the needs identified.

(c) All expenditure is from the appropriate cost centres.

(d) Please refer to answer for (c)

(e) Please refer to answer for (c)

39. (a) Does any agency in your portfolio receive media monitoring services?

(b) If so, what was the annual cost in 2001-02, by agency?

(c) If the media monitoring services are sourced from other cost centres, which budgets are they allocated to and what is the annual cost?

(d) How many different suppliers do agencies in your portfolio have contracts with, either directly, or indirectly through media monitoring services sourced from other cost centres?

- (e) Please list all suppliers.

Answers:

- (a) Any decision to access media monitoring is determined by the agencies concerned and the need for monitoring of issues.
- (b) All costs were in accordance with identified needs.
- (c) All expenditure is from the appropriate cost centres.
- (d) & (e) The appropriate cost centres are utilised.

40. (a) In 2001-02, how much was spent on your Ministerial Office? Please provide a breakdown by expense.

(b) What is the forecast amount to be spent in 2002-03 and what is the forecast number of staff?

Answers:

- (a) The Government has released the costs of Ministerial expenditure to the Opposition under an FOI application.
- (b) It is too early in the financial year to predict expenditure. Staff numbers will approximate those released under the FOI application.

41. (a) What is the total cost of your overseas trips in 2001-02?

(b) Can you please provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost?

(c) For each trip, please provide a breakdown in airfare costs, hotel costs, car hire, and accompanying staff and officials.

Answer:

(a) to (c)

Official travel is undertaken in accordance with appropriate guidelines.

Costs incurred during official overseas travel were in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

42. (a) What is the estimate of money to be spent on your overseas trips in 2002-03?

(b) Can you please provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost?

(c) For each trip, please provide a breakdown in airfare costs, hotel costs, car hire, and accompanying staff and officials.

Answer:

(a)to (c)

This will depend on the nature and scope of any travel undertaken in 2002-03.

Costs incurred during official overseas travel will be in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

43. (a) What is the total cost of your interstate trips in 2001-02?
- (b) Please provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost and for each trip a breakdown in airfare costs, hotel costs, car hire, and accompanying staff and officials.

Answer:

(a)and (b)

Official travel was undertaken in accordance with appropriate guidelines and in a cost effective manner.

44. (a) What is the estimate of money to be spent on your interstate trips in 2002-03?
- (b) Can you provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost?
- (c) For each trip, can you provide a breakdown in airfare costs, hotel costs, car hire, and accompanying staff and officials?

Answer:

(a)to (c)

It is too early to provide an estimate at this stage of the financial year. However, expenditure will depend on the nature and scope of any travel in 2002-03.

45. (a)How many staff were employed as at 30 May 1999, 30 May 2000, 30 May 2001 in your Ministerial Office?
- (b) What was the annual salary cost of those staff in each of those years?

Answer:

(a)and (b)

Ministerial staff are employed by the Director General of the Premier's Department in accordance with the provisions of the Public Sector Management Act 1988.

All costs were in accordance with the expenditure necessary to facilitate the effective functioning of the office and within allocations to Ministerial Offices.

46. (a) Does your office contract consultants?
- (b) If so, what consultancies have been commissioned in 2001/2002, and at what cost?
- (c) What consultancy services will be commissioned from July 1 2002 - March 2003 and at what estimated cost?

Answer:

(a) to (c)

Expenditure on consultancies is reported in Annual Reports. All expenditure is in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

It is not possible to predict so early in the financial year the likely expenditure on consultants in 2002-03.

47. (a) Were any legal costs incurred by your office in 2001-02.
- (b) If so, what was the cost and nature of each instance of legal advice?

Answer:

All legal costs were incurred after an assessment of the need to obtain external legal assistance. Legal professional privilege will be maintained in relation to advice and costs.

Mr Gay asked the Minister for Local Government, Regional Development and Rural Affairs, the Hon Harry Woods, MP—

For each of your portfolio agencies in 2001-02:

48. (a) What was the total cost of public relations activities?
- (b) What is the forecast cost for 2002-03?

Answer:

(a) and (b)

Public authorities conduct a range of extension activities aimed at communicating to the public a range of regulatory, advisory, research and general information.

The question posed is too broad to identify an actual cost.

49. How much was spent on public opinion surveys?

Answer:

The Premier issued Memorandum 2000-28 which specifically directed government agencies not to use surveys of government clients or NSW citizens to elicit questions on political issues.

50. (a) How much money was spent on advertising? *Please provide a list of each campaign and cost.*

Answer:

Details of total government advertising were published in the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper on Monday 29 July 2002 in an article by Paola Totaro, State Political Editor.

All requests relating to advertising must be approved by a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Government Advertising.

51. What is the estimate of money to be spent on advertising in 2002-03? *Please provide a list of each campaign and cost.*

Answer:

Expenditure on advertising is determined by agencies in accordance with the needs identified.

Issues such as traffic safety, police requirements and other extension activities determine when and where advertising will take place.

52. (a) How much was spent on consultants? *Please provide a list of each agency and cost.*

(b) What is the estimate of money to be spent on consultants in 2002-03? *Please provide a list of each agency and cost.*

Answer:

(a) and (b)

The cost of consultants is reflected in the annual report.

Expenditure depends on the need for consultancy services throughout the year.

For each of your portfolio agencies in 2001-02:

53. (a) How much was spent on overseas trips in 2001-02 by officials? *Please provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost.*

(b) What is the estimate of money to be spent on overseas trips in 2002-03 by officials? *Please provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost.*

Answers:

(a) Domestic and international travel by public servants was undertaken in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

Details regarding overseas visits are included in the Annual Report.

(b) This will depend on the particular issues identified as requiring travel overseas.

54.(a) How much was spent on inter-state trips in 2001-02 by officials? *Please provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost?*

(b) What is the estimate of money to be spent on interstate trips in 2002-03 by officials? *Please provide a list of each trip, purpose and cost?*

Answers:

(a) Domestic and international travel by public servants was undertaken in accordance with the appropriate guidelines.

(b) This will depend on the particular issues identified as requiring travel.

For each of your portfolio agencies in 2001-02:

55. How much was spent on legal expenses?

Answer:

Expenditure on legal expenses followed appropriate review of the circumstances, the need for such expenditure and within appropriate guidelines.

In the case of core work for public sector agencies the Crown Solicitor meets these costs.

56.(a) How much was spent on office fit-outs and refurbishments?

Answer:

All office accommodation fit-outs and refurbishments were undertaken in accordance with OH&S requirements and appropriate guidelines.

57. What is the estimated cost for 2002-03?

Answer:

It is not possible to predict so early in the financial year the likely expenditure on accommodation and fit-outs in 2002-03.

58. (a) How much was spent on the cost of leases in the Sydney CBD?

Answer:

The Government Asset Management Committee (GAMC) monitors the leasing of the majority of government office space. Costs are kept to a minimum by virtue of the whole of government approach taken to leasing.

59. What is the estimated cost for 2002-03?

Answer:

The Government Asset Management Committee (GAMC) monitors the leasing of the majority of government office space. Costs are kept to a minimum by virtue of the whole of government approach taken to leasing.

60. (a) Was there any vacant or under-utilised office space?
(b) What is the cost of such unused office space?

Answer:

The Government Asset Management Committee (GAMC) oversees the leasing of the majority of government office space. It monitors lease negotiations to maximise occupancy and avoid vacancies.

For each of your portfolio agencies in 2001-02:

61. (a) How much money was spent on performance pay for public servants in:
(i) 2000-01?
(ii) 2001-02?

(a) Did you personally approve these bonus payments?

Answer:

On 28 August 2001 Premier's Memorandum 2000-21 was issued indicating that performance pay was not to be made available to members of the Chief and Senior Executive Services.

Approvals for performance payments prior to 28 August 2001 as well as all other remuneration to members of the Senior Executive Service were made by the respective Chief Executive Officers.

62. (a) How much was spent on the salary packages for the Senior Executive Service?
(b) What is the estimated cost for 2002-03?

Answer:

(a) & (b)

Upon election, the Government inherited a Chief and Senior Executive Service of 1,434 positions. The Government reduced the number of Senior Executive

Service positions in accordance with a commitment to do so. As at April 2002 there were 1,003. This is a reduction of 431.

Remuneration for the Senior Executive Service (SES) is determined by the Independent Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal (SOORT). It is not possible to predict so early in the financial year the likely expenditure on SES remuneration. However, expenditure will be in accordance with any determinations by SOORT.

For each of your portfolio agencies in 2001-02:

63. (a) Have any Departments or agencies been fined by a court or statutory or regulatory authority between July 1 2001 and June 30, 2002?
- (b) If so, detail each fine and amount, and the reason for each fine?

Answer:

Any penalties imposed by a court or statutory authority are on the record of that court or statutory authority.

64. (a) How many times were matters referred for independent investigation to ICAC? *Please provide a breakdown of these referrals.*

Answer:

Section 11 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 requires the principal officer of an agency to report any matter the officer suspects on reasonable grounds concerns or may concern corruption.

Disclosure of information may identify issues under investigation and therefore impede these investigations.

For each of your portfolio agencies in 2001-02:

65. (a) What fees were increased, and by how much?
- (b) What fees are expected to be increased in 2002-03?

Answer:

- (a) & (b)

As was the case in the former Greiner/Fahey Government's any increases in fees are measured and take into account the specific fee, movements in the CPI and other related factors.

Mr Gay asked the Minister for Local Government, Regional Development and Rural Affairs, the Hon Harry Woods, MP—

- (1) (a) In 2001-02, how many board appointments were made you, or by your portfolio agencies?
- (b) Of these appointments:
- (i) How many were women?
 - (ii) How many were of people from a non-English speaking background?
 - (iii) How many were of people with a disability?
 - (iv) How many were Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders?
 - (v) How many were young people?

Answer:

- (a) The Government made a total of 1754 appointments to boards and committees in 2001/02.
- (b) (i) Approximately 694 were female.
- (ii) Due to the self-identifying nature of the nomination form no reliable figures are available for people from a non –English speaking background.
- (iii) Due to the self-identifying nature of the nomination form no reliable figures are available for people with a disability.
- (iv) Due to the self-identifying nature of the nomination form no reliable figures are available for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders.
- (v) Due to the self-identifying nature of the nomination form no reliable figures are available for young people.

Harry Woods
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Rural Affairs