

**BUDGET ESTIMATES AUGUST 2021
DPC - SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**

QUESTION – Public Health Advice

1. Did the Premier receive advice that recommended the reclassification of the Shellharbour local government area as regional from:

- (a) The Chief Medical Officer? or
- (b) NSW Health? or
- (c) Another individual or organisation?

- i. Was the advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?
- ii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?
- iii. If not, why not?

2. If the advice in Question (1) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?

3. On what date was the advice in Question (1) received?

ANSWER:

Questions about any advice received by the Premier from the Chief Medical Officer, NSW Health or other individuals or organisations should be directed to the Premier and not to the Department.

The Department notes that any advice provided to the Crisis Policy Committee of Cabinet is Cabinet-in-confidence. Under Premier's Memorandum 2006-08, *Maintaining Confidentiality of Cabinet Documents and Other Cabinet Conventions*, public officials are required to keep Cabinet information confidential.

QUESTION – Public Health Advice

4. Did the crisis policy committee of the NSW Cabinet receive advice that recommended the reclassification of the Shellharbour local government area as regional from:

- (a) The Chief Medical Officer? or
- (b) NSW Health? or
- (c) Another individual or organisation?

- i. Was the advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?
- ii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?
- iii. If not, why not?

5. If the advice in Question (4) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?

6. On what date was the advice in Question (4) received?

ANSWER:

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The Crisis Policy Committee of Cabinet operates strictly in accordance with Cabinet conventions, including collective Ministerial responsibility and confidentiality.

Under Premier's Memorandum 2006-08, *Maintaining Confidentiality of Cabinet Documents and Other Cabinet Conventions*, public officials are not authorised to publicly disclose Cabinet information.

QUESTION – Public Health Advice

7. When the Premier received advice that Shellharbour local government area be reclassified as regional did the Premier receive advice on the classification of the Wollongong local government area for the purposes of the health response to COVID from:

- (a) The Chief Medical Officer? Or Premier
- (b) NSW Health? Or
- (c) Another individual or organisation?

i. If so, what was the nature of this advice from (a), (b), (c)?

ii. Was this advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?

iii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?

iv. If not, why not?

8. If the advice in Question (7) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?

9. On what date was the advice in Question (7) received?

ANSWER:

Questions about any advice received by the Premier from the Chief Medical Officer, NSW Health or other individuals or organisations should be directed to the Premier and not to the Department.

The Department notes that any advice provided to the Crisis Policy Committee of Cabinet is Cabinet-in-confidence. Under Premier's Memorandum 2006-08, *Maintaining Confidentiality of Cabinet Documents and Other Cabinet Conventions*, public officials are required to keep Cabinet information confidential.

QUESTION – Public Health Advice

10. When the crisis policy committee of the NSW Cabinet received advice that Shellharbour local government area be reclassified as regional did the committee receive advice on the classification of the Wollongong local government area for the purposes of the health response to COVID from:

- (a) The Chief Medical Officer? or
- (b) NSW Health? or
- (c) Another individual or organisation?

i. If so, what was the nature of this advice from (a), (b), (c)?

ii. Was this advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?

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iii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?

iv. If not, why not?

11. If the advice in (10) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?

12. On what date was the advice in Question (10) received?

ANSWER:

See previous response (Questions 4-6).

QUESTION – Spending

13. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster in FY 20/21 what was the total amount spent on each of the following categories?

(a) Indoor plants

(b) coffee and tea

(c) crockery

(d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters

(e) alcohol

(f) cakes, muffins and pastries

(g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs

(h) office renovations and fit-outs

(i) taxi and rideshare expenses

(j) office equipment

(k) office renovations or upgrades

(l) hospitality

(m) conferences

(n) travel

(o) accommodation

(p) employee development and training activities

(q) study assistance

(r) travelling and meal expenses

(s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private

(t) removal and storage expenses

(u) education of children

(v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)

(w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)

(x) additional benefits

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ANSWER:

All NSW Government agencies must comply with the NSW Procurement Policy Framework established under the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 to ensure value for money when procuring goods and services. Information about expenditure is available in agencies' annual reports which are prepared and tabled in accordance with the requirements of the Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985, Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, Government Sector Finance Act 2018 and Government Sector Audit Act 1983.

It is not practicable to provide the specific data sought by the member within the limited timeframe for responding to supplementary questions. The member may, however, wish to make an informal request directly to the relevant agency for the information sought in accordance with section 8 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

14. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster, from FY 20/21 what are details (specific item, and total cost) of the top five most expensive occurrences of spending on each of the following categories?

- (a) indoor plants
- (b) coffee and tea
- (c) crockery
- (d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters
- (e) alcohol
- (f) cakes, muffins and pastries
- (g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs
- (h) office renovations and fit-outs
- (i) taxi and rideshare expenses
- (j) office equipment
- (k) office renovations or upgrades
- (l) hospitality
- (m) conferences
- (n) travel
- (o) accommodation
- (p) employee development and training activities
- (q) study assistance
- (r) travelling and meal expenses
- (s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private
- (t) removal and storage expenses
- (u) education of children
- (v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)
- (w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)
- (x) additional benefits

ANSWER:

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All NSW Government agencies must comply with the NSW Procurement Policy Framework established under the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 to ensure value for money when procuring goods and services. Information about expenditure is available in agencies' annual reports which are prepared and tabled in accordance with the requirements of the Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985, Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, Government Sector Finance Act 2018 and Government Sector Audit Act 1983.

It is not practicable to provide the specific data sought by the member within the limited timeframe for responding to supplementary questions. The member may, however, wish to make an informal request directly to the relevant agency for the information sought in accordance with section 8 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – Bumping up education results for children

15. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of bumping up education results for children?
16. Can you outline any changes in the approach to this priority in 2015-19 to the current target?
17. Why was the target narrowed from 2015-19 to only address reading and numeracy?
18. Is this target on track to be achieved by 2023?

ANSWER:

15. The priority baseline is 31.6% (2017-2018 average) and the target is 36.4% in 2022. In 2019, 32.2% of students achieved in the top two NAPLAN bands. NAPLAN did not proceed in 2020 due to COVID-19 and results for NAPLAN 2021 are pending. Prior to 2020, the number of students achieving in the top 2 NAPLAN bands had increased for 3 consecutive years. Remaining uplift required is 4.2 percentage points.

16. For the first priority (*'Improving Education Results'*), Education developed the *Bump it up* program; identifying those schools that had the greatest potential to progress more students from band 3 into bands 1 or 2. Band 1 and 2 NAPLAN improvement targets were set for these schools. The current priority (*'Bumping Up Education Results for Children'*), is based on the success of the *Bump it up* program, with targets now set for all schools on the basis of their potential to improve against the suite of outcomes as described in the Department's Strategic Plan. This forms the basis of the Department's new School Success Model. Across the two priorities Education has refined its framework of support to achieve their vision that *'Every student, every teacher, every leader and every school improves every year'*.

17. The target was always only ever focused on increasing the proportion of students in the NAPLAN bands 1 and 2 for reading and numeracy. This focus was based on the foundational importance of reading and numeracy to all learning, and the maturity of NAPLAN in assessing these domains.

18. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the Premier's Priorities website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

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QUESTION – Premiers Priority – Increasing the number of Aboriginal young people reaching their learning potential

19. Can you provide a progress update on this target of increasing the number of Aboriginal young people reaching their learning potential?

20. What initiatives are in place to reach the target?

(a) How often are they evaluated to find what is working and what isn't?

21. What are the barriers to Aboriginal students receiving their HSC?

(a) What initiatives are in place through this target to specifically address these barriers?

22. Is there a difference in approach in reaching this target in rural/regional areas compared to metropolitan areas?

(a) If yes, can you outline the difference?

23. Is this target on track to be achieved by 2023?

24. The Premiers Priorities website states "We are monitoring attendance and HSC results to understand and respond to the impact of COVID-19 on students' learning through 2020". Can you provide any information on what that impact is?

(a) What is being done to counter it?

ANSWER:

19. Interim 2020 HSC results provided by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) in February 2021 indicate that there has been no change to the HSC attainment rate for Aboriginal students compared with the 2019 attainment rate (45%). The Department of Education, in partnership with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO), are continuing to monitor results to understand and respond to the impact of COVID-19 on students' learning.

20. The Premier's Priorities website provides an overview of what is being done to address the priority. Information pertaining to the Premier's Priority will also be included on the Department of Education's website, on the Aboriginal Outcomes and Partnerships Directorate pages due to be updated in the second half of the calendar year.

20 (a). The performance of all initiatives is monitored by initiative leads on an ongoing basis to enable continuous improvement and scaling of good practices across sites.

21. Challenges Aboriginal students may face when it comes to attaining their HSC are multifaceted and can vary significantly between students. Things that can negatively affect attainment include a lack of cultural supports in schools to help students cultivate a strong sense of identity and belonging to school; inadequate tailored academic supports to meet students at their learning level; insufficient levels of cultural safety in school environments and in classrooms; and challenges in students' personal and family lives that make engaging with learning difficult.

21 (a). By providing a mixture of individualised support to students and making changes at the system-level, the co-designed Initiatives outlined on the Premier's Priorities website address these barriers.

22. The co-designed initiatives are being rolled out across Principal Networks with a high proportion of Aboriginal students – some are metro, though the majority are regional / rural. The initiatives take a community based approach; and are therefore customised to local needs and cultural contexts.

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22 (a). The implementation of initiatives are tailored to the unique features of each location and community in order to meet the needs and aspirations of local students, families and communities. This means initiatives vary in how they strengthen connection with local stories, cultures, histories, sites and languages.

23. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the Premier's Priorities website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

24. Whilst the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold, the Department of Education remains focussed on supporting students to engage in a program of learning in 2021 as we have done in 2020 whilst under stay at home restrictions.

24 (a). To help manage the impact of COVID-19, Premier's Priority initiative leads including Department of Education staff, staff from the NSW AECG and Community Connector staff located within the NSW Aboriginal Land Council are providing regular contact and practical support to students, families and the broader Aboriginal community.

These staff members are providing opportunities for students to engage online with general support, tutoring, access to data and laptops, regular wellbeing check-ins and career planning activities.

The Department of Education is particularly focussed on the retention of Aboriginal students as part of the Premier's Priority relating to Aboriginal students' HSC attainment.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – Protecting our most vulnerable children

25. Can you provide a progress update on this priority- Protecting our most vulnerable children?

(a) Was there an evaluation process between the 2015-19 and 2019-23 targets?

(b) What has changed in the approach from the 2015-19 priority to the 2019-23 priority?

26. Can you outline any known impact Covid-19 has had on children at risk?

27. Do you anticipate long-term issues on the number of children at risk arising from the past 18 months?

28. Is this target on track to be achieved?

ANSWER:

25. The measurement for 31 March 2021 shows that the re-report rate increased slightly to 39.8 per cent, up 0.6 percentage points from the previous quarter and 1.2 percentage points up from the year before.

(a) The Audit Office of NSW produced a Performance Audit in September 2018. This is publicly available.

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(b) By June 2018, 36.2% of children were re-reported at risk of significant harm (ROSH), a reduction of over 10% from baseline. Recognising the continuing importance of this work, the priority was included in the 2019-2023 set of Premier's Priorities with a new target set to decrease re-reports by 20% by 2023 from the original baseline.

(c) While maintaining a focus on high quality casework practice, the approach has broadened to include optimisation across the whole-of-system.

26. The Department of Communities and Justice is monitoring the situation.

27. The Premier's Implementation Unit is not in a position to speculate on long term issues on the number of children at risk arising from the past 18 months.

28. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

QUESTION – Premier's Priority – Increasing permanency for children in out-of-home care

29. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of increasing permanency for children in out-of-home care?

30. What strategies are in place to reach this target?

31. Is this goal on track to be achieved by 2023?

ANSWER:

29. In 2019-20, 1,134 children exited OOHC by either being restored to their families, through a guardianship order, or by being adopted, which is an eight per cent increase on 2018-19. This included 553 children being restored, 419 guardianship orders and 162 adoptions to families.

30. The Premier's Priorities website provides an overview of what is being done to address the priority.

31. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

QUESTION – Premier's Priority – Reducing domestic violence reoffending

32. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of reducing domestic violence reoffending?

33. Why was the deadline for this this priority extended from 2021 to 2023?

34. What initiatives are in place for this priority?

35. What data is held about the percentage of reports of domestic violence made to police that result in charges being laid?

(a) If no data is held, how was it determined that measuring repeat offenders would be the best way to reduce domestic violence, given there's no data on those accused, but not charged for offences?

36. Are there particular areas of NSW that strategies are targeted to?

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(a) If yes, where?

37. Ms Sarah Cruickshank provided the 2020 data at budget estimates in March this year, why has that information not been updated publicly on the website?

38. The 2018 Audit Office Report found there were limitations with the way reoffending is measured for this target and additional indicators were used to measure the effectiveness.

(a) What are these additional measures?

(b) Can you provide an update on how they are tracking?

39. Is this target on track to be achieved by 2023?

ANSWER:

32. The baseline was 1,814 (2015). The target is 1,360 in 2023. In the 12 months to March 1,857 domestic violence offenders had reoffended within 12 months.

33. The Government is committed to the hard task of reducing domestic violence reoffending. It was for this reason the Premier renewed it as one of 14 priorities for the period 2019 to 2023.

34. Department of Communities and Justice has a wide range of initiatives in place to address the complex issue of domestic violence, including those that focus on reducing reoffending. The Premier's Priorities website provides an overview of what is being done to address the priority.

35. In the 12 months ending June 2021, 66.4% of DV assault incidents resulted in legal action.

36. Strategies are developed for the State as a whole.

37. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

38. (a) The measure changed from the rate of reoffending for the previous priority to a count of the number of reoffenders for the current priority.

(b) See answer to question 32.

39. See answer to question 37.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – Reducing recidivism in the prison population

40. Is this target on track for reducing recidivism in the prison population to be achieved by 2023?

41. Why is 2018 the latest data available on the Premiers Priority website?

42. Can you provide a progress update on this priority?

43. What is being done to reduce the proportion of reoffenders?

44. Is this target on track to be achieved?

ANSWER:

40. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

41. The measure for this priority is the proportion of adult offenders released from custody who have a new offence in the 12 months following release. Reporting of reoffending has a 15 month

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lead time. This allows 12 months post release where reoffending activity can be observed and a further 3 months for any crimes committed during this period to be brought before the courts and finalised. The Premier's Priority website is updated annually.

42. In 2020, 29.1% of inmates reoffended following release from prison. The rate has been reducing over successive quarters, indicating that the suite of initiatives in place are having the intended effect.

43. The Premier's Priorities website provides an overview of what is being done to address the priority.

44. See answer to question 40.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – Reducing homelessness

45. The Premier's Priority website states "Further work is underway to expand data collection by rolling out the City of Sydney Rough Sleeper count to other hot spot locations."

(a) What are the other locations?

(b) City of Sydney have been conducting their count since 2010, why is it taking the Government so long to develop other forms of data collection?

(c) Will this data be published on the Premier's Priority website to provide the public with a better understanding of how this target is tracking?

46. A previous Premiers Priority was to reduce youth homelessness - why have these two components of homelessness been singled out?

47. The investment in the Together Home program has reduced the number of people sleeping rough.

Why did it take a pandemic for the Government to take this target seriously?

48. The 2021 Audit Report 'Responses to homelessness' notes this Priority sits outside the NSW Homelessness Strategy. Do the two intersect in any way?

49. Is this target on track to be achieved?

ANSWER:

45.(a) This information is available publicly in the Technical Paper NSW Statewide Street Count. ([Technical-paper-NSW-Statewide-Street-Count-2021.pdf](#))

(b) The Australian Census is the primary metric against which the Premier's Priority target is measured. However, Census data is only available every five years. The NSW Government has committed to undertaking annual street counts of people experiencing street homelessness to deliver more regular data on our progress towards achieving the Premier's Priority target.

The NSW Government continues to collect data on homelessness from a range of sources. For example \$295.9 million was invested in specialist homelessness services in 2021-22 and this data is available publicly through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

(c) Street count data is published on the Department of Communities and Justice's website (www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/streethomelessness).

46. Premier's Priorities are the Government's commitment to improving quality of life for people in NSW by tackling complex issues that have been in the too hard basket for too long. Having

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achieved the target set for Youth Homelessness in the last set of priorities, the government is now focussing on those whose experience of homelessness makes them especially vulnerable and is often the result of complex and multiple issues.

47. The Together Home program builds on other initiatives to reduce street homelessness, including the NSW Government's continued investment in the NSW Homelessness Strategy for prevention and early intervention programs to support people to establish and sustain long-term housing, screen young people at risk of homelessness, and expand assertive street outreach services.

48. The Reducing Homelessness Premier's Priority sits alongside the NSW Homelessness Strategy as part of the NSW Government's homelessness response. Initiatives funded under the NSW Homelessness Strategy are helping to meet the Reducing Homelessness Premier's Priority target.

49. Performance is on track to meet the target. The New South Wales-wide street count in February 2021 identified 1,141 people experiencing street homelessness in New South Wales, a 13 per cent reduction compared to the 2020 street count. This included a 19 per cent reduction in street homelessness in the City of Sydney LGA compared to 2020. The City of Sydney is the LGA with the largest number of people sleeping rough in NSW.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – Improving the health system

50. At a previous budget estimates round in 2019, Mr Reardon stated "they [Premier's Priorities] are very much about business unusual. They are very much about disrupting how we would normally go about things". Why was triage category 1 included in the priority when it was already achieved?

51. As it stands, Categories 2 and 3 are a long way off reaching the target – what is being done to improve waiting times?

(a) What are the biggest causes of delays for patients in those two categories?

(b) Can you outline which regions have the lowest proportion of ED presentations seen on time?

(c) What's the strategy to improve the wait times in those regions?

52. Is this target on track to be achieved?

ANSWER:

50. The focus of the improving service levels in hospitals priority is to ensure the performance of triage category 1 is sustained, whilst continuing to lift performance of triage categories 2 and 3.

51. To ensure timely access to emergency treatment, several initiatives are currently being implemented by NSW hospitals, including improving patient flow in the ICU and streaming patients through clinical pathways. Further information is available on the Premier's Priorities website.

a) Acutely unwell and complex patients use a higher degree of time and resources to assess, treat and diagnose whilst receiving emergency care. This is best reflected in the significant increase in volume of Triage category 2 patients and to a lesser extent Triage category 3 patients

b) This data is available publicly through the NSW Bureau of Health Information <https://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au/>

c) The NSW Ministry of Health monitors emergency department performance across the state for presentations treated within benchmark times (Triage), and works closely with Local Health

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Districts and Specialty Health Networks to prioritise and progress improvement strategies where needed.

Two key programs of work are in progress to directly support improving time to treatment performance:

- Eleven emergency departments across NSW are currently participating in the Good to Great program, which challenges emergency department leadership teams to strive for performance improvement through a focus on leadership, culture and collaborative partnerships
- The Emergency Protocols Initiating Care (EPIC) program aims to develop nurse-initiated protocols that standardise the emergency care provided to patients within all NSW public hospitals. This directly supports early commencement of treatment for patients following triage.

52. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the Premier's Priorities website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – Towards zero suicides

53. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of towards zero suicides?

54. Covid-19 has seen an increase in demand for mental health support – do you anticipate this will make this target harder to reach?

(a) If yes – what's being done to counter that?

55. What initiatives are showing evidence of working?

(a) What isn't working?

56. Is there are particular focus on a region or age group in working towards this target?

(a) If yes, where?

57. At a previous hearing, Dr Lyons said "We have a number of strategies that we are actually going to implement". What are those strategies, and have they now been implemented?

(a) How much of the allocated \$87 million has been spent so far?

58. Dr Lyons also said, "Over time what we will be doing is looking at the cohorts and monitoring what the suicide rates are and what we need to do to address particular groups in that strategy".

Can you provide an update on which cohorts have been identified as needing focus and what strategies have been implemented?

59. Is this priority on track to be achieved?

ANSWER:

53. The Towards Zero Suicide priority includes a range of initiatives designed to work together to prevent suicides occurring in the NSW community. The target is to reduce the NSW suicide rate by 20 per cent by 2023. The target is benchmarked against the 2017 baseline age-standardised rate per 100,000, which is 11.6, giving a target of 9.3. The early estimate suicide rate in 2020 as reported by the NSW Suicide Monitoring System is 10.7 per 100,000 population.

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54. There are several known risk factors for suicide, and the rate of death by suicide fluctuates over time. Currently, available data indicates that the suicide rate has remained stable overall for 2020 and 2021 but this is being closely monitored.

(a) N/A

55. As the lead agency, NSW Ministry of Health is closely monitoring the implementation of initiatives. A number of evaluations have commenced to measure longer-term impacts and outcomes. The Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women is the responsible Minister for this priority.

(a) Evaluations relating to this priority are ongoing. These are being closely monitored and findings will be considered and implemented as they become available.

56. Towards Zero Suicides initiatives are aimed at providing support across NSW. Some initiatives are tailored towards Aboriginal communities, people living in rural areas, youth and other priority groups.

(a) N/A

57. 15 Towards Zero Suicides initiatives are currently being implemented. These seek to provide best practice crisis care and support, build on local community resilience and improve systems and practices to reduce the suicide rate in NSW. For further information on each initiative, please visit <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/services-towards-zero-suicides.aspx>.

(a) The Towards Zero Suicides priority is in its third year, and funding has been fully committed across the 15 initiatives.

58. The NSW Suicide Monitoring System will help inform suicide prevention activities by providing an early estimate of the number of suspected suicides in NSW. This will support timely and effective responses from Government, local organisations, and communities. For further information, please refer to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, who is the responsible Minister for this priority.

59. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the Premier's Priorities website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – World class public service – Proportion of government sector employees with a disability

60. The proportion of government sector employees with a disability has steadily declined under this government, reaching a record low in 2018 and 19 – how did that happen?

(a) Why was it not identified as an issue earlier?

61. Why is the public sector so far behind the private sector?

62. What is being done to increase disability employment within the public sector?

(a) What is being done to ensure public sector workplaces are inclusive and accessible?

63. Is this priority on track to be achieved?

ANSWER:

60. At the census date in 2018, an estimated 2.5% of public sector employees identified as having a disability, a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from the 2017 estimate. In 2018, disability services were transferred from the Department of Family and Community Services to private providers under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This led to a decrease in the proportion of public sector employees with a disability as this workforce had a relatively high

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proportion of people with disability. In 2019, the proportion of people with disability remained stable and the rate of commencement of people with disability increased relative to separations.

(a) In 2019, the low proportion of government sector employees with a disability was identified as an issue and for this reason, a disability target was included in a Premier's Priority.

61. As the biggest single employer in NSW and Australia, with 413,567 ongoing, casual and temporary employees (State of the Sector Report 2020), it is difficult to compare the NSW Public Service and private employers. The current workforce data held in our HR systems does not necessarily reflect an accurate picture of the public sector. For example, a higher percentage of people share that they have a disability in the anonymous annual People Matter Employment Survey. The public sector is implementing initiatives to increase employees' willingness to share their disability information, while respecting their privacy and confidentiality.

62. Each Cluster is implementing a range of initiatives that are most suited to its varied workforce. These include: targeted recruitment for people with a disability; initiatives to encourage staff to share their diversity information; partnering with the Australian Network on Disability to build a pipeline for students with a disability into the NSW Government Graduate Program; developing the sector's understanding and working relationship with Disability Employment Service (DES) providers; and implementing the Age of Inclusion campaign.

(a) An eLearning course is being provided to managers which educates them on, and commits them to, more inclusive management practices for employees with a disability. An Accessible Office Design framework has been developed to ensure that new and existing government workplaces meet diverse needs. Finally, an Access and Inclusion Index is being used to drive access and inclusion outcomes across organisations.

63. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the website which is updated annually. In 2020, in the Premier and Cabinet Cluster, 3.9% of staff identified as having a disability. The next workforce profile data will be available in October and the next website update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

QUESTION – Premiers Priority – World class public service – Proportion of government sector senior leaders who are women

64. Is this target on track to be met?

65. What initiatives are in place to achieve this target?

66. What are the other indicators referred to in the 2018 Audit Office report which are considered in this area?

(a) What is the performance in these indicators?

ANSWER:

64. Information on how Premier's Priorities are tracking is made publicly available via the website which is updated annually. The next update is scheduled for Q2 2021/22.

65. The Premier's Priorities website provides an overview of what is being done to address the priority.

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66. The Audit Office of NSW produced a Performance Audit in September 2018. This is publicly available. In the report it is not specified which indicators were examined for the public sector diversity Premier's Priority. This question should be directed at the Audit Office.

(a) See above response

QUESTION – 2015-19 Premiers Priorities

67. Are the 2015-19 Premiers Priorities still monitored and reported on?

68. Can you provide an update on the ones that weren't included in the 2019-23 targets?

69. The Premiers Priority website only refers to the 2019-23 targets. Why is a public record of the 2015-19 priorities not available?

ANSWER:

67. In the previous term of Government, there were 12 Premier's Priorities. Five of these Priorities are now business as usual for Government and will continue to be a focus for relevant government departments and Ministers. DPC does not monitor and report on these five priorities. Seven of the original 12 Premier's Priorities were adopted as part of the 2019-23 Priorities.

68. See above response.

69. The September 2018 Performance Audit by The Audit Office of NSW provides a public record of the 2015-2019 Premier's Priorities.

QUESTION – Premier's Priority: Reducing Street Homelessness

70. One of the Premier's Priorities is to reduce street homelessness across NSW by 50% by 2025. The Premier's Priorities website states that 'official data' used to track the progress of this Priority is the Census, but that there are 'positive signs of progress' in other datasets. Please provide the most up-to-date statistics available which indicate 'positive signs'.

71. The Premier's Priorities website states that 'we are committed to reducing street homelessness by focusing on initiatives to ... collect and use better data'. What data collection on street homelessness is being undertaken by the NSW Government?

72. Please provide a breakdown of street homelessness in NSW since 2014 by age and gender.

73. According to the SMH, 'the government provided 3732 rough sleeping households with temporary accommodation, mostly in hotels and motels, between April last year and the end of January this year', and that as of March 2021 '133 rough sleeping households still in temporary accommodation, implying 2706 had left the program without the government finding them a permanent home'.

(a) Please provide a breakdown by age, gender, LGA, current homelessness status, and date of departure from the program for all persons that participated in the program.

(b) Was any support additional to what would have been provided by the NSW Government prior to COVID-19 extended to households on departure from the temporary accommodation program?

74. It has been reported that the NSW Government provided 899 rough sleepers with temporary accommodation at the onset of the most recent lockdown.

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- (a) Please provide a breakdown by age, gender, and LGA of the most current numbers of rough sleepers in temporary accommodation under this program.
- (b) For how long will these people be provided with temporary accommodation?
- (c) What will happen to these people when they are no longer provided with temporary accommodation?

ANSWER:

70. The New South Wales-wide street count in February 2021 identified 1,141 people experiencing street homelessness in New South Wales, a 13 per cent reduction compared to the 2020 street count. This included a 19 per cent reduction in street homelessness in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) compared to 2020.

71. The Department of Communities and Justice partnered with 150 local organisations to complete street counts in 293 towns and suburbs across 71 local government areas in February 2021.

72. This information is not held by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

73 (a) This information is not held by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

(b) All clients receiving temporary accommodation, regardless of Covid-19, are connected with Specialist Homelessness Services who help provide a long-term housing pathway.

74.(a) This information is not held by the Department of Premier and Cabinet

(b) The cap on temporary accommodation has been waived for the period of the lockdown. Public Health orders will determine the length of stay.

(c) See 73 (b).

QUESTION – Premier’s Priority: People with Disability in the Public Sector

75. The See the Possibilities campaign directs disabled jobseekers to contact a variety of job service providers, private and non-government organisations, but provides no contact point for people with disability to seek help or support from the NSW Government in any way. Are there any plans to back this campaign up with Government-provided services like career counselling, guidance through application processes, and mentoring for people with disability seeking a job in NSW, and particularly in the NSW public service?

76. What integration has been developed with the federal JobSeeker process to ensure that job providers are matching disabled jobseekers with NSW public sector jobs?

ANSWER:

75. The See the Possibilities campaign website now includes a specific link to the ‘I work for NSW’ page for people with disability. Career counselling and guidance throughout the recruitment process is available via Federally funded Disability Employment Services, under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Additionally, job applicants to the NSW public service can request adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure it is accessible and inclusive.

76. In July 2021 the Commonwealth announced funding for the Get Skilled Access job platform which will match jobseekers with a disability with organisations. If there is an opportunity to participate, the NSW public service will do so.