



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022 Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance

TREASURER, ENERGY

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TREASURER, ENERGY

Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC *(on behalf of the Opposition)*

Early Retirement of Eraring Power Station

1. How did Project Phoenix modelling consider the impact on employment in the region proximate to Eraring Power Station?
 - (a) What is the estimated number of job losses connected to the early retirement of Eraring?
 - (b) When will this modelling become available to be shared with the Committee?

Answer:

The modelling undertaken to inform the NSW Government's response to the closure of the Eraring Power Station is cabinet in Confidence.

- (a) Origin Energy has advised that around 400 people are currently employed at Eraring power station. The closure of the Eraring power station is expected to lead to the loss of 200 jobs at the Myuna coal mine which supplies solely to the plant, and a proportion of the 400 jobs at the Mandalong coal mine, noting that this mine also sells to other customers and export.

The number of job loss depends on how many workers will be redeployed. Origin Energy has stated that it will consult with its Eraring workforce about the timing of the announced potential retirement, as well as providing a generous support package during any transition period. This will include re-skilling, career support and redeployment into new roles, where possible.

- (b) Not applicable.

2. Did the Minister or Department inform the Federal Minister for Energy or his Department of the possibility that Eraring Power Station would retire earlier?

- (a) If not, did the Minister or Department advise or encourage Origin to advise the Federal Minister for Energy or his Department of the possibility that Eraring Power Station would retire earlier?

Answer:

Origin Energy has advised that the Federal Minister for Energy and his Department were informed of the potential closure of Eraring on 16 February 2022, after trading had closed on the Australian Stock Exchange. I spoke to the Federal Minister prior to Origin's announcement.

3. What commitments have Origin provided the Government in relation to worker transition plans to Eraring?

(a) What steps are the Government taking to ensure those transition plans outlined by Origin are actioned?

Answer:

See response to 1(a).

(a) The Government will continue to work with Origin Energy to understand and monitor implementation of its transition plans. The Government will also focus on delivering its own comprehensive plan to support up to 3700 jobs in future industries.

4. Has the Minister at any point received advice from the Department or an advisor that the installation of the Waratah Super Battery is unlikely to be completed by 2025?

(a) How much is the NSW government investing in the Waratah Super Battery under its Transmission Acceleration Facility?

(b) What back-up does the grid have if Eraring retires in 2025 and the Waratah Super Battery is incomplete?

Answer:

No.

(a) The Transmission Acceleration Facility is intended to fund the accelerated development of the Waratah Super Battery project. This will ensure it is ready to take to market and obtains relevant regulatory and planning approvals. It is intended that the facility will be repaid by the party chosen to deliver the project.

(b) The Department of Planning and Environment expects that the Waratah Super Battery will be commissioned by 2025, in advance of the earliest potential retirement date of Eraring. The System Integrity Protection Scheme and large batteries have been procured and commissioned in shorter time frames in Australia.

Under the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020*, annual Energy Security Target monitoring by the Australian Energy Market Operator, the appointed Energy Security Target Monitor, considers the amount of reliable energy available to meet demand and any anticipated shortfalls. This will include consideration of any unexpected delays in infrastructure delivery. If necessary, additional measures such as firming and long duration storage tenders can be activated under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap.

Gas

5. What contingency measures have the Department considered if there is a further decline in gas producers' forecasts?

Answer:

The NSW Government is committed to delivering secure and reliable access to gas through the 2021 Future of Gas Statement and will continue work to identify where current gas usage might be better met through alternative solutions, like hydrogen, electrification and other fuel-switching opportunities through the Net Zero Industry and Innovation Program.

6. Does the Australian exposure to the global market for LNG create a higher risk of higher gas prices?

(a) Has the Department modelled gas prices after 2023?

(b) What steps has the Minister and Department taken to mitigate the risk of gas shortages or price rises?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Deputy Premier, and the Minister for Regional New South Wales, the Hon Paul Toole MP.

7. Has the Department modelled the impact of higher gas prices on manufacturing?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Deputy Premier, and the Minister for Regional New South Wales, the Hon Paul Toole MP.

8. What steps is the Minister taking to reduce household reliance on natural gas?

Answer:

The Energy Savings Scheme provides incentives for households to switch from natural gas water heaters to electric water heaters. In addition, the NSW Government recently amended the Energy Savings Scheme Rule to remove residential fuel switching from electricity to natural gas.

AGL Takeover Bid

9. Has the Minister or a member of the Department spoken to senior executive staff at AGL about the takeover bid made by Mr Cannon-Brookes and Brookfield?

Answer:

The NSW Government engages regularly with energy companies on matters related to their business operations.

10. Has the Minister directed the Department to undertake modelling on the impact of the earlier retirement of Bayswater Power Station?

Answer:

The consumer Trustee is responsible for undertaking modelling to inform its plan for the competitive tenders to replace retiring power stations in the long-term financial interests of consumers.

NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap

11. Of the original \$32 billion investment plan, how much has been spent to date?
- (a) How many jobs have been created so far by the money spent from this investment plan?
 - (b) How many projects have commenced or progressed beyond a construction phase?
 - i. If finished tomorrow, how many gigawatts of new renewable energy capacity would these projects add to the grid?
 - ii. If finished tomorrow, how many additional gigawatts of storage capacity would be added to the grid?

Answer:

The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap sets out the Government's 20-year plan to deliver the generation, storage, firming and transmission infrastructure needed to power NSW into the future. The Roadmap will unlock up to \$32 billion in private investment in regional energy infrastructure to 2030, including in strategically planned and coordinated Renewable Energy Zones. Since early 2021, the Government's has focused on ensuring entities responsible for Roadmap delivery are established, and arrangements in place to underpin the successful rollout of the estimated \$32 billion of private investment.

- (a) The data is not yet available to answer this question.
- (b) Since the Roadmap was announced, 19 renewable projects in NSW have commenced or progressed beyond construction phase.

- i. If these renewable projects were completed tomorrow, 2.63 gigawatts would be added to the grid.
- ii. No long duration (eight hour) storage projects have been committed at this stage In December 2021, the Consumer Trustee released the Infrastructure Investment Objectives (IIO) report, which sets out proposed timings for long duration generation tenders.

Kurri Kurri Gas Peaking Station

12. What commitments have the NSW Government sought and/or received from the Federal Government in relation to local job opportunities in the construction and operation of the proposed Kurri Kurri Gas Peaking Station?
- (a) How many local apprentices will be employed by the project?
 - (b) How many women will be employed by the project?
 - (c) How many Indigenous people will be employed by the project?
 - (d) How many long-term unemployed people will be employed by the project?
 - (e) What percentage of the workforce will be drawn from the local area?
 - (f) Are there any guarantees that local contractors and businesses will be provided work through the project?
 - (g) What percentage of the project will be built with local steel as compared to imported steel?

Answer:

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Snowy Hydro Kurri Kurri Power Station project outlines that it would create up to 250 construction jobs at the peak of the construction phase and up to 10 operational jobs over the life of the project. The EIS also indicates that the construction workforce would be sourced mainly from the Hunter region, however, resources external to the Hunter region may be required to supplement any gaps in local skills or capacity for specialised tasks. I am advised Snowy Hydro has committed to develop a local skills register to prioritise local resourcing and skill sets and is involved in the Clontarf Foundation to evaluate local social procurement opportunities as part of a Local Aboriginal Action Plan. Snowy Hydro has not made specific commitments regarding the composition of the construction workforce or where construction materials would be sourced.

Electricity Prices

13. What is the average price of electricity in a quarterly household bill for the years 2020 and 2021?
- (a) Has the average household bill increased during lockdown period of 23 June 2021 to 11 October 2021?
 - i. By how much has it increased?
 - (b) How many consumers asked for an extension on energy bills in Q4 2020-21?
 - (c) How many consumers were disconnected from their retail provider in Q4 2020-21?
 - (d) How many NSW consumers are currently paying the electricity reference price?

Answer:

The NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is responsible for reporting on electricity retail price changes on an annual basis. IPART does not provide a quarterly breakdown of household bill costs. IPART's annual market monitoring report for 2020–21 has determined the average annual electricity bill in July 2021 to be \$1,177 in the Ausgrid region (-6.4 per cent from June 2020 level of \$1258), \$1375 in the Endeavour Energy region (-3.6 per cent from June 2020 level of \$1427), and \$1621 in the Essential Energy region (-1.9 per cent from June 2020 level of \$1652).

- (a) This data is not available.
- (b) This data is not available.
- (c) The Australian Energy Regulator reported there were 4111 residential customers and 304 small business customers in NSW disconnected for non-payment in Q4 2020-21.
- (d) In Q1 2021–22 there were 325,428 residential customers and 64,551 small business customers in NSW on standard offer retail contracts (representing 10 per cent of NSW residential contracts and 19 per cent of NSW small business contracts). Standard offer retail contracts are not necessarily priced at the reference price, but for an average consumption level must be priced at, or below, the reference price.

State of the Environment Report 2021

14. The EPA has released a State of the Environment Report for 2021. Does the Minister agree with the following findings:
- (a) Total NSW non-renewable energy consumption is poor.
 - (b) Total transport sector use of non-renewable energy is poor.

(c) Atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases is poor and the trend is getting worse.

(d) Project outcomes for annual mean temperature and sea level rise is poor and the trend is getting worse.

Answer:

I acknowledge the outcomes of the NSW State of the Environment 2021 report and can assure you the NSW Government is committed to effective action on climate change. While atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases is poor, greenhouse gas emissions are reducing in NSW, being 17 per cent lower in 2019 than 2005. The Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020–2030, released March 2020, is projected to reduce NSW's emissions by 47–52 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030.

The Government continues to implement policies to encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. The Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, released November 2020, is the Government's plan to transform our electricity system into one that is cheap, clean and more reliable. The Roadmap will unlock up to \$32 billion in private investment in regional energy infrastructure to 2030, including in strategically planned and coordinated Renewable Energy Zones. The Government's Energy Security Safeguard is supporting energy efficiency and reduction in demand at peak times.

We are addressing emissions in the transport sector through the Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy, released June 2021, to help increase EV sales to more than 50 per cent of new car sales by 2030–31 and help NSW achieve net zero emissions by 2050. EVs also present opportunities to increase the proportion of renewable energy used in the transport sector.

The NSW Government's Hydrogen Strategy, released October 2021, will provide up to \$3 billion in incentives to develop the NSW green hydrogen industry, including: investing \$70 million in hydrogen hubs in the Illawarra and Hunter regions; providing exemptions from electricity network and government scheme charges; expanding the scope of the Energy Security Safeguard to include hydrogen and rolling out hydrogen refuelling stations.

Through the NSW Climate Change Policy Framework, we are ensuring that NSW is more resilient and can adapt to a changing climate including annual mean temperature and sea level rise. The Government's Coastal Management Framework also works to support thriving and resilient coastal communities.

The Government's record speaks for itself, we are acting now to address the many challenges presented by climate change and will continue to ensure our response delivers results for the people of NSW.

Solar & Battery Support Programs

15. Of the \$50 million increase to the Solar for Low Income Households program, how much has been spent?

(a) How many recipients installed solar through the program in 2020-21?

Answer:

Since 2019, the Solar for Low Income Households offer has been operating as a trial in selected regions. The program has spent \$1.6 million of the \$50 million allocated in October 2021 for the state-wide expansion of the offer.

(a) In the 2020–21 financial year, 716 recipients had solar systems installed as part of the program.

16. What is the value of the Low Income Household Rebate in 2020-21 for an individual recipient?

(a) How much money was allocated to the scheme?

(b) How much money has been drawn from the scheme?

Answer:

For the Low-Income Households Rebate, in the 2020–21 financial year eligible retail electricity customers receive up to \$285 per financial year and eligible on-supply electricity customers receive a lump sum payment of \$313.50 per financial year.

(a) In the 2020–21 financial year, \$217,906,000 of the Energy Social Programs budget was allocated to the Low Income Households Rebate.

(b) In the 2020–21 financial year, \$227,972,000 of the Energy Social Programs budget was spent on the Low Income Households Rebate. The difference in budget allocation and actual spend is managed within the Energy Social Programs budget.

17. What criteria does an individual need to satisfy in order to be a qualifying applicant in the Empowering Homes program?

(a) How many household batteries have been installed under the scheme to date?

(b) How many households have participated in the scheme to date?

i. Can the Department provide a breakdown of householders per LGA?

(c) Does the government intend to expand the pilot further?

Answer:

To qualify for the Empowering Homes pilot program, an applicant must satisfy the following criteria found on the program's website:

- live in one of the eligible postcodes
- have a household income of no more than \$180,000 per annum
- own their own grid-connected home, live in it and have the authority to install the system
- satisfy the consumer loan criteria, assessed by the program's delivery partner, Plenti, which includes:
 - being a natural person, not a company
 - not participating in another NSW solar assistance program
 - only having one Empowering Homes loan per customer

- meeting basic credit criteria, including being an Australian permanent resident or Australian/New Zealand citizen, being over 18 years of age, having a minimum gross income of \$20,000 per annum, and minimum Equifax credit score of 450
 - meeting minimum employment length, which includes three months if full time employed, six months if part time employed, or one year if self-employed
 - being able to meet liability repayments, general living expenses, and Empowering Homes loan repayments without suffering hardship.
- (a) As of 23 February 2022, 502 installations have been completed under the Empowering Homes pilot program.
- (b) As of 23 February 2022, 554 households have had loans approved under the Empowering Homes pilot program. Loan approvals are broken down as follows:
- 14 in Bathurst
 - 2 in Blayney
 - 31 in City of Blue Mountains
 - 3 in Cabonne
 - 49 in City of Central Coast
 - 34 in City of Cessnock
 - 7 in Dungog
 - 21 in City of Hawkesbury
 - 5 in Kempsey
 - 116 in City of Lake Macquarie
 - 5 in City of Lithgow
 - 65 in City of Maitland
 - 36 in Mid-Coast
 - 3 in Mid-Western
 - 16 in Muswellbrook
 - 34 in City of Newcastle
 - 5 in Oberon
 - 21 in City of Orange
 - 8 in Port Macquarie
 - 42 in Port Stephens
 - 13 in Singleton
 - 13 in Tamworth
 - 10 in Upper Hunter Shire
 - 1 in Walcha
- (c) An evaluation of the Empowering Homes pilot is currently underway. An announcement on the next stages of the program is expected when the evaluation is completed.

Renewable Energy Zones (REZ)

18. The Minister has previously said that the way Transgrid engaged landowners was not respectful. What is the status of the guidelines being developed that Transgrid would be forced to adhere to when engaging with private property owners?

- (a) If complete, can it please be provided to the Committee?
- i. What feedback has the Department obtained from landholders since these guidelines were applied?

Answer:

The NSW Government is developing transmission guidelines for all new major transmission projects across NSW. The guidelines will provide a robust framework for the design and development of new transmission infrastructure projects, including best-practice community engagement and route design principles.

- (a) Not applicable.
 - i. Not applicable.

19. The Rod Stowe report made 20 recommendations to Transgrid. Based on these recommendations what consultation will now be performed by Energy Co?

Answer:

The Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) will consult with a range of stakeholders in developing the transmission guidelines.

20. How many projects have commenced under the Hunter-Central Coast REZ?

Answer:

The Hunter-Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) has not yet been formally declared under section 19(1) of the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020*. The declaration is the first step in formalising the REZ under the Act. EnergyCo is in the early planning stages of the Hunter-Central Coast REZ and will be using results from the registration of interest process to inform the timing, capacity and boundaries of this REZ.

21. Has the government reviewed arrangements under the *Just Terms Compensation Act* in recognition of the long-term financial consequences to the farming sector through use of agricultural land for essential renewable energy infrastructure?

(a) Are there options for annual payments or payments to neighbouring landholders?

(b) What compensation is being provided to affected communities?

Answer:

The *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991* sets out a process for the compulsory acquisition of land for electricity infrastructure and the relevant considerations for the amount of compensation paid to landholders, which includes among other matters, the market value of the land, special value and loss due to disturbance. As part of its role in implementing the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and delivering REZs, EnergyCo is investigating opportunities to provide additional benefits to landowners and neighbours in recognition of the supporting role of regional communities in the delivery of a modern electricity grid for NSW.

Green Investment Strategy

22. What is the status of the NSW Government's Green Investment Strategy?

(a) When will it be finalised and/or released?

(b) Are there projections on the anticipated investment the strategy aims to attract?

Answer:

- (a) The NSW Government has a range of current and future initiatives to attract investment in green industries including the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, the net Zero Industry and innovation program, and the Hydrogen Strategy.
- (b) The Department and Treasury are working closely with Investment NSW on investment attraction to size business opportunities and generate jobs in the transformation to a net zero economy.

NABERS

23. In the Net Zero Plan Stage 1, the NSW Government committed to expanding the NABERS rating scheme to other major building types. Can you please update on work completed to date to expand the NABERS rating scheme?

(a) Has the Department conducted an audit of government buildings?

Answer:

Since the launch of the Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030, the NSW Government has engaged with other state governments and the Australian Government to expand NABERS to additional sectors. In September 2021, NABERS Energy and Water ratings were launched in two new sectors: residential aged care and retirement living. The NSW Government is now working to expand NABERS star ratings to two additional sectors later in 2022: industrial warehouses and cold stores.

- (a) NABERS ratings are carried out for eligible office and other NSW Government buildings on an annual basis. More broadly, Government departments also assess their overall energy and water consumption annually under the Government Resource Efficiency Policy.

24. In the Net Zero Plan Stage 1, the NSW Government committed to improving the BASIX to provide a pathway to deliver cost-effective, low emissions outcomes for residential, commercial and public buildings. Can you please update on work completed to date to improve BASIX?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Planning, the Hon Anthony Roberts MP.

Lane Cove Test Station Closure

25. The NSW Government facilitated engagement between PLUS ES and the electrical industry to assess implications and risks of the Lane Cove Test Station Closure. What is the status of the industry consortium formed to identify solutions for its continued operation?

- (a) Has the Minister/Department undertaken an evaluation of the implications of the closure of the Lane Cove Test Station?
- (b) Is the Minister/Department aware of the risks arising from the closure of the Lane Cove Test Station in relation to energy security and the ability of domestic businesses to innovate and to supply the domestic market with high quality electrical equipment?
- (c) Does the NSW Government have any plans to explore ways to ensure that the capability to undertake high current testing of electrical equipment is not lost to Australia once PLUS ES closes the Lane Cove Test Station?

Answer:

The NSW Government remains engaged with the industry consortium in assessing options for specialised electrical testing that was provided at the Lane Cove Test Station.

It is advised that the majority of test services provided at Lane Cove Test Station are available at alternative Australian providers with the exception of specific specialised high-power tests.

Service options for these specialised tests are being considered collectively with the industry consortium and the Australian Government to leverage synergies beyond the electrical power industry, where such tests are critical for equipment safety and Australian Standards compliance.

Sweltering Cities Report

26. Has the Minister or Department reviewed The Australia Institute and Sweltering Cities report 'HeatWatch: Extreme Heat in Western Sydney'?

- (a) What adaptation measures have the Minister and/or Department considered implementing to address the risk of a five-fold increase in extreme heat days in Western Sydney?

Answer:

The Department has reviewed The Australia Institute and Sweltering Cities report 'HeatWatch: Extreme Heat in Western Sydney' published on 17 February 2022 and its concluding recommendations.

- (a) Under the Increasing Resilience to Climate Change (IRCC) grants program, the NSW Government has provided \$3,482,659 total grant funding to NSW councils (over three rounds) and community groups (one round) to take action to adapt to climate change. Many of these grant projects have focused on building the capacity of councils and community groups to manage extreme heat and heat related impacts in Western Sydney.

Council projects include the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) cool suburbs project; Blacktown City Council evidence-based interventions for urban cooling; and Cumberland Council UV-smart and cool playgrounds. The Department has also supported WSROC to expand the work carried out by Waverley Council through the IRCC funded project: Future proofing residential development from climate change in NSW.

Community projects include Beyond Zero Emissions adapting households for climate change; and Wentworth community housing's Western Sydney heat and social housing. Both grant outcomes focused on providing information to households on how to manage the impacts of extreme heat in residential settings.

The Department supported the Greater Sydney Commission to deliver a climate risk assessment across the Western Sydney Place-based Infrastructure Compact program. This identified how key climate risks would change across the area and identified risk mitigation measures.

The Department has also supported the development of the School MicroClimates Guide and a climate change risk assessment informed the Making the Western Parkland City report, which includes heat mitigation.

Disability Employment

27. How many employees identify as having a disability within the Department of Energy?

(a) How many of these employees are in senior management positions?

Answer:

As at January 2022, 61 employees in the Department of Planning and Environment's Environment, Energy and Science Group identify as having a disability.

(a) As at January 2022, zero employees at Public Service senior executive level identify as having a disability.

28. How many employees identify as having a disability within the NSW Treasury?

(a) How many of these employees are in senior management positions?

Answer

17 (2.46%) of the NSW Treasury employees identify as a person with a disability (as of 28 February 2022 and excluding the NSW Small Business Commission and Business Connect staff who are transitioning to the Department of Customer Service).

(a) 3 (2.70%) employees in senior management roles identify as a person with a disability (as of 28 February 2022 and excluding NSW Small Business Commission and Business Connect staff).

Electric Vehicle purchases

29. How many EVs have been purchased since the start of:
- The NSW government rebate program
 - The NSW government stamp duty exemption program

Answer:

This question is best directed to the Minister for Transport for NSW.

30. Of those how many have claimed either the rebate or the stamp duty exemption?

Answer:

As at 26 February 2022, 1,555 rebates and 2,069 stamp duty refunds had been paid.

31. Please provide a breakdown by suburb of where those vehicles were purchased to indicate which communities are taking up the government's rebate and stamp duty exemption programs the quickest.

Answer:

See Attachment D – Supplementary Q31'.

32. What analysis has Transport for NSW done to determine the areas where demand for EVs is highest or where residents are interested in purchasing EVs?
- How will that impact decisions about where to install EV charging?

Answer:

The NSW Government analysed the results of a multi-criteria analysis accounting for metrics including number of existing car registrations, number of electric vehicle (EV) registrations, population growth by postcode, number of existing EV chargers and other factors to determine the areas where demand for EVs is highest.

- The Government has developed a roadmap for the placement of fast and ultra-fast chargers across the state through an online interactive map on the NSW Electric Vehicle Fast Charging Infrastructure Master Plan webpage.

The master plan is guided by the Government's objectives, to enable industry to construct ultra-fast charging stations no more than five kilometres apart on average in metropolitan NSW and no further than 100 kilometres apart on major highways and was informed by the multi-criteria analysis. Modelling suggests that most fast-charging stations will be used when commuting or travelling away from the home town or city, so placement next to areas of high demand for EV ownership is only one metric among many that were considered.

The Government has also modelled the uptake of EVs through to 2030 and the number of chargers that would be required to support this growth. The Government announced its EV destination charging grants as an additional program to support EV adoption across NSW.

Mole River Dam proposal

33. Has the strategic business case for Mole River Dam been reviewed by Treasury and Infrastructure NSW under the Infrastructure Investor Assurance Framework?

Answer:

Yes

34. Has the NSW Government produced a final business case for the Mole River Dam?

Answer:

No

35. Have all milestones for the Mole River Dam business case, as itemised in the Project Agreement under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund – Feasibility Component (2019 – 2025) Schedule E signed by Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce on 8 August 2021 and NSW Water Minister Melinda Pavey on 14 September 2021, been met?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who administers the Agreement.

36. Has the NSW Government received the \$12m committed under the Federal funding agreement?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who administers the Agreement.

37. How much funding from the NSW budget has been invested in developing the business case for Mole River Dam?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who is responsible for the development of the Business Case as Minister for Water Infrastructure NSW and Portfolio Minister for WaterNSW.

38. Is the NSW Government proceeding with the Mole River Dam project?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who is responsible for the development of the Business Case as Minister for Water Infrastructure NSW and Portfolio Minister for WaterNSW

Dungowan Dam & Pipeline proposal

39. Has the final business case for Dungowan Dam & Pipeline been lodged with Treasury and Infrastructure NSW for review under the Infrastructure Investor Assurance Framework?

Answer:

Yes

40. Has the failure of the Dungowan Dam & Pipeline project to meet the third milestone as itemised in the Project Agreement under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund – Capital Component (2019 – 2025) Schedule E signed by Michael McCormack on 20 December 2020 and NSW Water Minister Melinda Pavey on 22 January 2021, caused a budgetary shortfall of \$20m?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who administers the Agreement.

41. How much has the development of the Dungowan Dam & Pipeline final business case cost?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who is responsible for the development of the Business Case as Minister for Water Infrastructure NSW and Portfolio Minister for WaterNSW

42. How much of the development of the Dungowan Dam & Pipeline final business case has the NSW Government funded?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who is responsible for the development of the Business Case as Minister for Water Infrastructure NSW and Portfolio Minister for WaterNSW

43. How will the NSW Treasury view a significant increase in the cost of Dungowan Dam & Pipeline when the Productivity Commission has stated that any increase in costs will make the project unviable?

Answer:

Treasury advises the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet on all fiscal decisions including on infrastructure projects. That advice is confidential and to disclose that advice would be to reveal the deliberations of Cabinet.

44. Is the NSW Government prepared to invest above the current commitment of \$242m into the Dungowan Dam & Pipeline proposal?

Answer:

Treasury advises the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet on all fiscal decisions including on infrastructure projects. That advice is confidential and to disclose that advice would be to reveal the deliberations of Cabinet.

Macquarie Re-regulating Weir (Macquarie-Wambuul Water Security project)

45. Has Treasury reviewed the final business case for the Macquarie Re-regulating Weir?

Answer:

No

46. Was that business case rejected by the NSW Government?

Answer:

Treasury advises the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet on all fiscal decisions including on infrastructure projects. That advice is confidential and to disclose that advice would be to reveal the deliberations of Cabinet.

47. Will the rebadged project, now known as the Macquarie-Wambuul Water Security project, be costing the impacts of the project on the downstream Ramsar listed Macquarie Marshes?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who is responsible for the development of the Business Case as Minister for Water Infrastructure NSW and Portfolio Minister for WaterNSW.

Raising Wyangala Dam Wall proposal

48. Has the failure of the Wyangala Dam project to meet the second and third milestones as itemised in the Project Agreement under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund – Capital Component (2019 – 2025) Schedule E signed by Michael McCormack on 20 December 2020 and NSW Water Minister Melinda Pavey on 22 January 2021, caused a budgetary shortfall of \$40m?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who administers the Agreement.

49. What is the cost of the construction of the Wyangala Treatment Plant?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who is responsible for the development of the Business Case as Minister for Water Infrastructure NSW and Portfolio Minister for WaterNSW

50. How much has the NSW Government spent, to date, on the development of the final business case and Environmental Impact Statement for the Wyangala Dam proposal?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Lands and Water who is responsible for the development of the Business Case as Minister for Water Infrastructure NSW and Portfolio Minister for WaterNSW

51. Have the Treasury predictions, released in papers to Parliament, that the Wyangala Dam proposal may cost between \$1.2b and \$2.1b when only \$650m has been committed, shared by the federal and state governments, changed the NSW Government support for the project?

Answer:

Treasury advises the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet on all fiscal decisions including on infrastructure projects. That advice is confidential and to disclose that advice would be to reveal the deliberations of Cabinet.

52. Is the NSW Government prepared to fund the excess costs above \$650m for the Wyangala Dam proposal?

Answer:

Treasury's advises the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet on all fiscal decisions including on infrastructure projects. That advice is confidential and to disclose that advice would be to reveal the deliberations of Cabinet.

53. Does the Energy Minister continue to be sceptical as to the need for the Kurri Kurri gas fired plant? Or will the Energy Minister now acknowledge that Angus Taylor was correct to support the development of a new gas fired generator at Kurri Kurri, in a manner similar to the NSW Government-funded Tallawarra B gas-peaking plant?

Answer:

The NSW Government supports all investment to secure the reliability and affordability of electricity for the people and businesses of NSW. The Kurri Kurri Gas plant was not necessary to support the NSW electricity system's reliability following the closure of Liddell.

54. When will the first contracts under Minister Kean's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap be signed?

Answer:

Long-term energy service agreements will be entered into by the scheme financial vehicle after the independent Consumer Trustee conducts tenders and makes recommendations.

55. Will the Government commit to release the full details of each contract signed under the Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap so that NSW taxpayers will be able to see whether the Government has provided any financial support or commitments in terms of backing the relevant project?

Answer:

Contracts will be commercially confidential between the scheme financial vehicle and a long-term energy service agreement operator. An annual report will be tabled in Parliament by the Minister on the exercise of functions by entities involved in the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020*.

56. Can the Government provide details of contracts with KPMG in relation to the development of the Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap?

Answer:

KPMG provided strategic professional advice that informed the NSW Government's consideration of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap in 2020. A total of \$1,169,504 (GST exc) was paid under the contract 'Energy Transition as a foundation of NSW economic recovery'. KPMG also supported the Department of Planning and Environment by engaging with investors and other industry stakeholders. A total of \$23,187.50 (GST exc) was paid for this.

57. Can the Government provide details of contracts with KPMG in relation to the implementation of the Government's Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap?

Answer:

The Department of Planning and Environment engaged KPMG to provide accounting advice for the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap implementation. As at 28 February 2022, the total value of this contract was \$354,000 (GST exc). The Department of Planning and Environment engaged KPMG in 2021 to provide cash flow advice for the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap implementation. The total value of this contract was \$70,000 (GST exc).

The Department of Planning and Environment engaged KPMG in 2021 to provide advice on structuring and role definition of the Financial Trustee for the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap implementation. The total value of this contract was \$26,500 (GST exc).

The Department of Planning and Environment engaged KPMG to support the work on the organisational design and establishment program workstream as at 28 February 2022, the total value of this contract was \$415,150 (GST exc).

The Department of Planning and Environment engaged KPMG to support implementation of the Pumped Hydro Recoverable Grants program and as at 28 February 2022 the total value of this contract is \$422,268 (GST exc).

58. Can the Government provide details as to the processes followed in awarding these contracts to KPMG?

Answer:

Regarding the procurement of advice for the development of the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, the Department of Planning and Environment followed the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework competitive tender process in engaging KPMG for two contracts. KPMG was selected from a pool of four bids following a Request for Tender for the, 'Energy Transition as a Foundation of NSW Economic Recovery' engagement.

Regarding the accounting advice on implementation of the Roadmap, the Department followed the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework single source approach under the Performance and Management Services Scheme (PMS Scheme). KPMG was engaged for this work based on its accounting expertise and deep knowledge of the Roadmap. After variations, the total value of the engagement was \$354,000 (GST exc).

The Department engaged KPMG under a single source approach allowable under the Performance and Management Services Scheme (PMS Scheme) for the cash flow and structuring and role definition transactions noted in responses to question 57

Between July and September 2020, the Department, in accordance with NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework, ran a competitive process for Renewable Energy Zone Design and Delivery Framework involving 12 bidders across five consortia. This included an organisational design and establishment program workstream. In March 2021 that competitive process was used to appoint KPMG to deliver the organisational design and establishment stream as it was the equal highest ranked applicant for that component of the work.

KPMG was selected by the Department of Planning and Environment from a pool of four bids following a Request for Tender for Technical Advisory and Commercial Services to support implementation of the Pumped Hydro Recoverable Grants program noted in responses to question 57.

59. I refer to the announcement by Minister Kean when responding to the early closure of the Eraring Power Station on to the building of a 700MW Waratah big battery to cover the expected electricity supply shortfall:

- (a) Where will this battery be built?
- (b) When will construction be commenced?
- (c) When will the battery become operational?
- (d) What funding support will be provided by the State Government?
- (e) Is it correct that this proposed battery can only run continuously for a maximum of 2 hours?
- (f) How is a battery that can only run for a maximum of 2 hours going to be able to replace the 2800MW Eraring plant during the daily evening peak electricity demand period that runs for well over 2 hours?
- (g) How will a battery that can only run for 2 hours going to be able to replace the 2800MW Eraring plant during the Summer peak demand period in 2026?

Answer:

- (a) The procurement of the System Integrity Protection Scheme (SIPS) and network standby battery will commence in 2022.
- (b) Construction and installation will commence once the tender is finalised and final planning approvals are secured by the selected tenderer.
- (c) The current timeframe has the SIPS and network standby battery operational in approximately three years, which is well in advance of the earliest closure date of Eraring.
- (d) The NSW Government will run a competitive tender for the network standby battery and site that will be evaluated in part on the basis of price. It will be a regulated price for at least the period of time required to bridge between the closure of Eraring and the commissioning of increased high voltage transmission to deliver energy from generation sources to the demand centres. The SIPS that controls the network battery will be procured by Transgrid.

- (e) The additional network capacity provided by the SIPS battery is not limited to two hours. The SIPS battery is normally on standby to respond quickly (within a second) to a shock on the power system and its capacity is not used up while on standby. Each response to a shock may use up to half an hour of battery capacity, in which time the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) and Transgrid are required to return the power system to a secure state. The proposed SIPS battery is sized to respond to multiple shock events before needing to be charged.
- (f) There is a difference between a large-scale battery (used to store and regularly discharge energy to operate in the market to meet demand) and one used for the purpose of increasing network capacity, controlled by a SIPS. The design of a SIPS and network standby battery means it allows existing generation sources and existing transmission infrastructure to be utilised more effectively by increasing the allowable transmission network capacity. As the battery manages this by being on standby and holding charge, it is ready at all times to be triggered by the SIPS to respond immediately, the increase in transmission capacity is not limited to two hours. A SIPS battery only needs to be recharged after it responds to multiple shocks.
- (g) Please refer to <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/nsw-response-to-closure-of-eraring-power-station>.

60. Will Minister Kean now correct his statement (at page 18 of the Transcript) that he had received advice from AEMO on the unserved energy consequences of the early closure of Eraring, given this is not true?

Answer:

As the subsequent testimony shows it became clear it was clarified that AEMO's modelling was focused on the Energy Security Target under the *Electricity Infrastructure and Investment Act 2020* not the reliability standard otherwise referred to as unserved energy under the National Electricity Rules.

The subsequent testimony from the Treasurer and Mr James Hay, particularly on pages 28, 59 and 60 of the uncorrected transcript, clarified this point.

61. Why did James Hay claim the EST monitor report is a higher reliability standard than the unserved energy target, given that a capacity target is only a hypothetical reflection of available capacity (regardless if there's any power in a battery or gas in a gas generator)?

Answer:

Please refer to the response on pages 5 & 6 (question on notice number 8) of the Treasury and Energy Budget Estimates responses to questions on notice, dated February 2022.

62. Does the Government rely on these capacity targets because they lend weight to battery storage over more robust sources of supply?

Answer:

The question is entirely misconceived. All plants have different operating characteristics, it can take longer to start gas generators than batteries but they are generally run longer. Coal plants are having substantial reliability issues due to mechanical and electrical failures, yet they run for a large proportion of time. The Government relies on the EST because it ensures that the state strikes the right balance between ensuring reliability at times of peak demand and affordability

63. When will the Government publish an assessment of the unserved energy outlook, post Eraring, to give consumers a projection of likely time in blackouts?

Answer:

The Australian Energy Market Operator has advised that it plans to publish an update to the Electricity Statement of Opportunities by April 2022.

64. What is the projected cost, per MW/hr, in NSW of the firming needed for intermittent renewables under the EI Roadmap?

Answer:

The cost of firming depends on the mix of technologies deployed and how long they run. In terms of capital cost, Australian Energy Market Operator's most recent Inputs, Assumptions and Scenarios Report (IASR) assumes \$900-\$1500 per kilowatt build cost for OCGTs, \$790-\$1700 per kilowatt for battery storage and \$1800-\$5300 per kilowatt for pumped hydro in 2021–22. Reducing the costs to MW/h figures requires estimates of how long they will run.

65. What advice has Matt Howell of Tomago given the government on the outlook for his plant post-Eraring?

Answer:

The NSW Government continues to work closely with large energy users like Tomago to ensure the provision of reliable, affordable energy.

66. How much load shedding will Tomago have to bear post-Eraring? What is the maximum projected period it will be without electricity supply in shut-down?

Answer:

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has advised it plans to publish an update to the Electricity Statement of Opportunities by April 2022. This will account for the bringing forward of the closure of Eraring.

Load shedding is only required when the available generation and demand response is insufficient to meet current demand. Tomago may have commercial arrangements in place with its energy supplier and/or the AEMO to reduce demand. These arrangements are not classified as load shedding. Any load shedding that could be required would be done with reference to whether commercial arrangements have been enacted or not. Load shedding and any commercial arrangements consider the timeframes needed to keep the potlines at Tomago secure and stable.

67. How can NSW proceed with ESG principles in its fund investment strategies without knowing what this will cost the budget in maximum returns foregone?

Answer:

See response to QoN 50.

68. Why wasn't an independent ESG reviewer chosen instead of Pru Bennett who has financial interests in this area and is a fully paid-up member of the ESG fan club?

Answer:

Ms Bennett is well-credentialed and experienced on ESG matters. She has the knowledge and expertise to conduct a robust review that will help NSW become a leader in this space.

Perhaps the member would like to join me in getting a membership to the ESG fan club – I'm sure we could get a discount if we join together.

69. If the post-Eraring jobs plan is going to cost the NSW Government \$500-600,000 per job, why doesn't the Treasurer give the money to the workers to make their own investment, training and job plans? Why does the Treasurer think he can create a better economic future for these workers than they can create for themselves?

Answer:

As the world moves to decarbonise, a range of new industries will emerge, including in renewable energy manufacturing, green steel, green ammonia and green hydrogen. The NSW Government is committed to capturing the job opportunities created by these new industries within the State.

In response to the closure of Eraring Power Station, the NSW Government has announced a comprehensive plan to support up to 3700 jobs in future industries. This includes an estimated:

- 500 extra jobs from a \$250 million investment over five years in the Renewable Manufacturing Fund
- 500 extra jobs from a \$300 million investment over 10 years to expand the New Low Carbon Industry Foundations element of the Net Zero Industry and Innovation Program. This will help build the State's clean industry base, in particular the green hydrogen industry
- 2700 direct construction jobs associated with the fast-tracked delivery of critical transmission infrastructure needed to connect new sources of generation, including the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), the New England REZ and Hunter Transmission Project. This is on top of the 1200 jobs associated with the construction of Hume Link.

This funding is expected to create benefits for the NSW economy and job opportunities for NSW workers over the longer term.

70. What is the Treasurer's target for bringing the NSW Budget back into surplus under his Fiscal Repair Plan?

Answer:

The 2021-22 Half-Yearly Review provides guidance on when the Government is aiming to bring the budget back to surplus. *Box 3.2: Rebuilding the State's fiscal capacity* on page 27 outlines the Government's target to bring the Budget Result back to a surplus by 2024-25.

71. What advice has the Minister received about the energy situation in Europe, where over-reliance on renewables has governments scrambling for baseload power from new nuclear, gas and coal? What has the Minister learnt from the European energy shortages?

Answer:

The question is misconceived. Renewables have less to do with energy challenges in Europe than geopolitics.

72. When will NSW produce its first solar panels and wind towers, instead of its over-reliance on China?

Answer:

I'm glad to see that the Member wants to see renewables manufactured locally.

The NSW Renewable Energy Sector Board has prepared a plan for the NSW renewable energy sector, which sets out how to cost effectively maximise the use of local goods and services, and employ suitably qualified local workers, in the construction and operation of infrastructure under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. The Board has provided me with its plan.

The NSW Government announced a \$250 million Renewable Manufacturing Fund in February 2022, which will support initiatives to boost locally manufactured content for the renewable energy sector.

The Fund will take advantage of opportunities identified by the Renewable Energy Sector Board to establish or expand local manufacturing sites in areas of the supply chain where NSW could be competitive. This includes in wind tower fabrication, electrolyser production or battery assembly. The Fund will help secure strategic energy supply chains to ensure NSW businesses can access required equipment to replace ageing energy infrastructure.

73. Why can't Energy Australia source any hydrogen for Tallawarra B?

Answer:

Please refer to the response on page 12 (question on notice number 21) of the Treasury and Energy Budget Estimates responses to questions on notice, dated February 2022.

74. Is the Minister aware of moves by the owners of Energy Australia to sell out? What would be the consequences of a green investor buying the NSW assets and closing Mount Piper and Tallawarra B?

Answer:

The ownership of Energy Australia is a matter for its shareholders, but my expectation is that owners of large generators act responsibly.

75. Does the Minister support Federal Labor's Safeguard Mechanism policy as a complement to his own climate change, Net Zero agenda? Could he work with the policy if there's a change of Federal government?

Answer:

The NSW Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth on policies to reduce emissions in ways that create jobs, reduce the cost of living and support economic growth.

76. In hindsight, will the Minister now correct his answer regarding his claim of no meetings with Gladys Berejilkian and Leslie Williams?

Answer:

I refer the Member to my answers provided at the hearing.

77. Does the Minister recall on 10 December 2019 declaring the NSW bushfires as "the new normal" and that "the emergency is not changing" and that "We now have longer, drier periods, resulting in more drought and bushfire"? Why does the Minister continue to defy established climate science by conflating weather events with long term climate change, as he is now doing with the NSW floods?

Answer:

There is overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is impacting the frequency and intensity of weather extremes including heatwaves, extreme rainfall and adverse fire weather conditions.

78. Why doesn't the Minister follow the findings of the Ross Garnaut Report to the Rudd Government, using the best available climate science, that no one severe weather event can be linked to climate change? Where are the bushfires he predicted as the 'new normal' in the two subsequent wet and mild summers in NSW?

Answer:

The Final Report of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry prepared by SW Police Deputy Commissioner Dave Owens and Professor Mary O'Kane AC made clear the impact that climate change is having upon increased bushfire risk.

According to the recently released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report, rainfall variability associated with the El Niño-Southern Oscillation is very likely to increase in the second half of the century, leading to more very wet and very dry years. NSW saw unprecedented flooding in 2021 and 2022 associated with La Niña events. A warming atmosphere, coupled with a warmer ocean, increases the likelihood of more rain occurring during La Niña events.

79. When will the Minister stop linking single weather events to climate change and damaging the climate advocacy he professes to hold dear for "saving the planet"?

Answer:

Extreme events are more likely when natural climate variability acts to amplify the influence of climate change. This is routinely discussed and illustrated with reference to events within the Australian Bureau of Meteorology's State of the Climate reports.

80. Has Energy Australia had any discussions with the Minister and/or his Department on

- (a) problems with operating its Mt Piper plant because of coal supply difficulties and/or
- (b) the prospect of early closure of the Mt Piper plant?

Answer:

The NSW Government regularly engages with large energy companies on matters affecting their business operations.

ATTACHMENT D

Supplementary Question 31

Please provide a breakdown by suburb of where those vehicles were purchased to indicate which communities are taking up the government's rebate and stamp duty exemption programs the quickest.

Answer

The postcodes that have the highest take-up rate with 5 or more rebates or stamp duty refunds as at 26 February 2022 have been provided in the tables below.

Postcodes with 5 or more rebates as at 26 February 2022

123 of 381 rebate receiving postcodes are shown below.

2155	32	2076	9	2486	7	2035	5
2153	25	2090	9	2550	7	2038	5
2066	24	2093	9	2763	7	2041	5
2154	21	2096	9	2009	6	2047	5
2250	21	2118	9	2022	6	2063	5
2065	20	2120	9	2025	6	2072	5
2126	20	2135	9	2034	6	2085	5
2026	16	2171	9	2036	6	2087	5
2068	16	2768	9	2040	6	2122	5
2075	16	2000	8	2046	6	2143	5
2070	15	2069	8	2077	6	2146	5
2765	15	2097	8	2086	6	2150	5
2031	14	2113	8	2092	6	2158	5
2074	14	2117	8	2099	6	2213	5
2127	14	2119	8	2101	6	2234	5
2137	13	2166	8	2103	6	2251	5
2620	13	2444	8	2151	6	2257	5
2088	12	2560	8	2179	6	2487	5
2071	11	2769	8	2204	6	2533	5
2073	11	2020	7	2210	6	2540	5
2125	11	2110	7	2232	6	2567	5
2145	11	2115	7	2259	6	2582	5
2017	10	2121	7	2261	6	2640	5
2030	10	2138	7	2287	6	2761	5
2067	10	2156	7	2485	6	2762	5
2095	10	2165	7	2515	6	2770	5
2107	10	2170	7	2565	6	2780	5
2112	10	2207	7	2570	6		
2176	10	2220	7	2577	6		
2211	10	2284	7	2745	6		
2260	10	2450	7	2019	5		
2478	10	2481	7	2023	5		

ATTACHMENT DPostcodes with 5 or more stamp duty refunds as at 26 February 2022

165 of 416 refund receiving postcodes are shown below.

2155	36	2000	10	2036	7	2487	6
2153	33	2121	10	2040	7	2536	6
2065	31	2125	10	2063	7	2575	6
2066	31	2176	10	2087	7	2761	6
2154	28	2220	10	2106	7	2795	6
2250	26	2229	10	2158	7	2008	5
2074	22	2550	10	2211	7	2019	5
2126	22	2565	10	2234	7	2021	5
2070	21	2769	10	2251	7	2022	5
2620	21	2017	9	2259	7	2023	5
2765	20	2046	9	2315	7	2029	5
2026	18	2072	9	2450	7	2049	5
2031	18	2090	9	2515	7	2060	5
2073	18	2092	9	2540	7	2079	5
2088	18	2095	9	2557	7	2111	5
2127	18	2101	9	2577	7	2141	5
2260	16	2117	9	2582	7	2143	5
2067	15	2170	9	2750	7	2144	5
2068	15	2171	9	2780	7	2165	5
2075	15	2204	9	2009	6	2205	5
2137	15	2485	9	2018	6	2207	5
2076	14	2762	9	2024	6	2212	5
2145	14	2768	9	2025	6	2213	5
2481	14	2020	8	2027	6	2225	5
2135	13	2032	8	2034	6	2233	5
2030	12	2047	8	2035	6	2261	5
2041	12	2077	8	2037	6	2263	5
2071	12	2086	8	2062	6	2285	5
2096	12	2099	8	2103	6	2305	5
2107	12	2115	8	2110	6	2430	5
2112	12	2118	8	2119	6	2482	5
2210	12	2138	8	2122	6	2483	5
2444	12	2174	8	2146	6	2508	5
2478	12	2179	8	2148	6	2526	5
2560	12	2223	8	2150	6	2619	5
2010	11	2232	8	2156	6	2747	5
2069	11	2567	8	2166	6	2770	5
2093	11	2570	8	2257	6	2774	5
2097	11	2640	8	2284	6	2830	5
2113	11	2745	8	2287	6		
2120	11	2763	8	2291	6		
2576	11	2011	7	2480	6		