

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 25 AUGUST 2022
MINISTER FOR SKILLS AND TRAINING, SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND
TECHNOLOGY
TRANSCRIPT QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1, PAGE NO 5,6,49

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Surely you must be looking at enrolment data because, ultimately, that's about asset utilisation. Take Lidcombe campus. On our analysis, Lidcombe had 6,475 enrolments in 2011. It now has 2,756.

STEPHEN BRADY: I think we've already said that that data isn't valid, and we can't draw a conclusion off the back of it.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Are enrolments declining at Lidcombe? Do you have any idea about that?

STEPHEN BRADY: I don't have that data available to me.

BELINDA MACKINNON: I don't have that data at hand, but I'm happy to take that on—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: You don't have that data. You know you are going to be asked questions on those—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Point of order: If the witnesses don't have the data at hand, they are entitled to be able to take the question on notice and then come back to the Committee within 21 days, as to the resolution, with that information.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: There is a story running in the Telegraph today on enrolment numbers. You come to estimates and you don't have accurate figures. Is that what you're telling us?

The CHAIR: Just to rule on the point of order and perhaps bring some clarity to the questions and answers. The situation seems to be that the TAFE officials are saying the methodology for raw enrolment numbers is not one that they depend on, but they do have utilisation rate numbers. It might be useful for the Committee if the utilisation rate numbers over the past decade for every campus could be provided to us on notice to give us an accurate steer on what you regard to be the accurate data.

STEPHEN BRADY: Thank you, Chair. We'll take that on notice. The concern I will raise is that we operate in a contestable market. When we get down to finite levels of data it is commercially sensitive. We do compete against other registered training organisations. When we start to provide quite finite data it allows our competitors to identify where there might be opportunities. We will take the question on notice and provide what level of information we can without putting ourselves commercially at jeopardy.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Do you have no idea what's going on at Lidcombe? Is it your evidence that there's no decline in enrolments at Lidcombe, that campus utilisation is not in decline over a long time?

STEPHEN BRADY: I think I've taken the question on notice, Mr D'Adam.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: No, you've taken on notice the specific numbers. You must have some idea. You come to this hearing as the CEO of the organisation. You must have some idea whether particular campuses are being utilised to their full extent and whether you are seeing declining utilisation in those campuses. I'm asking you about Lidcombe. Is it your understanding that that campus has had declining utilisation over a long period?

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STEPHEN BRADY: I do not have specific data on the Lidcombe campus with me today. I'm happy to take that question on notice.

The CHAIR: Without eating into your time, earlier on Mr Brady and I think Mr Collins were going to come back with some data about campus by campus utilisation numbers. Has that happened?

STEPHEN BRADY: We haven't got that data yet, Mr Latham. It will take some time to pull that together.

The CHAIR: It won't be available today?

STEPHEN BRADY: I doubt it will be available today.

ANSWER

Due to the contestable market in which TAFE NSW operates, it does not publicly provide a breakdown of enrolment numbers by campus

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QUESTION 2, PAGE NO 2

The CHAIR: In your time as Minister, how many discussions have you had with Amy Brown about matters relevant to your department?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I'd need to take that on notice as to the number

ANSWER

During the course of my work as Minister, I have met with Amy Brown on a number of occasions to discuss matters relating to my portfolio.

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QUESTION 3, PAGE NO 9

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I draw your attention to section 23 of the Government Sector Employment Act? Section 23 (4) states:
Appointments to the office of Secretary of a Department are to be made by the Minister.

You actually do have the authority.

The CHAIR: That's a good point. Who appointed Ms Brown originally?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I don't know. I'll need to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: But a Minister did? Minister Ayres, I assume?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I don't know. I'll need to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: Minister, at the moment Ms Brown is on sick leave. Say she never came back and resigned, who then would appoint the next departmental secretary?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: My understanding—and I've taken that on notice—

ANSWER

Ms Amy Brown was appointed Secretary of the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade by the employer, the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, on 31 January 2022.

Under section 23(4) of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, appointments to the office of Secretary of a department are to be made by the Premier. That power may be delegated under section 81 of the Government Sector Employment Act. As the Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade does not have any current delegation in that respect, these questions should be directed to the Premier.

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QUESTION 4, PAGE NO 11

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, how many times have you met with Amy Brown?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Again, I would need take that on notice. I have certainly met with her on a number of occasions and had, I think, videoconferences and other meetings with her. So we can get the exact number on notice.

ANSWER

I meet with Department officials at various times to discuss matters relating to my portfolio.

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QUESTION 5, PAGE NO 11

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: My understanding is I think that's two weeks ago today. When were you advised that she was going on leave?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I think I was advised that she was going on leave the day that it was announced to the department that she was going on leave.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: What was that date?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I don't know. I'd need to take that on notice.

ANSWER

I was advised on August 12.

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QUESTION 6, PAGE NO 24

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: How many employees are there at Trenayr?

JULIE TICKLE: I don't have that in front of me. I would have to take that on notice. May I clarify again? When you say, "How many employees are there at Trenayr?", what we need to look at is not necessarily how many employees. The question doesn't quite make sense, if I may, respectfully, because it doesn't mean that the people aren't working at particular campuses.

ANSWER

There is one full time staff member who has identified Trenayr campus as their base campus. TAFE NSW staff do work from multiple campus locations depending on delivery requirements, regardless of their base campus.

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QUESTION 7, PAGE NO 29

DAVID BACKLEY: Well, the solution that is provided—the solution is underpinned by the Oracle Corporation, not a very small company. PeopleSoft Campus is used around the world. We are using it here for a vocational solution. I don't think Oracle will be taking their product obsolete in the next few years.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: You don't think so.

DAVID BACKLEY: I am happy to take that on notice, but I have had this discussion with Oracle.

ANSWER

Oracle has advised TAFE NSW of its planned Peoplesoft strategy and roadmap through to 2032.

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QUESTION 8, PAGE NO 32, 49

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I might ask, Mr Collins appears to be the man who's got the figures. You talked about the funding to private providers. How much of the total spend is going to private providers?

DAVID COLLINS: Overall in terms of the allocations that we are managing, it is about—I would take it on notice so I can give it to you accurately—but it is about 25 per cent.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I am asking for the figure, what's the dollar figure?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Point of order: Mr Collins indicated that he would take it on notice to give an accurate figure.

The CHAIR: He is taking on notice the precise percentage. He has now been asked a separate question, what does that convert to in dollars.

DAVID COLLINS: I would like to come back to you on it. I can probably come back this afternoon with a dollar value as well.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: That would be good. The budget figures, the allocation is to the TAFE Commission. I am assuming that that proportion is within that budget figure. Is that correct? Of the 1.996 in the budget papers for the TAFE Commission, that 25 per cent that you suggest is out of that figure. Is that right?

DAVID COLLINS: The \$119 billion is direct funding to TAFE. It does include some of the TAFE's contestable funding, but that is funding for TAFE. The money that I am referring to is not taken out of that amount.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It is in addition to that amount. Is that right?

DAVID COLLINS: It is in addition to the \$1.9 billion.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: The global figure, you will come back to us with that. Is that correct?

DAVID COLLINS: You asked about the figure that goes to the private market.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Yes.

DAVID COLLINS: And I will come back with precision on that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Minister—

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: TAFE is roughly \$2 billion operational budget. We've got a \$3.1 billion skills budget. I can't give you the entire breakup between the \$2 billion and the \$3 billion, but that is the sort of numbers that we are talking about in this year's budget.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Perhaps on notice Mr Collins might be able to provide us with the detail of the breakup of the additional billion over the funding for TAFE.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Can I ask you to also provide us the not for profits as well. We have asked for privates, we would like not for profits as well as to TAFE. The full picture.

DAVID COLLINS: The figure will be for non-TAFE providers.

The CHAIR: Mr Collins, you had something to bring back after lunch as well, is that right?

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DAVID COLLINS: I had taken on notice the point about the split of funding for private and community providers. I need to take that on notice. I did say I might bring it back this afternoon, but I need to make sure it is accurate.

ANSWER

For FY2022-23 the total Skills Budget is \$3.1 billion which includes \$2.8 billion in recurrent and \$321 million in capital investments.

TAFE NSW has been allocated \$2.3 billion which includes \$2 billion in recurrent and \$319 million in capital investments.

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QUESTION 9, PAGE NO 35

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011, you are responsible for approving courses. Is that correct?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I'd need to defer to Mr Collins.

DAVID COLLINS: You give a New South Wales position, yes.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: We give a position, but my understanding is that it's a Federal system and all we have is input into that Federal system.

DAVID COLLINS: You do, on behalf of the State, endorse or support the courses that are created.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: How many have you endorsed, Minister, in nine months?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I'm not sure. I'll need to take that on notice in terms of the number.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Mr Collins, do you have any information?

DAVID COLLINS: I'd need to take it on notice as well.

ANSWER

From December 2021 to August 2022, 23 training packages were endorsed by the Minister after they were supported by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee. This involved the Minister endorsing 105 new or updated qualifications.

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QUESTION 10, PAGE NO 39, 69

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, I understand. That's good general information. I'm asking you specifically about the cert III in retail that was due to run—this was a course that was going to run online through Bega TAFE. It would have a hugely significant impact on the students who were enrolled to participate in that course. Yet, with the stroke of a pen, these students missed out. Can you explain why you wouldn't have a little bit of flexibility with implementing minimum class sizes for such a course?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: My understanding is that there is flexibility.

The CHAIR: Has Ms Mackinnon got the answer?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I think Ms Mackinnon might have more information about that.

BELINDA MACKINNON: I don't know the specifics of that certificate III in retail at Bega. I'll undertake to have a look why that occurred. What you're talking about in terms of the flexibility of minimum numbers absolutely is taken into consideration. So, as I said, I will look at that one. That's why we have flexible delivery models, and models where we'll have a delivery location and three students in Bega, five students in West Wyalong, or whatever, to ensure that we can operate and offer those rural communities—not just rural communities, metros in the same instance—an opportunity to undertake the course of their choosing.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: But what this is showing—

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: That's a good example, if I may add, of why the investment of our Government in 20 connected learning centres, and in connected learning points within existing TAFEs, is so important. It actually provides more opportunities for learning in regional areas than under the traditional model, which you so passionately speak about, 12 years or so ago. It's important for TAFE to embrace the opportunities of technology in terms of broadening the footprint of students who can learn.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, we've talked a lot about connected learning centres in these hearings previously. This specific example shows a cert III in retail that was due to run online at Bega TAFE and yet still got cancelled. Can you see now that even online students in rural and regional areas are missing out, if you're going to have these arbitrary applications?

BELINDA MACKINNON: As I said, Ms Houssos, I'll be able to undertake to look into the details of that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I ask about where we landed on the Bega retail course? I think you were going to come back with some further information.

BELINDA MACKINNON: I'm still waiting on those details, Mr D'Adam.

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ANSWER

A learner's enrolment in the campus-based Certificate III in Retail at Bega campus was withdrawn as the course was unable to proceed due to insufficient student demand, with only one active enrolment.

The original course commencement date of 20 July 2022 was extended to 10 August 2022 to allow more time for any interested students to enrol, however, no further enrolments eventuated.

TAFE NSW offered the learner the option to undertake the Certificate III in Retail via virtual classroom commencing in October 2022 as well as a different course aligned to the learner's identified goals offered for Semester 2, 2022.

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QUESTION 11, PAGE NO 43

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Minister, how much money has been allocated to and how much money has been spent on the Western Sydney Airport TAFE Skills Exchange?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: I would need to defer to, I think, Ms Harrisson and her staff.

STEPHEN BRADY: Skills Exchange is a TAFE—

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Or is that for you, Mr Brady?

STEPHEN BRADY: The Skills Exchange is a way in which we engage with industry around large programs. Obviously, for Western Sydney Airport, there's a very large construction program that's occurring there. We establish a capability on site to help to bring in new workers, train them and support the delivery of those large programs. For the western Sydney, I don't have specific data. We do have a small office in Parramatta that supports the delivery of that training. Ms Mackinnon?

BELINDA MACKINNON: I certainly don't have the dollar figure, but we can find that out. Mr Brady is correct that we are absolutely engaged with the aerotropolis and the western Sydney connex scenario to ensure that we're training those people interested and the existing employees for the skills to undertake that employment and build of the western aerotropolis et cetera.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: If you can just—you're going to take on notice how much money has been allocated to it and how much money has been actually spent of that allocation?

ANSWER

\$219,000 was allocated for Financial Year 2021/22 and the amount spent was \$256,000. The variance in expenditure includes delays to training commencement due to COVID-19.

The actual cost of training was separately funded under the Smart and Skilled program.

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QUESTION 12, PAGE NO 44

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Not a single student has enrolled at the Multiversity. In fact, I think there were a couple of expressions of interest and they got redirected back to the universities themselves. Is there going to be any training that is happening out there—TAFE, universities, anyone?

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Absolutely. But I'd ask Mr Collins for an update on that.

The CHAIR: Mr Collins, how many students have you got there?

DAVID COLLINS: This is another one we will need to take on notice. I understand that the Multiversity is jointly funded. It has secured Commonwealth funding for Commonwealth student places because the Commonwealth is actually the funder of higher education student places. I understood that it had commenced enrolments from the middle of 2021.

The CHAIR: It may have, but how many students are enrolled? It could be zero.

DAVID COLLINS: I don't have that information, I'm sorry.

The CHAIR: Maybe you can do a bit more research on that and have a crack.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: As the Minister responsible for tertiary education, we'd expect that you would know what is going on with skills and training in the aerotropolis.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: It is progressing, as I understand it. It's a partnership between many different organisations. It's a new concept. But we will need to take it on notice as to that matter of enrolments.

ANSWER

Please see answer to Budget Estimates 2021-2022 March 2022 hearing transcript question 31.

The NUW Alliance is responsible for the Multiversity and further information can be found on their website.

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QUESTION 13, PAGE NO 45, 46

The CHAIR: Thanks, everyone. It's 2 o'clock so we can resume, with our new seating configuration. I will commence the questioning regarding TAFE matters. TAFE diplomas are very important, with credits often leading to a university degree. Since the start of November 2021, why has the process of advising students that they've been accepted into the popular online diplomas collapsed, with many students not contacted and not even knowing that they're enrolled? Please, whoever is in charge of online diploma enrolment?

DAVID COLLINS: That would be Ms Mackinnon.

BELINDA MACKINNON: Thanks, Mr Latham. I am not aware that the process has collapsed at all. The application process is one where, in many cases, we need to assess portfolios and then make sure that they meet the requirements and entry requirements of courses as well.

The CHAIR: Right. You're unaware of the problem of students not even knowing that they've been accepted for enrolment?

BELINDA MACKINNON: I haven't heard that one, but I'm happy to take any details that you've got, Mr Latham.

The CHAIR: What sort of quality control do you have in that space?

BELINDA MACKINNON: We've certainly been monitoring the length of time that any of our inquiries take to be responded to and, equally, application processes, ensuring that they're assessed in as timely a manner as possible. In some cases, though, the process is held up, not by TAFE NSW; it's held up by students actually responding to the requirements in front of them.

The CHAIR: What's the average time from an inquiry to enrolment?

BELINDA MACKINNON: I would have to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: Can you? Has that been increasing, that average time, in the past couple of years—if you could take that on notice?

ANSWER

Most Diploma level qualifications have specific entry requirements as part of the training package such as previous study or industry experience. A learner's eligibility is assessed and applicants who are eligible, and have also completed their enrolment application are offered a place.

Successful applicants are emailed information on how to accept their place either online, by telephone, at a local campus or via the online chat.

Where a learner has not accepted their enrolment offer within two days of it being made, three additional attempts are made via SMS and email. Following the fourth attempt the learner is withdrawn and informed via email.

The average time from enquiry to enrolment for TAFE NSW TAFE Digital Diplomas between November 2021 and August 2022 is 10.77 days.

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QUESTION 14, PAGE NO 46

JULIE TICKLE: Yes. We have a number of student service centres—one in Port Macquarie, there's one in Kingscliff. They're all across the State, so I wouldn't say it's accurate to say that it was moved to Port Macquarie. We have a number of hubs where we have student services and we have student services, like many of our employees, across the entire State.

The CHAIR: When was that Port Macquarie office opened?

JULIE TICKLE: I would have to take it on notice. I work in that region so I know it's been there for quite some time. But I have to take specifically on notice that question.

The CHAIR: —who facilitated the Port Macquarie move?

JULIE TICKLE: Not that I'm aware of, but in terms of administrators, could you give me a little bit more detail on what you're asking and then I'll take the question on notice.

The CHAIR: I was told reliably that the Port Macquarie office was established in a way that downgraded Strathfield and some of the Sydney people just lost their jobs.

JULIE TICKLE: Not that I'm aware of, Mr Latham. As I said, we have student service centres across the State. It's actually really great that that happens, actually—for example, in the recent floods in the northern rivers, we opened Kingscliff to the public and we were able to not have a kind of downturn in the way that we accepted enrolments because we have hubs across the rest of the State, and Port Macquarie was one of those that helped out. But I'll take the question on notice.

ANSWER

In November 2015, TAFE NSW staffed a Customer Contact Centre located in Port Macquarie. This now operates as a Shared Service Centre supporting student administration services state-wide.

The move to a single state-wide operating model saw an increase in headcount at both Strathfield and Port Macquarie campuses of 19 and 18 staff, respectively.

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QUESTION 15, PAGE NO 46, 47

The CHAIR: Okay. Since Mr Black departed, what's been the relative growth of managers employed to teachers employed in TAFE?

STEPHEN BRADY: Ms Tickle, would you have that?

JULIE TICKLE: Yes. If you would just let me find my notes. In terms of executive employees at TAFE, we have senior executives employed in a couple of different ways at TAFE. As I said in March in front of this Committee, we are transitioning our senior executives across to the public service senior executive framework. Prior to that, and in fact when Mr Jon Black was the managing director, senior executives of TAFE were employed under two different ways—one was a TAFE common law contract—and our senior executives were also employed, and continue to be employed, under the TAFE managers agreement. We still have each of those types of employment. In terms of the change, I can provide to you how many people were paid the equivalent, if you like. So that's a total of 108 TAFE employees that are paid a salary equivalent or above the public service senior executive level at 30 June, which is actually the same—for your information, Chair—as 30 June 2021.

The CHAIR: What about previous years—2020, 2019, 2018?

JULIE TICKLE: I don't have that, but it would be provided in our annual report, I believe, so I'm happy to take that question on notice.

ANSWER

Information about employees is available in TAFE NSW's Annual Report.

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QUESTION 16, PAGE NO 47

The CHAIR: What sort of questions are asked? Is there a view expressed about management, the line manager and confidence in them?

JULIE TICKLE: Yes. From memory, and I'm doing this off the top of my head, but I believe there's 152—or thereabouts—questions in the survey. I completed it myself on Monday. It takes about 20 minutes to complete and there's a range of questions. It's the same questions that are asked of all agencies across the public service. We do have a number of customer questions that are asked for TAFE as well so, yes, there is a category around leadership.

The CHAIR: What has been the feedback there?

JULIE TICKLE: If you just bear with me, I've got that in front of me. So there is a number of questions. Senior leaders is a category under the PMES. Some results that the Committee may find useful—56 per cent of staff said that senior managers keep them informed about what's going on. That's actually an increase in our pulse result, actually, from 2021. In terms of the 2021 result for senior leaders, I'll just see if I can find that. I don't have it in front of me, Mr Latham. I may be able to come back to it if I find it in my notes.

ANSWER

Full results of the 2021 PMES for TAFE NSW are available on the Public Service Commission website.

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QUESTION 17, PAGE NO 48

The CHAIR: I am after a breakdown of those recruitment decisions you have been involved in along gender lines—how many women have been recruited under your watch versus how many men? Have you ever been presented within TAFE of a suggestion that there is a male bias against male recruitment? A number of men have said that they don't bother applying for these promotions and positions because they think they've got no chance.

JULIE TICKLE: I would completely disagree with that statement. We recruit people based on merit, on their suitability for the role, their experience, all of the things. If a male candidate has all of those things, then he would be the candidate that goes forward. If a female candidate has all of those things, then she would be. So I don't agree with that statement.

The CHAIR: If I can just get the data on the decisions you have been involved in over the two years, the gender breakdown and also more generally across the organisation, that would be helpful, on notice?

JULIE TICKLE: Yes, certainly. In our annual report we absolutely talk about our diversity targets and women and leadership roles of women across the organisation is one of those targets. As you know, it is a Premier's target. But I can provide the information you want on notice.

ANSWER

During Financial Year 2020/21 and Financial Year 2021/22, the Chief People and Culture Officer was the convenor of three recruitment panels for six vacant roles. Male candidates were successful for five of the six roles.

As at June 2022, 63% of the TAFE NSW workforce are female.

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QUESTION 18, PAGE NO 49

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: I would like to understand what's happening at Trenayr campus. We have put stats forward, which I accept the agency is saying should be highly qualified. But is it the case that the numbers overall in that area are trending down?

BELINDA MACKINNON: I would have to take advice on that, absolutely.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW Grafton is the primary campus in the region. Areas in which courses are delivered at Trenayr, which is an annex of Grafton campus, include Horticulture, Land Management and Rural Operations.

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QUESTION 19, PAGE NO 52

The CHAIR: Ms Tickle, based on our earlier conversation, there's widespread support for gender targets that are fifty-fifty, which always seems eminently fair and doable. Why does TAFE Digital have over 80 per cent of women in all roles above base-level teacher roles and less than 20 per cent male?

JULIE TICKLE: Mr Latham, I'll have to take on notice TAFE Digital, but I can provide to you our complete employment. This year, 63 per cent of our overall employees are women. In FY21 it was 63.3 per cent. In FY20 it was 62.9 per cent. In terms of your earlier question about recruitment that I've personally been involved in, in the last couple of months I've been involved in two recruitment actions. I convened the panel along with my colleague Mr Naidoo and our chair, Danny O'Connor, for some of our new Executive Directors Education and Skills. We had four roles to fill—three were filled by men and one by a woman. We have six of those roles because they're our new roles instead of the regional general managers, and the split is 50-50. We have three males and three females.

The CHAIR: Right, but I asked over the two-year period. You'll also take TAFE Digital on notice. Is that right?

JULIE TICKLE: I beg your pardon?

The CHAIR: I asked over two years, but will you also take the TAFE Digital numbers on notice?

JULIE TICKLE: Yes, certainly. I can.

The CHAIR: That's roles above base-level teacher.

ANSWER

As at 30 June 2022, 75% of TAFE Digital employees in positions above base-level teacher are female and 25% are male.

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QUESTION 20, PAGE NO 52

The CHAIR: That depends where you're looking. How many head teachers have not maintained the required 10 hours of direct student teaching per week through 2021 and 2022?

JULIE TICKLE: We have Band 1, 2 and 3 head teachers and they deliver different hours based on what band they're at, so they don't all have 10 hours to deliver. We would need to take the question on notice. We have a number of head teachers across the State.

ANSWER

It is not possible to provide data for the 2022 academic year as Head Teachers have an annualised teaching hour requirement. Records indicate that 92 Head Teachers did not meet their annualised teaching hour requirement in 2021.

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QUESTION 21, PAGE NO 52

The CHAIR: Okay. Three years ago, OTEN, now known as TAFE Digital, was regarded as rivers of gold financially for TAFE. Now I'm told it's in decline. In each of the TAFE Digital faculty areas, what is the level of student engagement, the percentage of students logging into their courses and the assessment submissions not lodged?

JULIE TICKLE: I will refer that question to Ms Mackinnon.

BELINDA MACKINNON: Thanks, Mr Latham and Ms Tickle. I'd have to take that on notice to delve into the details that you've provided there.

ANSWER

The number of students logged into the platform is an incomplete measure of student engagement.

Online students engage in their student journey in a variety of ways and to different levels depending on learning style and support needs.

The TAFE Digital self-directed mode of delivery allows students to submit their assessments in a flexible timeframe.

A review of active online enrolments in calendar year 2021 shows that 67% of students submitted an assessment.

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QUESTION 22, PAGE NO 52

The CHAIR: Okay. If I could get data, say, for the last five or six years—the OTEN period and then the revenue that's come in with TAFE Digital, to raise a comparison. What are the participation revenue and other KPI statistics for the last 12 months of OTEN and the last 12 months of TAFE Digital? That's not COVID affected because it's online.

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll take that on notice, thank you.

ANSWER

TAFE Digital revenue from Financial Year 2017/18 to Financial Year 2021/22 is:

TAFE DIGITAL - ACTUAL TOTAL REVENUE	
Financial Year	\$M
FY18	171.0
FY19	172.0
FY20	181.9
FY21	204.3
FY22	194.7

The table below shows TAFE Digital enrolments as a proportion of TAFE NSW enrolments between 2014 and 2021.

Reporting Year	TAFE Digital % of total enrolments
2014	20%
2015	24%
2016	26%
2017	23%
2018	22%
2019	23%
2020	42%
2021	28%

The higher proportion of enrolments in TAFE Digital during 2020 and 2021 were due to the COVID-19 Fee Free Short Courses and Lockdown Learning courses.

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QUESTION 23, PAGE NO 54

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Yes. I wanted to ask what the status is of the implementation of the recommendations? In particular, recommendation 9, which is, "That TAFE analyses treatment of prior reports of corruption, including public interest disclosures, to further inform its corruption prevention planning efforts."

STEPHEN BRADY: My information is that we are partially complete in that activity. We have been going back through and assessing. We have some more work to do. I will just see if I've got any more detail. The action is that we have analysed prior reports of corruption and are undertaking further analysis. We are currently in the process of updating the fraud and corruption plan based on the insights coming out of that analysis.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: How many incidents of public interest disclosures were involved in that analysis?

STEPHEN BRADY: I would have to take the question on notice, Mr D'Adam.

ANSWER

The analysis of prior matters involved 27 public interest disclosure investigations.

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QUESTION 24, PAGE NO 55

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Perhaps on notice you could provide some detail on the responses that you've undertaken to the other recommendations of that report, if that's possible?

STEPHEN BRADY: Very happy to.

ANSWER

As at 31 August 2022, of the 13 specific recommendations, TAFE NSW has fully completed recommendations 3, 4 and 13 and partially completed actions in 10 recommendations in its action plan, which is available on the ICAC website. By February 2023, a further 4 recommendations will have been completed, noting recommendation 14 is an independent review following completion of recommendations 1 – 13.

Significant resources are being invested to ensure the people, process and systems related actions are progressing broadly in line with the planned timeline. By December 2022, TAFE NSW will have achieved substantial improvement from its base state, with over 200 senior staff trained as nominated disclosure officers - more than recommended by the ICAC, a pilot of the online enterprise employee complaints systems underway and remaining regional data centres closed.

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QUESTION 25, PAGE NO 55

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It attracted some media, as I understand it, at the Hunter TAFE campus, and it related to a staff member giving dishonest directions to staff to complete timesheets and other associated records with time and attendance. Does that ring a bell, Ms Tickle?

JULIE TICKLE: Yes, I do believe I know the incident you're referring to. It's a historical matter and, as you said, it has received quite a lot of attention so it's quite public. In terms of actions taken, we did a number of things including what we call a manual or a handbook, the teacher program diaries, or TPD, which I guess is what you could say is the teacher timesheets. So all teachers are required to understand that. We also, just in the last 12 months, have rolled out training for our incoming teachers and head teachers. The head teacher version is called "head teacher essentials" and that includes a lot of information around how teachers should be scheduled, how to operate correctly under the enterprise agreement. We actually consulted with the Teachers Federation and took feedback from them in terms of what we would put into the modules in that head teacher essentials program.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: The internal report had a low-level finding of corruption. What happened to the employee against whom the findings were made?

JULIE TICKLE: I would need to take the question on notice because the incident is quite old. We do have information on that, but it's not in the folders for today because the incident is quite old. There were a number of actions taken around a number of employees concerned.

ANSWER

The investigation found that one manager had engaged in misconduct and low-level corrupt conduct. The manager was the subject of disciplinary action as well as a reasonable and lawful direction about future conduct which has involved the provision of training.

The independent report clearly states that there is no evidence that any of the staff members in question performed unpaid work.

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QUESTION 26, PAGE NO 55, 66

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: On notice can you provide information about the specifics of the back pay, if any, that applied to those staff who were affected by this incident?

JULIE TICKLE: In Hamilton? Yes, I can.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Ms Tickle, earlier you advised about the related duties underpayment. I ask a further question about that. How much did that cost in terms of the process of remediation and how much was actually repaid?

JULIE TICKLE: Thank you for the question. In terms of remediation, we did that internally, so there's not a cost associated. Our payroll team and our workplace relations team worked together to determine what the backpay needed to be. I would need to take on notice what the actual backpay amount is. I don't have that today.

ANSWER

No one involved in the workplace investigation that was conducted in Commercial Cookery at the Hamilton campus was underpaid which means that no back-pay was required.

Across NSW, a total of approximately \$4.9 million was paid following a review undertaken by TAFE NSW. The review included proactively seeking out employees in identified areas who may not have been paid for related duties performed since 2010.

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QUESTION 27, PAGE NO 56

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: How many public interest disclosure investigations have been conducted in the last five years?

JULIE TICKLE: That would be a question for Mr Bowes. We don't look after PIDs in my section.

STEPHEN BRADY: I think we'll have to take that question on notice, Mr D'Adam.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Sure. How many staff have been found to have engaged in corrupt conduct following any of those public interest disclosures?

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll take that on notice as well.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Of those staff who've been found to have engaged in corrupt conduct arising out of a public interest disclosure, how many are still employed at TAFE?

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll add that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What's the average cost of investigations?

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll take that on notice.

ANSWER

60 public interest disclosure investigations have been conducted in the last five years.

29 staff have been found to have engaged in corrupt conduct following those public interest disclosure investigations.

Four employees remain at TAFE NSW. These employees had sustained findings pertaining to conflict of interest and false recording of time worked.

Where sustained findings are made as a result of a workplace investigation, and termination of employment is not a proportionate or reasonable outcome, other disciplinary options are utilised such as verbal or written warnings and directions.

The average cost for a typical workplace investigation is approximately \$10,000. There are workplace investigations that do cost more because they are more complex such as having a broader scope, more allegations that comprise the complaint(s), or a large number of participants.

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QUESTION 28, PAGE NO 58, 59

The CHAIR: Just following up there, Ms Braid, when the current Government promised at the last election to halve the New South Wales immigration intake, they also said they were seeking a bigger role with input with the Commonwealth regarding the distribution of skilled migration places in the regions to match regional skill needs up against the destinations for skilled migrants around New South Wales. Has that role been upgraded, and is the State happy with the input that we have to ensure that our regions are filling their skill gaps?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: Mr Chair, I might just comment that Regional NSW would be able to provide some specific information in relation to employment opportunities across the regions. Given the focus this issue, I think, has had at National Cabinet, the Premier and the head of DPC may also be able to provide some information on those engagements with the Federal Government.

The CHAIR: What are you saying, I need to go to their estimates?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: I think that they have the lead in those issues, Chair, and would be able to help you with your inquiries.

The CHAIR: You've got nothing there, Ms Braid, that comes from your collaboration with Regional NSW on skills?

LISA BRAID: I understand that New South Wales' regional skilled migration program is delivered with assistance from Regional Development Australia officers around the State, who are operating under contract with the New South Wales Government. To further support regional development in New South Wales, innovation and investment program for migration makes concessions for migrants seeking to establish or invest into regional areas of New South Wales.

The CHAIR: Who calls the shots there? They're Commonwealth-funded but you said under contract from New South Wales. How does that work?

LISA BRAID: I will take that on notice.

The CHAIR: There's a specific New South Wales program, is there, to have these regional development officers do special work from our point of view—from the New South Wales point of view—for the distribution of skilled migrants?

LISA BRAID: The regional skilled migration program is delivered with assistance from the Regional Development Australia officers around the State, who operate under contract with the New South Wales Government. So I understand there is an agreement in place.

The CHAIR: Could you furnish the terms of the agreement and how it works in practice? It's an open question, isn't it, that these are Commonwealth-funded positions I think under the new Minister, who's the member for Eden-Monaro.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Kristy McBain.

The CHAIR: Yes, Kristy McBain is the new Minister. She funds them, but we must have some financial input and contractual arrangement, hopefully providing the New South Wales input on our regional skills needs. If you can take that on notice, that would be appreciated.

LISA BRAID: Certainly.

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ANSWER

The Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade’s role in Australia’s skilled migration program

NSW’s Business & Skilled Migration Program is an ongoing annual program delivered under agreement with the Commonwealth, known as the State Migration Plan.

Under the agreement, NSW nominates migrants with skills required in the state, to be able to apply for specific visas with the Department of Home Affairs.

This includes the Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) visa (subclass 491).

Regional Development Australia and the subclass 491 visa in FY21-22

Regional Development Australia (RDA) offices operated under contract to the NSW Government to assist in the delivery of the subclass 491 visa during the 2021-22 financial year.

RDAs provided insights into their local skills needs through skill audits, usually by surveying local businesses. Occupations identified by RDAs informed the development of NSW’s Regional Skilled Occupations Lists, published on NSW’s migration webpage.

RDA offices across NSW accepted and assessed applications for subclass 491 visa nomination by NSW.

Successful applicants were referred to the NSW Government who formally ‘nominated’ RDA recommended applicants within the Commonwealth Skill Select system.

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QUESTION 29, PAGE NO 59

The CHAIR: Dr McNeill, back to you and the question of these introductory quiz tasks at TAFE Digital. Has there been a problem in matching up the answers to the questions? Have there been complaints from students and/or teachers that the answers don't match the questions on these quizzes?

MARGOT McNEILL: As I mentioned before, we do have a quality assurance loop where we invite feedback from teachers and students. So if there are issues like that that will sometimes be how the instrument is being deployed, we absolutely work on that. I haven't heard of specific instances, but I know that would be part of the feedback loop.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW collects feedback from teachers as part of its quality assurance and continuous quality improvement process. In the last 12 months, TAFE NSW has received 122 submissions with a range of feedback on quizzes. As at September 2022, 86 have been resolved and a further 36 are being worked through.

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QUESTION 30, PAGE NO 59

The CHAIR: On notice, could you find out how many complaints have been lodged in the last 12 months on your quality assurance loop?

MARGOT McNEILL: Yes, sure.

The CHAIR: It's a bit of a worry if the answers don't match the questions. It doesn't give you a lot of confidence. It sounds like Parliament. Now, what are the numbers on the lodgement and marking of student assessments at TAFE Digital over the past five years? Has there been a decline? Are the students doing as much work as they used to, or they just don't lodge the assessments?

LISA BRAID: I would have to take that on notice, Mr Latham.

ANSWER

Percentage of TAFE Digital students enrolled each year who have lodged an assessment:

2017 - 58%

2018 - 63%

2019 - 65%

2020 - 59%

2021 - 67%

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QUESTION 31, PAGE NO 60

The CHAIR: What proportion of teachers undertake the annual teacher review process?

JULIE TICKLE: Well, the annual teacher review process is specified in the enterprise agreement, so they should all do that.

The CHAIR: That's compulsory. So that's 100 per cent.

JULIE TICKLE: Correct—well, they should all do that.

The CHAIR: They should do that. How many do? Is it 100 per cent or less?

JULIE TICKLE: I would have to take the question on notice.

ANSWER

The annual teacher review takes place at the local level and is administered by a Head Teacher with a Teacher. Therefore, data on completion rates for annual teacher reviews is not available centrally.

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QUESTION 32, PAGE NO 60

The CHAIR: What is the proportion who undertake the PDRP?

JULIE TICKLE: As I said, not everyone does the PDRP. In terms of different groups, depending on the make-up of the enterprise agreements—we have four enterprise agreements at TAFE. Where the majority of the staff in an area are under an enterprise agreement that is under the TAFE managers or the administration agreement, the percentage is higher on the uptake of the PDRP.

The CHAIR: Can I get that percentage on notice, please?

JULIE TICKLE: Yes, you can.

ANSWER

34.87% of employees not covered by the Teachers and Related Employees Enterprise Agreement 2021 undertook the PDRP in Financial Year 2021/22.

TAFE NSW anticipates a significant increase in the number of employees undertaking a PDRP in Financial Year 2022/23 following the launch of the TAFE NSW Strategic Plan 2022-25.

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QUESTION 33, PAGE NO 61, 62

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: So that I can get some clarity that we're talking about the same things, you're talking about the combined announcements of the 103 plus the 70,000 that were announced in June this year? Is that right,?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: I'm talking about the total number of places under the JobTrainer fee-free places that ran through the COVID period. But I'll let Mr Collins provide the specific details for the time period.

DAVID COLLINS: The commitment that you're referring to was a continuation of a partnership that the New South Wales Government has had with the Commonwealth Government. JobTrainer was introduced in 2020 as a joint initiative to respond to COVID: basically, funding for training places to support businesses to recover, to support people who may need an assistance to get back into jobs. The first tranche of it was 103,000 places. That was rolled out from 2020 and then towards the end of 2021. In 2021 an announcement was made to continue that; it was for the New South Wales Government to meet the Commonwealth Government's investment to continue for, in fact, another 103,000 places. We have been working to roll that out, with enrolments against that continuing to the end of this year.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I clarify how this operates? If someone who took up one of the initial 100,000 places is enrolled in a two-year course, do they then count in the 200,000 that were announced in the following—

DAVID COLLINS: They only count once. We are funding a mix of full qualifications and part qualifications. A number of those part qualifications are very short courses that might be about getting into a job or about boosting productivity. Linking back to the question about construction, we've done a lot of work in construction about—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: On notice, can you provide a breakdown of how many were part qualifications—

DAVID COLLINS: We can provide a breakdown of that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: —and full qualifications?

DAVID COLLINS: Those who enrol in a full qualification—and we've been funding qualifications up to and including diploma level—will be continuing students. Part of the investment that has been made is to support them to get through to the completion of their qualification. They only count once, though, as an enrolment.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Are you able to, for each of the announcements—or are they all just bundled together?—provide the breakdown in terms of how many were delivered by private providers and how many by TAFE?

DAVID COLLINS: We can pull that data together.

CHLOE READ: But just to note, the commitment is ongoing, with enrolments until the end of the year.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Okay. Are you perhaps able to just provide that data, then, till the end of the last financial year—until 30 June 2022?

CHLOE READ: Yes.

DAVID COLLINS: Yes, certainly.

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ANSWER

JobTrainer - Phase 1		Enrolments
TAFE	Full Qualification (Cert I and above)	56,835
	Part Qualifications	16,395
	Total	73,230
Non-TAFE	Full Qualification (Cert I and above)	23,508
	Part Qualifications	60,077
	Total	83,585
Total	Full Qualification (Cert I and above)	80,343
	Part Qualifications	76,472
	Total	156,815

JobTrainer extension - Phase 2		Enrolments
TAFE	Full Qualification (Cert I and above)	31,756
	Part Qualifications	4,968
	Total	36,724
Non-TAFE	Full Qualification (Cert I and above)	13,263
	Part Qualifications	17,062
	Total	30,325
Total	Full Qualification (Cert I and above)	45,019
	Part Qualifications	22,030
	Total	67,049

Notes:

- A very small number of training places (approximately 500) were delivered by the Department of Regional NSW. These were included in the non-TAFE enrolment figures. The rest of the non-TAFE courses were delivered by private training organisations.

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QUESTION 34, PAGE NO 63, 64

GEORGINA HARRISSON: Yes. Mr D'Adam, we're very happy to take on notice the specifics of that 2019 commitment and come back to you with more information, but just noting that obviously the situation and the economy changed significantly with COVID and we have pivoted to deliver on those needs. I think it is also worth highlighting some of the work that teams have done to make sure that we have supported industries at particular time. So, through JobTrainer, very clearly supporting the hospitality industry with summer skills programs, winter skills programs, to ensure that when those peak times were returning to those industries for travel within the State that they were able to access the workforce that they needed to get back on their feet and be opening their doors again. So I'm very happy to provide you on notice with that 2019 information, but I did just want to put on the record some of the, I think, really good work that's been done to support businesses in New South Wales with a skilled workforce at a point in time and at a point of need through this effort.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: So, on the 2019 number—obviously, on notice if you can't answer this—but was there any modelling done in terms of that particular announcement?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: Very happy to provide that on notice. I haven't got information dating back that far here with me today, Mr D'Adam, in relation to that commitment, but very happy to come back on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Presumably, when you make an announcement like that, you are anticipating the likely cost. You budget for an upper figure, presumably. The figures that you've provided, Ms Harrisson, are a lot less than the total number that have been announced in terms of available fee-free places, so there must be some underlying analysis that is undertaken to determine what the likely uptake will be. Is that correct, Mr Collins? Do you undertake some analysis to estimate how many of these positions, when you announce 100,000, you expect that at least 60,000 or 40,000 will be taken are up, or perhaps it's unlikely that you're going to get to the full 100,000, isn't it?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: So, Mr D'Adam, I think, as I said, we'll take that number on notice. In terms of the JobTrainer commitments, we have absolutely met those commitments along the way. So, in that first year, very high numbers of updates. I remember the reporting well, Mr D'Adam, because Mr Collins, you will recall in this forum, was held highly accountable for that being delivered, and he did so. So I am not sure I understand the premise of your question around falling short of those commitments but I am very happy to take the position around 2019 on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Did you meet the targets in JobTrainer? This is the February 2019 one.

CHLOE READ: No, it was the second round of JobTrainer that had those targets.

DAVID COLLINS: So the targets I've referred to are in the second round, and we are still—we're very close to each of them.

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Very close?

DAVID COLLINS: Yes. So, by the end of the year, we'll be good.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can you provide the non-completion assumptions for each of the rounds that have been taken into account? Is that possible?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: Mr D'Adam, we are very happy to provide whatever we can on the modelling that we have for both that 2019 commitment that you referenced as well as the JobTrainer program itself.

ANSWER

In 2019, the NSW Government announced 100,000 fee free training places which consisted of 70,000 fee free traineeships and 30,000 fee free training places for TAFE NSW.

The Department of Education's modelling approach when developing different fee free initiatives, such as fee free traineeships or JobTrainer uses: historical enrolment, completion and payment rates for the student cohorts relevant to each initiative; the proportion of students who are not already fee-free under existing policies; Smart and Skilled Prices, Fees, Subsidies and Loadings. Growth assumptions may also be applied. The costings include residual costs of training out students, where the training goes over multiple years and after the fee free commencement period ends.

These factors are built into the estimated number of commencements and completers/non-completers, which form part of the estimated budget to fully deliver each initiative.

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QUESTION 35, PAGE NO 65

The CHAIR: Why were entry level courses, such as horticulture at Richmond college cancelled for semester 1, 2022 without any engagement with relevant industry leaders?

MARGOT McNEILL: I will hand over to Ms Mackinnon to talk about specific courses.

The CHAIR: Ms Mackinnon, how many other courses like that were cancelled in semester 1?

BELINDA MACKINNON: I would have to take that on notice, Chair, just in relation to the details behind that so that I can provide accurate information.

ANSWER

Horticulture courses at TAFE NSW Richmond were not cancelled for Semester 1, 2022.

Delivery of the Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management at TAFE NSW Richmond concluded as the course was replaced by the new national training package qualification the Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management.

TAFE NSW offered the new Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management at Richmond in Semester 2 2022, following the successful recruitment of teachers.

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QUESTION 36, PAGE NO 65

The CHAIR: Is there any estimate on how many apprentices and trainees have been lost in horticulture as a result of that cancellation and also in other areas where the courses were cancelled?

BELINDA MACKINNON: Equally on cancellations, whilst a course might be cancelled, we offer courses at various times through the year. Whilst it might be cancelled on one scenario and time frame, we have got an extended college year that can actually go across 48 weeks of the year. We could be doing things not just on a semester basis in the traditional sense, but actually at different times.

The CHAIR: You don't think you would have lost any apprentices or trainees?

BELINDA MACKINNON: I couldn't say with accuracy.

The CHAIR: You couldn't say but you will take that on notice.

STEPHEN BRADY: We will take it on notice, Mr Latham. I think at the last hearing we did talk about the fact that we were able to get the offerings up. Some of them were a little later than we would have liked, and it is quite normal. We don't always start everything on the same day anyway; there is a staggered start. From memory, I think there were only two courses that had a real impact from that. We will take it on notice and we will come back to you. But we were able to get courses up and running. We do, as we've said earlier, adjust our service delivery depending on demand et cetera. It may well be that horticulture course was driven by other things than product development.

ANSWER

No apprentices or trainees were lost. Students, including four trainees, commenced in the new Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management at TAFE NSW Richmond in Semester 2 2022.

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QUESTION 37, PAGE NO 66

The CHAIR: Nowhere near that amount? The TAFE Digital Campus record has a flag or ticks on the front of every student's record that should raise with teachers that they are dealing with students who have special needs, such as disabled or Indigenous. Apparently this used to work well prior to TAFE Digital Campus and teachers knew their students' needs. How is it performing under the new arrangements?

BELINDA MACKINNON: As far as I know, certainly the TAFE Digital Campus is— whilst it had a few issues in the beginning with our teaching teams and access to training, we did offer quite significant training around that. Certainly, there were a couple of issues, as you have described, but we have other means also of identifying that students have needs. Students don't always disclose the fact that they have a disability or their Aboriginality or a language other than English either. The engagement that our teachers have is also a key identifier where we would offer assistance if those students required.

The CHAIR: What is the status of the flag system, then? Has it been discarded when you say there are other means that teachers are using to establish these particular special needs among students?

BELINDA MACKINNON: To my knowledge there would still be the flag there, but I would have to take that on notice to check the accuracy of that.

The CHAIR: What proportion of students on the system have got flags?

BELINDA MACKINNON: I would check on that.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW collects student demographic data from students at the time of enrolment to apply a fee waiver or organise additional support. This includes information on students' Aboriginality, disability and language backgrounds. Based on this information, for TAFE NSW in calendar year 2021:

- 9% of enrolments were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students
- 11% of enrolments were students with a disability
- 24% of enrolments were students from language backgrounds other than English, noting a student may appear across multiple categories.

There are no known issues with the flag system functionality. TAFE NSW Disability and Access Services and Aboriginal Education and Engagement Teams use the flag to assist teaching teams to identify these learners and implement reasonable adjustments, if needed, to assist them to engage with their studies.

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QUESTION 38, PAGE NO 67, 68

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: In June 2021 there was a further announcement: 200,000 free training places for veterans and their partners. How many enrolments and how many completions for that program?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: Sorry, Mr D'Adam; could you repeat that please?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: In June 2021 the Government announced 200,000 fee-free training places for veterans and their partners. Of that 200,000—

CHLOE READ: I'll have to take that on notice. I don't recognise that figure.

DAVID COLLINS: We'll take that on notice. I don't recognise the 200,000 figure. But the Government did make an announcement around fee-free training for veterans. We can come back with the details around that.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: The enrolments and the completions on notice.

GEORGINA HARRISSON: We're very happy to take both the enrolments and completions in relation to, and to confirm the commitment around, the veteran and their partners training.

ANSWER

Training for veterans and their partners under the Veteran Skills program was funded as part of the 100,000 fee free training places announced under JobTrainer: a total of 750 places allocated per year.

JobTrainer funding of \$3,547,929 has been committed for the veterans program.

As at 19 August 2022:

- 331 veterans and 33 veteran's partners enrolled in part qualification training while 276 veterans and 76 veteran's partners enrolled in full qualification training under the program.

- 212 veterans and 25 veteran's partners have completed part qualification training while 13 veterans and 5 veteran's partners completed full qualification training. It should be noted, completions will lag commencements as full qualification training can take up to three years to complete.

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QUESTION 39, PAGE NO 68, 69

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Can I come to this Committee's report on the future development of the New South Wales tertiary education sector? There was a recommendation in that report around improving transparency and enhancing annual reporting, including data on reliance on international student income, overseas student numbers in each course, staffing job security and staffing balance between teaching and research only. Can I ask what the status of the implementation of that recommendation is? Is that recommendation being implemented?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: Mr D'Adam, I don't have information on the Government's response to that report with me, and I am not sure that I can confirm if it has been finalised or not at this stage. Partly that's certainly not something I've seen, so I'm very happy to come back on notice with any information that we have available.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Could you also on notice, then, advise on the status of the implementation of recommendation seven: That the New South Wales Government mandate that universities provide a more detailed report of their staffing profiles, including a requirement that data be provided on permanent, fixed-term and casual staff levels in terms of both head count and full-time equivalents, modelled on the Victorian reporting requirements?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: Again, Mr D'Adam, very happy to take on notice and provide what I can in relation to the Government's position in relation to those recommendations and any work that has been progressed to date.

ANSWER

The NSW Government response to the Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 3 inquiry into the future development of the NSW tertiary education sector is available on the NSW parliament website.

Data collection for the university sector is largely the responsibility of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth's Higher Education Statistics dataset is published annually on the Commonwealth Department of Education website. The student data collection encompasses enrolments, student load and completions. The staff data includes information on the numbers and full-time equivalence of staff.

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QUESTION 40, PAGE NO 70

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I just wanted to come back to the tertiary education questions that my colleague started and ask about the NSW Higher Education Strategy and the Government action plan on that. When will the 2022-23 action plan be released?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: I'll ask Ms Read to provide some information on that.

CHLOE READ: It should be in the second half of this year, in the next couple of months, I think.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Are you able to give us any updates on the action under the five priority areas in the Higher Education Strategy?

GEORGINA HARRISSON: As Ms Read has indicated, there is a commitment to annually update on progress. That's due in the next couple of months, so we'll be able to provide that. It will be in the public domain at that point.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: You can't give us anything before then? You need to wait for the Minister to approve the release of the—

CHLOE READ: The strategy was released, and then an initial action plan, and then there'll be a refresh of the strategy that will come out. I think it's in October, but I'll confirm if that's the case.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, sure. If you want to take that one on notice, that's fine.

CHLOE READ: Yes.

ANSWER

Please see the answers to supplementary questions 48 and 49.

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QUESTION 41, PAGE NO 71, 72

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What about Coffs Harbour optimisation? What was the initial cost of that project at the time of announcement?

DAN BOWES: Coffs Harbour is \$29.6 million over three years.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: And how much has been spent to date?

DAN BOWES: I haven't got that. I'll have to take that on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: If it's a three-year program, could you provide the budget figure for each of the three years?

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What about Kingscliff campus expansion? What was the initial cost of that project at the time of announcement?

STEPHEN BRADY: Kingscliff is a total budget of \$32.7 million. The budget for this financial year is \$3.2 million.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: How much has been spent so far?

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll have to take that on notice. You'll appreciate that the first step in these programs and why it's only \$3.2 million out of \$32.7 million is there's a fair bit of planning work that needs to go into the first year. You'll expect to see a profile where planning work occurs and then the expenditure starts to ramp up as you step into delivery. We'll come back with any detail.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: For each of these projects, could you provide the allocation for each of the years of the forward estimates for as long as the project is running?

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: If you can take on notice for each of those projects provide us with the month and the year that you're projecting to complete it in. I noticed some of them you said "in two years". We're just interested in the exact month that you're expecting—

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll take that on notice.

ANSWER

Expenditure for the Coffs Harbour optimisation project to date is nil. Expenditure will commence from Financial Year 2022/23.

The budget figure for the Coffs Harbour optimisation project over three years is:

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Financial Year 2022/23: \$2.9 million
Financial Year 2023/24: \$14.4 million
Financial Year: 2024/25: \$12.3 million

There has been nil expenditure on the Kingscliff campus expansion to date.

The TAFE NSW budget for the Northern Rivers Education, Training and Research Hub is \$2.5 million in Financial Year 2022/23, with nil expenditure to date. The expected completion date is June 2023.

The budget for the Ryde building A upgrade for Financial Year 2022/23 is \$2.0 million, with nil expenditure to date. The budget allocation for Financial Year 2023/24 is \$2.9 million. The expected completion date is June 2024.

The budget for the Wyong Animal Studies project for Financial Year 2022/23 is \$2.0 million, with nil expenditure to date. The budget allocation for Financial Year 2023/24 is \$2.9 million. The expected completion is June 2024.

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QUESTION 42, PAGE NO 73

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What about the asset management solution? What was the initial cost of that project when it was announced?

DAVID BACKLEY: It was \$8 million.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: How much of that program has been spent to date?

STEPHEN BRADY: I think we'll have to take that on notice.

DAVID BACKLEY: I'll have to take that on notice, sorry.

ANSWER

The Asset Management solution budget spend to date is \$276,635.

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QUESTION 42A, PAGE NO 74

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Before you move on, can you give us a breakdown on notice of the total cost by CLC?

DAN BOWES: Yes, of course.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW Connected Learning Centre (CLC) costs:

- **CLC Tranche 1 (Funding Year: 2014/15)**
 - Total expenditure: \$11.4 million
 - Coonabarabran: \$2.3 million
 - Glen Innes: \$3.3 million
 - Quirindi: \$2.3 million
 - Tenterfield: \$3.5 million

- **CLC Tranche 2 (Funding Year: 2017/18)**
 - Total expenditure: \$47.9 million
 - Corowa: \$2.8 million
 - Narrandera: \$3.2 million
 - Deniliquin: \$4.4 million
 - Scone: \$6.2 million
 - Singleton: \$4.4 million
 - Murwillumbah: \$5.4 million
 - Yamba: \$5.7 million
 - Bourke: \$4.9 million
 - Grenfell: \$3.7 million
 - Bega: \$6.2 million
 - ICT retrofit for Tranche 1 sites: \$1.0 million

- **CLC Tranche 3 (Funding Year: 2019/20)**
 - Batemans Bay: \$6.7 million
 - Cobar: \$7.8 million
 - Hay: \$6.0 million
 - Tomaree: \$5.3 million
 - West Wyalong: \$6.8 million
 - Nambucca Heads: \$5.8 million
 - Jindabyne budget: \$8.7 million (still under construction)
 - Byron Bay budget: \$10.0 million (still under construction)

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QUESTION 43, PAGE NO 74

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What's the date of completion for that?

DAVID BACKLEY: It's this financial year, but I don't have a month. I can give you that on notice.

ANSWER

The IT Security Enhancement program will be completed in June 2023.

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QUESTION 44, PAGE NO 75, 76

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: They're all separate projects. Is Kingswood—can you just explain the relationship? I don't have the detail on that.

VIK NAIDOO: The Institute of Applied Technology we have two sites: Meadowbank, which is the digital tech campus; and Kingswood, which is the construction campus. So I think what you're referring to in terms of just the Institutes of Applied Technology, it's additional capital that we've been—I have provided on top of the \$157.2 million for Meadowbank and the \$80.4 million for Kingswood. So what you're probably referring to is the \$13.2 million that was provided in the 2021-22 budget.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Right. Okay. So, what's the spend to date on that—so is that two projects?

VIK NAIDOO: That's one project with two sites.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: One project with two components?

VIK NAIDOO: Correct.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Were they announced at the same time or separately?

VIK NAIDOO: They were announced in March 2021, as an outcome of the VET sector review.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is that figure the same? There's been no deviance from that?

VIK NAIDOO: It is currently underway. There's been no deviance. It's a four-year pilot.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: For each of the years of that project, can you provide the budget allocation and the spend?

VIK NAIDOO: I will have to provide that on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Okay. What's the completion date?

VIK NAIDOO: The completion date—the opening will be early next year and the completion date will be four years from then.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Four years from then. Do you have a specific month?

VIK NAIDOO: I don't have a specific month, but from memory it might be 2024-25. But I'll come back to you on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Construction has started? So how much has been spent to date?

VIK NAIDOO: Again, I'll have to provide that to you on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: All right. And for the duration of the project if can you provide the projected budget for each of the years and the expected completion date for that one.

VIK NAIDOO: The same thing—four years from next year.

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The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Right, I see. So the Institute of Applied Technology for Digital Tech?

VIK NAIDOO: That's opening in early next year.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What was the cost of that project when it was announced?

VIK NAIDOO: It was \$157.2 million in capital work.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is that still—

VIK NAIDOO: That's still underway. That's still within budget.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Still within budget?

VIK NAIDOO: But, again, we will provide you those details on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: And how much has been spent to date?

VIK NAIDOO: Yes, on notice.

ANSWER

The IAT in Digital Tech at Meadowbank is scheduled to be operational in February 2023 and subject to no further inclement weather, the IAT in Construction at Kingswood is targeted to be operational in May 2023. The four year IAT Pilot (Digital and Construction) is scheduled to complete on 30 June 2026.

As at 31 August 2022, \$31.8 million has been spent for the IAT in Construction at Kingswood.

As at 31 August 2022, \$155 million has been spent for the IAT in Digital Tech at Meadowbank within the budget.

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QUESTION 45, PAGE NO 76

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: At the end of the financial year. Okay, thank you. What about Scone Multi Trades Hub, when was that one announced?

STEPHEN BRADY: I might come back to you on the date of the announcement. The estimated total cost is \$3 million, with a current year budget allocation of \$1.8 million.

ANSWER

The Scone Multi Trades Hub was announced on 22 April 2021. Construction is scheduled to be completed for January 2023.

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QUESTION 46, PAGE NO 76, 77

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: The shared services centre, what was the initial cost of that project when it was announced? When was it announced, by the way?

STEPHEN BRADY: Dan, have you got the date of the announcement?

DAN BOWES: I don't know.

STEPHEN BRADY: We will take that on notice, but it's a \$4 million project. We've got an allocation this financial year of \$1.4 million. In last year, we invested \$2.6 million. We're currently on track for its completion. We're currently just finalising fit-outs, so it is actually in operation now, with some final works just occurring to finish off.

ANSWER

The budget for the Shared Services Centre is \$4.0 million. This has not changed since the original approval.

The Shared Services Centre was announced in March 2019.

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QUESTION 47, PAGE NO 77, 78

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I have two final questions. In budget estimates in March, we asked about the tranche two restructuring. I was just wondering how many jobs had been lost as a result of that restructure.

STEPHEN BRADY: Tranche two for student services?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, that's right.

STEPHEN BRADY: I will get Ms Tickle to give you the detail but, in fact, we increased the staffing under that organisational change.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Okay.

STEPHEN BRADY: It was actually designed to improve the service outcomes and ensure that we had a complete coverage across the State for all of our students. Ms Tickle?

JULIE TICKLE: Tranche two student services is actually in progress. The proposed change is planned to result in an additional 52 FTE employees across student services tranche two, which was our counselling, disability, librarians, all of those roles that support our students.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Was anyone displaced under the restructure?

JULIE TICKLE: The restructure is in progress. There have been no employees declared excess at all at the moment.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: There was one that we were talking about, though, in March—I can't recall—that was underway. Is that the same one?

JULIE TICKLE: It may have been student services tranche one.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Is that it?

JULIE TICKLE: That has concluded.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes.

JULIE TICKLE: A net reduction of seven employees in the student services tranche one, which is all of our administration, enrolment support services. Actually, may I clarify a question that I had before—not clarify; just give some more information that you asked, Chair?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Sorry, before you do that, can I just ask about this tranche one?

JULIE TICKLE: Yes.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: You said that there were seven jobs that were lost, in net. How many actual people were retrenched or made redundant as a result of it?

JULIE TICKLE: I'll have to take that on notice. We look at net reduction as—that's what we always look at in terms of change. What I can tell you about both student services tranche one and student services tranche two was that there was a really high rate of mapping. From memory, I think they're both over 90 per cent. Mapping means that the current employees are mapped to new roles because it's really important to remember that change doesn't necessarily mean redundancies or, as you called them, retrenched employees. It means that the jobs are changing, we're streamlining the roles, some people are reappointed into a new team, some people have their position description changed. So that's what change actually means. It's not just about redundancies.

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The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, and I understand that in changing those roles some people might not be able to transition across, so they are made redundant. But then someone comes in and gets filled, and so overall there has been a net reduction of seven. I'm interested then in also, if you can provide, how many people left as a result of it. If you want to say there were new people hired, I'm comfortable with that but if you can just give us the full picture, that would be helpful.

JULIE TICKLE: Yes, certainly, I can take that on notice, Ms Houssos. May I come back to—

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Yes, of course.

ANSWER

There were 114 redundancies, and 163 new staff were employed, with some employed in part time and job share arrangements so there was a net increase of 49 staff as a result of this change.

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QUESTION 48, PAGE NO 78

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I have just one final question. Mr Brady, it's probably one for you. A group called the Committee for the Hunter, which is a group that's based in the Hunter, has come up with a hydrogen plan and I understand that part of that hydrogen plan is based around the need for local skills. Has TAFE engaged with them or are you engaging with either—I understand that there's also obviously similar proposals around the Illawarra. How have you engaged with these organisations about the future skills that are going to be required and will TAFE be providing those skills?

STEPHEN BRADY: Thank you for the question. We are doing work in the renewable energy space. We've been working with a number of major manufacturers of equipment. For instance, we've just formed a partnership with Volvo Buses around electric vehicles. We have also launched some new courses in renewable energy, but I might ask Ms Mackinnon any specifics around the Hunter.

BELINDA MACKINNON: I haven't had any specifics on the Hunter as such, but, as Mr Brady said, the engagement with industry is absolutely critical to the success of that renewable energy.

STEPHEN BRADY: We'll follow up, Ms Houssos, and speak to our colleagues up in the Hunter and make sure we have reached out. I'd be surprised if we haven't, but that's a priority area for us as you'd imagine. We're very keen to develop the skills base for hydrogen and renewables.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: If you could just provide anything on notice, that would be quite helpful. Thanks very much.

STEPHEN BRADY: Will do.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW has had no direct involvement with the group called Committee for the Hunter. However, TAFE NSW has a representative on the Hunter Hydrogen Technology Cluster (NewH2), of which Ms Thompson, Chief Executive Officer for the Committee for the Hunter is also an active member.

In 2022, TAFE NSW has offered two new courses in renewable energy at Newcastle campus: an Undergraduate Certificate in Renewable Energy Engineering and a Diploma of Renewable Energy Engineering. TAFE NSW also delivers a broad range of trade and post trade courses in electrical, mechanical and fabrication, which will directly support hydrogen projects with the required skills in the Hunter region.