PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - REGIONAL NSW

Tuesday 24 October 2023

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

SMALL BUSINESS, LANDS AND PROPERTY, MULTICULTURALISM, SPORT

UNCORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:15.

MEMBERS

The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Chair)

Ms Abigail Boyd
Dr Amanda Cohn
The Hon. Greg Donnelly
The Hon. Wes Fang
The Hon. Scott Farlow
The Hon. Emma Hurst (Deputy Chair)
The Hon. Cameron Murphy
The Hon. Peter Primrose

MEMBERS VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Ms Cate Faehrmann

PRESENT

The Hon. Stephen Kamper, *Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The CHAIR: Welcome to the first hearing of the Committee's inquiry into budget estimates 2023-2024. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay respect to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. I welcome Minister Stephen Kamper and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, and Sport.

I ask everyone in the room to please turn their mobile phones to silent. Parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses giving evidence today. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of the hearing, so I urge witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants. I encourage committee members and witnesses to be mindful of those procedures. I welcome our witnesses and thank them for making the time to give evidence. All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. I remind Minister Kamper that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

Ms KIERSTEN FISHBURN, Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment, affirmed and examined

Ms MELANIE HAWYES, Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces, affirmed and examined

Mr LEON WALKER, Deputy Secretary, Property and Development NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms JENNIFER HICKEY, Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr STEWART McLACHLAN, Chief Executive Officer, Valuation NSW, sworn and examined

Ms JANINE LONERGAN, Executive Director, Corporate Services, Infrastructure NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr TOM GELLIBRAND, Chief Executive, Infrastructure NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr JOSEPH LA POSTA, Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW, sworn and examined

Ms KAREN JONES, Chief Executive, Office of Sport, affirmed and examined

Ms KERRIE MATHER, Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW, sworn and examined

Mr KEVIN THOMPSON, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Institute of Sport, affirmed and examined

Mr GREG WELLS, Chief Executive Officer, Department of Customer Service, Service NSW, sworn and examined

Ms CASSANDRA GIBBENS, Executive Director, Department of Customer Service, Service NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr CHRIS LAMONT, Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Commission, sworn and examined

Ms EMMA HOGAN, Secretary, Department of Customer Service, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.15 to a.m. to 5.30 p.m. We are joined by the Minister for the morning session from 9.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. In the afternoon we will hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During these sessions there will be questions from Opposition and crossbench members only. Fifteen minutes will be allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. We will now begin with questions from the Opposition. Mr Farlow?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Good morning, Minister. What is your vision for golf in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think my vision for golf is that it continues to prosper the way it has been of recent, and I've enjoyed engaging with the golfing community over the last six months as Minister. My vision is to continue to work with the golfing community, just like all other popular sports.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Speaking of that engagement with the golfing community, did you have any engagement with either Golf NSW or the Moore Park Golf club before the announcement was made by the Premier on Sunday?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've had engagement with Golf NSW, but I welcomed the Premier and Minister Scully's decision. Moore Park Golf course currently sits on 45 hectares of public land, and the land has been operated as a golf course under successive service agreements with the New South Wales Government but will now be returned to the public. I'll be meeting with Golf NSW shortly to discuss any issues of concern that they may have, but this is owned by Greater Sydney Parklands and falls under Minister Scully. Essentially, Minister Scully is the responsible landlord and Golf NSW is a tenant.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of that question before, you didn't have any meetings with either Golf NSW or Moore Park before the decision was announced?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said earlier, this situation is the responsibility of Minister Scully.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But in terms of your responsibility, you are the Minister for Sport. You didn't have any meetings with either Golf NSW or the Moore Park Golf club before that decision was announced on Sunday?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have had meetings with Golf NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Prior to that meeting?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can refer to my diary; my diary's got everything there. If there's any further detail you want, I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The article that dropped in *The Daily Telegraph* on Sunday announcing the decision mentioned the land audit that you're responsible for. Was the Moore Park Golf course initiative a result of that land audit that you've been conducting?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's not my understanding. There have been ongoing conversations in relation to the golf course over the a number of years, and under your Government as well. There have been a number of approaches to do something with that land or to review the settings.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has your land audit identified any golf courses in Sydney or in New South Wales for housing development?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: On 1 May 2023, all New South Wales Ministers were asked to direct their agencies to immediately pause the sale of government-owned land and property. The Premier has commissioned an audit of New South Wales government-owned land to determine what could potentially be used to address the New South Wales housing supply shortage. We know that there's a chronic problem with housing supply in this State, and over the previous 12 years nothing was done about meeting the supply requirements. That is why we undertook this process. I think it was a sensible thing to do. It is something that has never been done in a comprehensive way.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To that process, has that process identified any golf courses for housing development?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The process has identified—the audit has been jointly led by the Cabinet Office, and Property and Development NSW, and includes representatives—

The Hon. WES FANG: That's not an answer, Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We're asking about golf courses.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm trying to give a comprehensive answer in relation to the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, you're trying to read your notes. You're not answering the question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're asking about the land audit and I'm trying to give you a comprehensive answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, we're asking you to answer a question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We'll give you another minute, Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: This is not the lower House question time. This is budget estimates, Minister.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order: It is a good start from the Hon. Wes Fang. We know how these hearings are conducted: back and forth, one question at a time.

The Hon. WES FANG: To the point of order: Usually Ministers answer their questions and don't waffle on like this. I would ask the Minister to answer his question.

The CHAIR: That is not a valid response to a point of order. If you have concerns about how the Minister is answering his question, you can ask a follow-up.

The Hon. WES FANG: I just don't know if he can't answer it.

The CHAIR: I concur with the Hon. Greg Donnelly. This works best if there is one person giving an answer and one person asking a question, and if there is a bit of breath between that so we are not talking over the top of each other—not for the sake of everyone's entertainment, but more for the sake of Hansard so they can record it.

The Hon. WES FANG: Fair.

The CHAIR: I am happy with a bit of banter going back and forth, but can we at least allow some gap between each other and try not to talk over the top.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Who was asking the question? Mr Fang, or was it—I took your comments on board too.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, the land audit and with respect to golf courses in New South Wales.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The land audit is comprehensive. It sits across all government land across New South Wales. It is identifying opportunities right across the board and it—I mean, in terms of the, you know, each—

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you incapable of answering?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There are thousands and thousands of properties that have been reviewed. You can't expect me to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And of those thousands of properties, are any of them golf courses?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —be able to detail each property, one by one. I will take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I am asking you for a class—you will take it on notice? Okay. A class of courses—that golf courses could be used for housing development. Is that correct, as part of that land audit?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't seen the evaluation of every property yet. We are waiting to get the full detail of what the property audit will produce.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. When does the Government next plan on meeting with representatives of Moore Park Golf club and Golf NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe that there is a meeting booked to meet with me at some stage in the future. I can't give you that date.

The Hon. WES FANG: One day, one week, one month—what? Do you have any idea?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Maybe a month, a week. I will take it on notice. I can clear that up later.

The Hon. WES FANG: Take it on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, before the announcement was made, did you have any discussions with either the Premier or the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces about the announcement?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have many, many discussions with the Premier and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you were consulted before this announcement was made?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's what a collaborative government does. We have discussions amongst each other.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You will just confirm that you were consulted before the announcement was made.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've had many discussions in relation to this.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's not an answer, Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's a yes or no: You were consulted or you were not. It's not a trick question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The conversation about Moore Park has been in the public domain—

The Hon. WES FANG: You weren't consulted. Can't you just admit that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —for much time, now.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order: As a matter of fairness, the Minister needs to be able to answer the question without constant interruptions from the Hon. Wes Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: To the point of order: He's been asked three times now to confirm yes or no whether he was consulted or not. It's a pretty clear question. The Minister isn't answering. We can conclude from that that the Minister wasn't consulted. Let's just move on.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Further to the point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: Obviously the Premier just sidelines the—

The CHAIR: That's debating the answer. Now you are getting into debating points.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I will not debate it. I will simply say that the Minister is perfectly at liberty to answer the question as he wishes, as the asker is perfectly at liberty to proceed to the next question, should they wish to do so.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, it would be good if he answered the question in the first place.

The CHAIR: Let me rule on the point of order. Once again, we are jumping over the top of each other. You might not like the answer the Minister is giving—

The Hon. WES FANG: Any answer would be good, Chair.

The CHAIR: No. He is answering a question. You might not like how it is being answered, but you are then provided an opportunity after he has finished that answer. You can follow up and press him on the fact if you think he hasn't been consulted—

The Hon. WES FANG: That's what I'm doing.

The CHAIR: You can argue those semantics in the follow-up—

The Hon. WES FANG: You can waste our time too, Chair—but that's okay.

The CHAIR: You can argue your semantics in the follow-up question.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

The CHAIR: Please continue.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, back to the question: Were you consulted prior to the announcement, or not?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Government is continuing to consult with Golf NSW, and it is continuing to do it. That consultation—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What about yourself, Minister? Were you consulted?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: And that consultation—

The Hon. WES FANG: Were you blindsided by the Premier?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not blindsided by the Premier.

The Hon. WES FANG: You knew it was happening and you were consulted? You approved of this plan? You approve—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't approved anything. It's not my responsibility. I have told you on a number of occasions. It's the responsibility—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But were you consulted?

The Hon. WES FANG: You're the Minister for Sport. Did you fight for golfers?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, there's lease—there's—

The Hon. WES FANG: Or did you fight for your Cabinet colleagues to get what they wanted?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's lessees right across the State within different agencies. It's not the—

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you an advocate for sport in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's not my responsibility to manage that tenure.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you an advocate for sport in New South Wales, or are you just a lackey for the Premier to do whatever he wants?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am definitely an advocate for sport in New South Wales.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: That's a question!

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Again, I ask that the Minister be allowed to answer the question. You cannot ask a question and then seek to answer it at the same time. The Minister is here. Allow the Minister to answer the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: I was seeking a very detailed question. It was a long question. I think he is a lackey for the Premier, basically. We'll move on.

The CHAIR: Once again, it is very simple. Question, then answer. Question, and then answer. You should be able to tell when a Minister has finished his answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: With this one I'm not so sure.

The CHAIR: You will soon work it out.

The Hon. WES FANG: Fair enough.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Chair, I won't let Mr Fang continue to try to stand over me. He can try all day; he won't get anywhere.

The Hon. WES FANG: I think I've done pretty well so far.

The CHAIR: No worries. Mr Farlow, do you have any further questions?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, I do indeed. Minister, are there any other golf courses that you are looking at reducing from 18 holes to nine holes in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have not actively worked on removing any golf courses—

The Hon. WES FANG: You just said you were doing the land audit.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —or reducing any golf courses. There is a land audit that is in place to evaluate the potential to provide housing supply in our State. For 12 years, your former Government—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And is any of that land audit—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —that you represented—for 12 years, you did nothing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is any of that land audit, Minister, contemplating the reduction of any golf courses from 18 to nine holes?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not that I'm aware of.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Not that you are aware of. Okay. Thank you, Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is your department contemplating it? Ms Jones?

KAREN JONES: Through the Chair: I can say that no, we are not aware of it. But what I can say is, as part of the announcement that was made by the Government around Moore Park Golf course, that there will be extensive consultation done with that. That will include Golf NSW, as well as many other sporting organisations that might benefit from the provision of public open space. The Office of Sport looks forward to being part of that consultation process.

The Hon. WES FANG: Was the Office of Sport consulted before the Premier made the announcement and the drop to the paper?

KAREN JONES: The Office of Sport, like I mentioned before—we were consulted around various amounts of sporting initiatives from the Government. In this instance, we look forward to ongoing consultation around the provision of sporting facilities for a variety of sports in Moore Park.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Were you consulted around Moore Park and the announcement the Government made, specifically?

KAREN JONES: I was advised that there might be an announcement, but, from my end, there was no advice sought.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you advise the Minister when you were advised of that possible announcement? And did the Minister provide any advocacy for golf and Golf NSW in response?

KAREN JONES: What I can say is that the Minister is a solid supporter of sport in New South Wales, including golf.

The Hon. WES FANG: Clearly.

KAREN JONES: I think it is important to recognise that through the Office of Sport we have 96 sporting organisations that are recognised, and that there is always a balance, particularly in a highly urbanised area, providing sufficient facilities for all sport across the State.

The Hon. WES FANG: Where you do have that balance, do you seek to engage with the peak bodies before an announcement is leaked to the paper and there's a substantial change to one of the most premier and accessible golf courses in the Sydney CBD area?

KAREN JONES: We will engage with peak bodies—

The Hon. WES FANG: So you haven't done it beforehand?

KAREN JONES: Excuse me, let me finish my answer. We will engage with peak bodies as appropriate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, Moore Park Golf club has said that it will likely not survive after the decision from the Government. And it was said about Marrickville golf course that, if you chop it to nine holes, you may as well be honest and say get rid of it altogether, because it simply won't be viable. Do you agree?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't comment on that. I have got no information in front of me to say that it won't survive.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you done any assessment in terms of the viability of a nine-hole golf course?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, the announcement was—what, yesterday?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Wouldn't you have been consulted before the announcement? You're the Minister for Sport.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There have been many conversations around that tenancy. And that's what it is: It's a tenancy that's under the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. But the decision has been made to sit there and have further conversations in relation to the future of the golf course.

The Hon. WES FANG: It sounds like the decision's already made.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you done any assessment into the viability of nine-hole golf courses?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I haven't done any assessment.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you done anything?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you looked at a history of nine-hole golf courses and their viability at all—Parramatta potentially?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm sure there are lots of successful nine-hole golf courses. I've played on nine-hole golf courses myself. I've truly appreciated nine-hole golf courses.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to Marrickville golf course, that comment was actually made by Prime Minister Albanese, where he was opposing the reduction of it to nine holes. What's the difference between Marrickville and Moore Park?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The situation at Moore Park, as I've said on a number of occasions, is a decision that is to be made in consultation with the golf club, Minister Scully and the Premier. I don't know where you're trying to lead to with further questions in relation to that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It has been said with respect to the redevelopment at Moore Park, of additional sporting facilities in that area. What would you like to see in that area?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The broadening of sporting activity in that area would be a great thing—a great thing for our community and a great thing for young people and elderly people in the inner city. There's an enormous opportunity there which will benefit the community. From a whole-of-sport perspective, it could be a great outcome, with the retention of, potentially, golfing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many golf courses are on Crown land in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I will have to take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you not think to look up this issue before you came here?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Wes, as I think Karen Jones said earlier—

The Hon. WES FANG: Is she the Minister? You should be across your brief, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —there's 97 sporting groups, and there's facilities associated with all of them. If you've got that in the back of your pocket or you've got those types of details in your head—

The Hon. WES FANG: I don't think you're across your brief, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'd be very surprised if you're across any brief in relation to sporting.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: About 10 per cent of the Crown land in Sydney is occupied by golf courses, so they're a very significant tenant of Crown land in New South Wales. What engagement have you had with golf courses since you've become the Minister for both sport and Crown land?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Crown land represents 40 to 42 per cent of the land in New South Wales, so there's a number of facilities on Crown land. My responsibility is the management of all of that land across the State. With the greatest respect to the golfing fraternity, that's one aspect of it. In terms of details and numbers of how many golf courses and how many square metres across the State, I think we're starting to get a little bit ridiculous.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You're taking it on notice. That's fine.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let me finish. We're stretching this out a little bit too far.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Outside of Moore Park, will you guarantee the future of the remaining golf courses on Crown land in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In terms of golf courses, that depends on the commercial viability of a golf course. That's not something that I can determine on many occasions. That's not something that I decide. There's existing leases in place. But there's no approach to interfere with any golf operation. There's nothing on the program. I can't guarantee it. A golf club or a golfing organisation might not be able to sustain its particular site, so that's not necessarily a decision that's going to fall in my hands. I will pass it to Mel.

The Hon. WES FANG: We'll hear from Ms Hawyes this afternoon when we've got them, but I've got—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. You're asking for specific detail.

The Hon. WES FANG: I've got questions for you, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I know you've got plenty of questions.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: Stop trying to obfuscate. Stop trying to dodge the questions.

The CHAIR: There has been a point of order, Mr Fang. You probably didn't hear it over your—

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Haranguing of the Minister.

The CHAIR: —exuberant question.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: I've let this go a number of times, but we're in a situation where the Hon. Wes Fang isn't treating the Minister, the witness, with courtesy and respect. He's making a number of comments that aren't questions while the Minister is trying to answer. He's providing good answers to questions that I can't even hear because of this interruption. I ask you to call him to order.

The CHAIR: I will caution the member. He is trying my patience a little bit here. I do accept that there's a bit of banter between a member and a Minister, but there should be a greater level of respect shown to our public servants.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Chair, could I make a comment, please?

The CHAIR: Can I just rule on—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: He's continuously passing comments right throughout the whole conversation, and it's—

The CHAIR: Can I just rule on the point of order, Minister? I'm conscious of the time. You obviously have a right to defer to your public servants for assistance and answering questions. But the members on the Committee also have a right to say that they'll take up those questions later on with those public servants. I will allow, in this case, Mr Farlow or Mr Fang to continue with the questions, hopefully in a polite manner.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, will you rule out selling off any golf courses in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is no proposal to sell any golf courses.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But will you rule it out—an ironclad guarantee?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If the golf course isn't going to be used by an operator, that's not a decision that I'm going to make.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: This is on Crown land. This is your land.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's on Crown land. How we utilise Crown land in the future, that can depend on a number of factors.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will you rule out selling off any golf courses on Crown land?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is no proposal to sell any golf course.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But you're not going to rule it out?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is no proposal to sell off any—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We'll move on to the next question. What compensation will there be for the Moore Park golf club?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Currently, there's negotiations underway. Ms Jones commented on the negotiations and the conversations in relation to—

The Hon. WES FANG: You're not across your brief, are you, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Chair, I would appreciate if Mr Fang controlled his commentary. You're not winning anyone over, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: I've got questions.

The CHAIR: The last one was a question, although a bit sarcastic. Have you finished your answer, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have a final question in the next 30 seconds?

The Hon. WES FANG: I do. Minister, on 19 May you put out a media release advising that an independent expression of interest was underway to fill the vacancies on Venues NSW's board. Do you remember that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you recall meeting with Mr Iemma? Do you know when that was?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My diary would—

The Hon. WES FANG: It was 23 May, Minister, if you don't know. It says it was about sports matters. Who instigated the meeting? He needs a note. Quick. Get it to him.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: It's becoming ridiculous.

The CHAIR: It is.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm happy to provide you with the meeting disclosure form. We discussed two issues concerning grassroots sport. The first was a local matter to do with training and grant allocations for sporting groups in the St George region. The second discussion was about cricket—in particular the needs for facilities in Sydney's south-west. As you know, Morris Iemma is a real cricket zealot, so that was what we discussed in that meeting.

The CHAIR: Ms Hurst will lead off for the crossbench.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Good morning, Minister. We've had some incredibly difficult events overseas in Israel and Palestine over the past few weeks, which are particularly impacting certain communities in New South Wales. I understand you can't talk about any of the details of your Federal meetings, but I'm wondering if you can tell us what Multicultural NSW is doing in response to these events. What services might be available for people right now in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's a great question. I want to acknowledge that it has been a very difficult period for our community, especially our multicultural community. The New South Wales Government condemns the acts of violence and hatred conducted by members of Hamas. There's nothing to celebrate in the

killing of innocent people, the firing of rockets at civilians or the taking of hostages. We need to keep rejecting hate and violence, and all those who perpetrate it. The New South Wales Government and Multicultural NSW have been engaging community leaders since Sunday 8 October 2023, when we received information of that atrocity on that day—that act of terrorism. We're extending our sympathies, listening to community perspectives and keeping lines of communication open.

Multicultural NSW has activated the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan, which is COMPLAN. COMPLAN draws together New South Wales agencies in a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to managing risk to community harmony. The COMPLAN response includes representatives of the Premier's Department, Education, Communities and Justice, Local Government, Multicultural NSW, Health and the NSW Police Force.

On Monday 9 October 2023, Multicultural NSW issued a COMPLAN notification calling on member agencies to monitor the situation and to share relevant information. On 13 October 2023 the representatives of the members of COMPLAN met. The COMPLAN members are reviewing measures available to them to counter divisive influences, limit harmful consequences and provide support and relief to affected persons and communities. It's been an extremely difficult period. As multicultural Minister I have been communicating with all of the relevant groups. It's incumbent upon us to try to maintain harmony in New South Wales. We celebrate the wonderful multicultural community we have.

For everyone, I think, this is not a time where we look to gain political advantage over this issue. This is a time where we all have to work together across government. All parliamentary representatives need to be working with the community because it's going to be extremely difficult. One thing I know, our multicultural communities don't like division and don't want division. We've seen, in the past, and they know, in the past, what it's done to them. They don't want to go back there. This issue and what's happening in the Gaza and in Israel is something that is going to be tough for an unknown period of time. But we've got to make sure that we keep harmony within our community. That's our job—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry, Minister. Were there any support services being made available through Multicultural NSW, which was the main part of my question?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might ask Joe to give us some greater information in terms of the support services.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thanks, Minister. Ms Hurst, firstly, thanks for your question. Reinforcing the Minister's answer, it's an incredibly difficult time. I thank a number of the people sitting around this table for your work in reassuring the community. I think the most important thing right now is that we ensure that the moderate voices that are out there are supported in such an extremely volatile time. Two key things, Ms Hurst, if I can: The first thing is that we have been engaging over 100 community leaders. That's not just members of our Israeli or Jewish or Muslim communities—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry to interrupt. I know this is an important question, but I do just want the answer around what support services might be available.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. I can tell you what they have asked for and then I can tell you how we're responding, if you like.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might come back to it this afternoon, if it's going to be a lengthy answer, because we are short on time.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sure. Not a problem.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, I might move on to gender issues regarding sport. You would be aware that there have been calls from advocacy groups such as Equal Pay for Equal Play for the New South Wales Government to make equal prize money between genders to be a precondition for sports clubs, organisations and peak bodies to receive any kind of government grants or funding. Is this something that you're willing to commit to, as the sports Minister, around equal pay?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's something that I have had numerous meetings with many organisations in relation to—equal pay. Look, it's a tough issue in that there is obviously a transition requirement there, but the New South Wales Government has made a significant funding commitment in the 2023-24 budget to increase participation of women and girls in sport, both on and off the field. We recognise that this is a unique opportunity to turbocharge the growth of women and girls in sport in New South Wales, capitalising on the success of the record-breaking FIFA Women's World Cup, which was a momentous time. This funding includes $30 million in 2023-24 for the Level the Playing Field Program, to provide grants for new and upgraded sports facilities for women and girls.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm just wondering, Minister, in regards to that $30 million for the Level the Playing Field Program, how are you able to ensure that applications to construct and upgrade sporting fields are specifically benefiting women and girls playing sport, when I'm assuming that a lot of these playing fields are shared playing fields? I'm just wondering how you can tag that as money for women.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Successful projects must demonstrate an ability to increase participation of women and girls. I might pass to Karen to give you the greater detail on how we're structuring the grant program.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might come back to Karen this afternoon and get a bit more information from her then.

KAREN JONES: If it does exist, I can advise on information around the Equal Pay for Equal Play as well as the Level the Playing Field. If you are ready, I can provide the information.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: This afternoon would be fantastic. Thank you, Ms Jones.

KAREN JONES: Okay.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, one part of this program says that the money can be used for the construction for lighting on fields and playing areas. Again I'm just a bit confused as to how we can say that construction for lighting is gendered, that that is some benefit specifically for women when, obviously, these sporting fields are shared.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's true. We do need greater lighting. There are issues around women's participation and what times they get on the pitch and on the facilities. It's about extending hours of play so we can get greater participation.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do you have any evidence that women aren't playing in certain hours? Was there evidence to suggest that women weren't playing sports at particular hours because of lighting difficulties?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The problem that I've experienced, just through consultation with a lot of women's groups and sporting clubs, is that they tend to prioritise—many sporting clubs in the past prioritised key times for the men. If we're providing greater lighting facilities and extending the hours that a pitch is available, it then makes it easier to program—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Which women's groups are telling you that they would be more likely to be involved in sport if there is better lighting?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was general information that was also coming from the Office of Sport. I have had a number of meetings. You can check my diary to see when I've met with—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: If you could take it on notice which organisations are giving this information.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I will take it on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Have you met with Equal Pay for Equal Play?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely, yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You have met with them. Have they asked you to commit, as the sports Minister, for equal prize money between genders as a precondition?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: And you have made that commitment?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. We're supporting. I embraced their goal, which is to get to very much like tennis is, where we have got equal prize money for tennis players.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you commit to it, though?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, since the March 2023 election, have there been any grants provided by the New South Wales Government to sports organisations that do not provide equal prize money between genders? If you need to take that on notice. That's my time up.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Does UFC provide equal prize money?

The CHAIR: It's not your time for questions. If you've agreed to take that on notice, I might just see whether Ms Faehrmann is on Webex and she's ready to ask questions.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes. I was thinking I was going to go to the next round, but I can jump in. Morning, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Morning.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I wanted to get an update on cemeteries, if I can. Could you just update me about where the Government's proposed two-operator model for the management of Crown cemeteries is up to and what that two-operator model looks like?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The model is currently under development, so I might throw that to Melanie Hawyes to give you a full run-down of that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Thank you. This Government came in with a fairly clear mandate to develop a two-operator model. The model for the Catholic cemeteries trust is under development. That development process is integrating design considerations around probity, governance and the treatment of the assets. It is under development at the moment with a view to being brought forward to government for decision in the near future.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Right. Okay. When you are saying "management of assets", can we just be clear on what the assets are in terms of the current cemeteries in terms of the Crown assets? Can you go through those?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. Correct—the Crown assets. We are working very closely with Treasury in the design of the final, end-state operating model for the CMCT. As I say, it is under design. I won't comment further here, but those matters are being dealt with as part of the process and with the close involvement of the Treasury.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Just confirming, the cemeteries and land that are currently under the control of the CMCT are Rookwood, Varroville, Wallacia and Liverpool. Is that correct? And, just confirming, that is Crown land?

KAREN JONES: Yes, the CMCT manages Crown land assets on behalf of the State, so it's everything within its remit. And on the flipside of that model, we are making a lot of progress in moving forward with the amalgamation of Metropolitan Memorial Parks and are at the sort of closing end of completing a recruitment of a skills-based board to run the MMP into the future. So quite a significant amount of progress has been made over the past six months.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Just confirming, Minister, it's your understanding that Rookwood, Varroville, Wallacia and Liverpool are all Crown land?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's correct.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Has the CMCT transferred ownership of the land at Varroville to the Crown? Has that happened?

MELANIE HAWYES: We've gazetted the Varroville reserve for the purpose of the development of that cemetery. Is that your question?

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: The question is—I understand that the Minister's direction at the time of approval of the purchase of the land was that ownership of the land would go to the Crown, specifically. I'm just wanting to check. Has that happened yet?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, we have gazetted it. I think it happened in December last year, from memory, but I can take that on notice, Ms Faehrmann, if you want some specifics. But it is a Crown cemetery, gazetted as such.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Okay, thank you. I'm wondering whether the CMCT's books have been audited yet. What is the update on that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I understand that the NSW Treasury—I think we need to appreciate the history here too. For the past, I think, three or four years there was a lack of decision-making by the previous Government and we had the cemetery space at—everyone was at war with each other. So we've acted, as soon as we've gotten in, to try to put a rest to that. We've got to appreciate that there has been a shortfall in terms of burial space across the State for a long period of time. People have been talking about it. We thought the only way to get on top of that is with an audit of the place—establish operating models moving forward and one of them was the CMCT and what its future looked like.

I understand that the NSW Treasury considers that, for the purpose of a financial audit, CMCT is a controlled entity and the Audit Office is able to audit the accounts. I also understand that the Audit Office has

contacted CMCT multiple times seeking access to documents for the purpose of conducting financial and performance audits, and I'm considering the issues that the Auditor-General has raised in a special report on this matter and the options available to the Government to address these issues. A new model will be transparent and provide a legal pathway for the Auditor-General to audit the entity that will manage the lands and the funds.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: When you say that a new model will create a legal pathway to audit the entity, that does not sound like you are placing pressure on the CMCT to open its books, which is what Treasury and the Audit Office have been requesting for years now?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, well, I might pass back to Mel to give you the detail of what's occurred in relation to the books.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Minister, I am also very interested to know whether you personally, given your influence within the Catholic Church, which I understand is reasonably strong, are influencing and requesting the CMCT to open its books?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Part of the whole process moving forward is an open and transparent audit of the books. That goes without saying. There was—I think it was back in 2018—a position that was held by the Auditor-General, who has deemed it to be a controlled entity, and there has been toing and froing over that period. That was under a previous administration. My job is to get—my objective is to get it fixed. Catholic Cemeteries have been operating, and they have done a very good job of operating cemeteries, for 153 years, faith-based—

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: But how do you know that, Minister, if they haven't opened their books? This is what everybody says, but the fact that they are not opening their books to the Auditor-General, doesn't that concern you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass to Mel to give you the detail.

MELANIE HAWYES: If I may, they are audited. Their accounts are audited. The Audit Office, as you know, tabled a letter which describes—the view is contested, because the Catholic operator maintains that it has a charitable trust status, and this is being unpacked and resolved in the design of the end-state operating model. That is our focus at the moment: to provide that absolute clarity so there is certainty going forward for all operators in the sector. But their accounts are audited on an annual basis.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Who are they audited by?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't know which—it was an independent firm.

JENNIFER HICKEY: I think it's Nexia.

MELANIE HAWYES: The CEO will probably be able to answer that, because the regulator receives those audited reports. Jen, did you want to add to that?

JENNIFER HICKEY: Yes, that's right. Nexia, I think, is their auditor.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So Minister, it's a private company. In the last financial year's audits, I think up until the last audit of the State's accounts, the fact that CMCT didn't open their books impacted the qualification to the State's accounts. Do you understand what that means?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Saying that they get their accounts audited is avoiding the seriousness of the matter. We're not talking about private auditors; we're talking about the NSW Audit Office for the State's accounts, which the Auditor-General has remained extremely concerned about, as has the New South Wales Treasurer. I'm just asking, once again, what you're doing about it as Minister for Lands and Property and someone who has taken a strong interest in this issue over a number of years.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm considering the issues that the Auditor-General has raised and the options available to Government. Moving forward, there is obviously the intention of having the fact that it's a controlled entity and that the accounts will be audited and will be available in the future.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes, but that's in this new entity. There may be a situation where some of the current assets or funds go into a separate entity within the Catholic Church and can no longer be audited. That, obviously, depends on what your two-operator model looks like and where the perpetual funds go in terms of assets. What is the department doing in that regard? Are they ensuring that, what I understand is potentially $1 billion of assets and income over the next decade, for example—or more than that, but a significant amount of money. Are you guaranteeing that that stays with the Government or is that going to go into some perpetual fund for the Catholic Church?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, the model moving forward will have a situation where it stays within the Government.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So all of the funds and assets and income stays within the Government?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, I'm just going to go back to where I was previously. I didn't quite get a clear answer. Who instigated the meeting between yourself and Morris Iemma?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'd refer to my diary entries of—

The Hon. WES FANG: Who instigated the meeting?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I would say that the—well, the meeting was instigated by Morris Iemma.

The Hon. WES FANG: So Mr Iemma asked for the meeting?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I assume so. I mean, I didn't call him and put it in my diary.

The Hon. WES FANG: You assume so? That's not exactly a—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, I didn't call him and put it in my diary. Obviously, there has been a request and it's been processed through my office.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, did the sporting matters as related to the diary entry include Mr Iemma's potential or actual appointment to Venues NSW's board as chair?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: They didn't? Okay. Do you think it's appropriate that you met with Mr Iemma after the expressions of interest process had started, given that you ultimately nominated him as chair for the board? Read your note.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In June the Premier's Department and the Office of Sport led a recruitment process for the vacant positions of the Venues NSW board. These positions included the role of chair. The former Premier Morris Iemma was short-listed by the independent panel and his selection approved by Cabinet. Morris Iemma believed he was unable to fulfil the chairman's role as he battled some personal health issues. While the timing was unfortunate, I accepted Morris Iemma's resignation, and we wish him well in his recovery. He wasn't—

The Hon. WES FANG: Four days after you put out a media release saying that you're going to open the expression of interests for the vacancies, you meet with Mr Iemma on sport matters. You then, subsequently, award him the position as chair of the board. You can see how that's a little bit—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There was a process involved, Mr Fang. That process produced Mr Iemma as the best candidate for the job. I wasn't involved in any part of that process.

The Hon. WES FANG: You weren't involved at all? Here's, I guess, the crux of it, Minister. Given that Jo Haylen's office directed the public service on who to interview for the transport secretary role, do you think it was prudent for you to meet with Mr Iemma while there was an active expression of interest process underway for the board of Venues NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I wasn't aware, at that stage, that Morris Iemma was making an application to the board of New South Wales.

The Hon. WES FANG: Was it your idea that he make the application? Did you suggest it to him?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not. Mr Fang, there was a proper process put in place.

The Hon. WES FANG: We know how that proper process goes with you Labor Ministers.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That process was followed.

The Hon. WES FANG: We've seen that roll out with Ms Haylen.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I was—

The Hon. WES FANG: You pick your mates.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At the end of the day—

The Hon. WES FANG: You tell them to interview them.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At the end of the day, that process was followed.

The Hon. WES FANG: We know how you operate.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No-one questions—

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: Chair, I'm really reluctant to keep having to do this.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're not. We know who you defended.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: But we're in a situation where Mr Fang asks a question and then, before the Minister can even answer the question, he then interrupts with some invective about Labor processes or something else. I just ask that you call him to order and you allow the Minister to just answer the question that's been asked before there is new commentary or another question.

The Hon. WES FANG: If the Minister would answer the question, I might.

The CHAIR: I would once again ask the member to allow the Minister to finish his answer. Be a bit patient. I know where you're going with this. I think we all know where you're going with this. Allow him to finish the answer before you actually ask the next one. Thank you. Please continue. Had you finished your response, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Karen was on the panel throughout the whole process. I think Karen should be able to comment on it.

The Hon. WES FANG: Let's not drop Karen on it. If we do, we'll ask her later. Minister, you can see that people would have questions around the process, given that there are similarities between the way that you've conducted yourself and Minister Haylen conducted herself in relation to the appointment of Josh Murray. Tell me how it's different.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've told you. I told you in a previous answer. I played no role in that process.

The Hon. WES FANG: She said she played no role in it and that was a proper process, as well. Look what we've uncovered so far.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't comment on that.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't comment on that. Thank you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's not my business.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's enough. I'll pass over to my colleague.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, did you approve a Cabinet submission recommending the appointment of Mr Iemma to the chair of Venues NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. It went through the process, and it was established through that process. He was the most outstanding candidate. I don't think anyone could deny that. We're talking about a former Premier who's had an enormous involvement in sport throughout his life. If you talk to this bloke about venues—there's nothing he doesn't know about venues, nothing worth knowing. He was well received across all the community, all commentariat. Everyone acknowledged him as the number one person for the chair role, except for yourself, Mr Wang.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Fang. I appreciate it if you get my name right, at least.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Sorry about that.

The Hon. WES FANG: You are the Minister for Multiculturalism. But that's okay. We'll move on from there. Minister, how many expressions of interest were received? How many people were on the shortlist?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If I could ask Karen, who was involved in the process—if I could ask Karen Jones to answer that, because she's got all the detail in relation to how many people.

The Hon. WES FANG: Just a brief answer, please, Ms Jones.

KAREN JONES: What I can say around the process is that it was done independently of the Minister. The process itself included expressions of interest, in which case I'd have to take the exact number on notice, but I think it was in the 90-odd applications that were received. There was a panel that was established around going through those expressions of interest to then determine who we would short-list for an interview. That panel met. We short-listed. We then went through two days' worth of interviews, in which case we then formed a view around

people who were suitable for all the roles on the Venues NSW board, including the chair, the deputy chair and other board members, whose roles will be coming up shortly. Then that was tabled for the Minister's consideration. Then it was sent through to Cabinet.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Jones, with respect to that, was the Minister given one choice? Or was the Minister given a selection of choices?

KAREN JONES: The actual briefing note itself contained recommendations for all of the roles.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, if you'd already determined that you would appoint Morris Iemma to be the chair of the Venues NSW board, do you think it's appropriate that you wasted taxpayers' money on the unnecessary expressions of interest process?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't accept that question.

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No—because I hadn't.

The Hon. WES FANG: You hadn't?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I hadn't determined. We've just gone through explaining to you what the process was.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Jones, did the Minister at any time direct you as to his preferences in relation to who he thought would be suitable for the board?

KAREN JONES: No, he did not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, turning to your multicultural portfolio. Mr La Posta I notice, as well, as we do that. During the election, your Government committed to a $15 million program for grants programs going towards security of religious institutions. Can you please provide us with details on the rollout of that program.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I just want to acknowledge that, yes, we did commit $15 million as an election promise leading into the election. We've embraced that. I think I might pass on to Joseph to give you some details in relation to the rollout of the program.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thanks, Minister. Through you, Minister, and the Chair. Mr Farlow, we were supported with a number of election commitments, which my hardworking team at Multicultural NSW is working through. The safety and security commitment needs a level of policy crafted around it that is very well considered and measured because we need to make sure that the funding that is available is nuanced and different from what the Commonwealth is looking to provide in this space, which was announced just before our funding. Then the second part is—obviously, the situation in Israel and Gaza at the moment and the broader Middle East has certainly heightened the scenario. So my team is working around the clock to fast-track the announcement of the opening of that sort of transparent process that will run. We're hoping to do that in the next few weeks.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So at this stage, despite the election commitment, there is no process for an organisation or religious institution to be able to apply for funding through that program.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The Commonwealth Government has just closed their process, Mr Farlow. We were keen to see, in terms of the best use of taxpayer funding, exactly how their process was received and also the limitations and sort of parameters around their grant process. My team's already engaging with the New South Wales police and others across the New South Wales Government to make sure that our grant program for that $15 million, which is $15 million over four years—it's not per year—when we can release the program, the specifics around the program and also the quantum that we can release for year one. Mr Farlow, you're quite right in saying there is an imminent need within the community for safety and security funding in terms of our religious institutions. The team are working around the clock to be able to deliver that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of course, while acknowledging the Federal program that's available, there's many organisations that have missed out on that Federal funding and are looking at the State. What are the minimum and maximum amounts that organisations will be able to apply for under the New South Wales scheme?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's still being determined. In fairness to the Minister—we haven't even briefed the Minister yet in and around the parameters of the grants. Once we do that, the Minister makes an announcement, I'm happy to be able to communicate that to this group, but it's still being worked through at the moment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Securing Faith-Based Places program grants—the Federal program—it covers religious schools, preschools, places of worship or faith-based community centres facing threats of violence and/or security risks associated with religious or racial intolerance. Will the New South Wales program cover the same scope?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We're still working through the scope of the program. I think the Commonwealth Government announcement caught us a little bit by surprise in terms of the fact that this was something that the New South Wales Government—well, the then Opposition—were looking to make as part of their election platform. You are quite right in terms of the ancillary structures and associated structures that sit around our religious institutions; that will be a key consideration for us because we want people to feel safe and secure, regardless of whether they're going to their place of worship or they're going to the associated educational institutions that's next to them and those things at the moment. I think right now, particularly within our Jewish community and our Islamic community, there are heightened tensions and it is critical that we provide a timely response to those communities.

The other thing I would just say is we're working with the police every single day. Operation Shelter is currently live in terms of supporting our community organisations and making sure that there's increased levels of patrols around all of those associated buildings and structures that you spoke to before. We are working with the police extensively to make sure that whatever program is drafted and crafted is responsive to the needs of the community and adapts appropriately. You are quite right, Mr Farlow. Yes, there is an element where we don't just want to duplicate or give the same organisations funding from the Commonwealth, but there's obviously also a heightened sensitivity at the moment, because of the conflict overseas, to make sure that our response is commensurate to what the needs of the community are.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr La Posta. Minister Kamper, this, of course, was a key commitment of your Government in coming to government. What have you done to be able to make sure that this program comes to fruition as soon as possible?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As Joe mentioned earlier, there's been an announcement from the Federal perspective as well and we're looking at how—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's the Feds; that's not the State Government.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I appreciate that but we want to make sure that we're not duplicating and we're getting the best outcome for our faith communities in terms of—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister Kamper, was there any funding in the 2023-24 budget for this program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, there was $15 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That was allocated in the 2023-24 budget?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sorry, Mr Farlow, Minister. Mr Farlow, there is $3 million allocated in this year and $4 million in the subsequent three years, which is the $15 million commitment over four years. There are live conversations happening at the moment, given the crisis overseas and escalating community tensions here in New South Wales, to increase the amount of funding that's available in the first year. I think it'd to be fair to say, and fair to the Minister, that no-one could foresee the extenuating circumstances of what's happened globally and overseas. The Minister and I have been in regular dialogue about fast-tracking this application process so that we can provide the ongoing support to the community as required.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, before you just jumped in and saved the Minister, the Minister had actually indicated the contrary to what you have just answered. Minister, do you understand what was asked of you, given that Mr La Posta has just literally given a alternate answer to what you started answering?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't believe he did. I answered that there's been $15 million over the period—

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, we'll check the *Hansard* afterwards but I think you actually said it was committed.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, within the forward estimates, it is committed.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, that's not the answer that you gave.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is $3 million for the first year. You are seeking to find—you're seeking to get what you want.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, I mean—you're not across your brief, are you, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am very much across my brief.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I have two things. First of all, the honourable member is trying to verbal what the Minister actually said. The Minister said "$15 million". It's pretty clear that it was over a period of time that's being explained. Statements like "You're not across your brief" are just disrespectful. I'd ask you to remind the member that it is a Minister of the Crown and his staff here today and that he should show due respect and allow the questions to be asked and answered as we know they should be done.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, can you identify where this funding allocation is in the budget papers?

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: Can we have a ruling on the point of order first, please?

The CHAIR: There was actually a bit more of a gap between the banter this time but still, I refer the member to procedural fairness about how we address witnesses. While I don't necessarily say that the comment "You're not across your brief" is stepping over that line, it is probably going pretty close. If you have that view, maybe rephrase it in another way. The Opposition has the call.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, if you can identify where this program is in the budget papers?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's allocated in the budget papers. You find it yourself.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you read the budget papers, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you? Well then why can't you identify it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's in the budget papers.

The Hon. WES FANG: Where?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You thought it was $15 million to begin with.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If that's not good enough for you, I'll take it on notice and you can—

The Hon. WES FANG: You're kidding? This is why I say he's not across his brief because, I mean—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This is ridiculous.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Obviously, neither are you.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Primrose, it's not about me today. If you've got to protect the wallflower, I mean, that's up to you.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: You're asking the questions.

The CHAIR: Order! We are questioning the Minister; we're not having slanging matches between each side. Don't waste your question time with funny quips across the table. Next question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much, Chair. Minister, the Multiculturalism portfolio has numerous stakeholders to deal with; it's a very extensive portfolio. We've had a look at your disclosures from 1 April to 30 June and we could only identify nine meetings regarding Multiculturalism portfolio matters. Is this potentially a discrepancy?

The Hon. WES FANG: Hand him the note.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I provide all the necessary diary disclosures in accordance with the Premier's Memorandum M2015-05-Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information. Details of matters discussed are made available as part of that disclosure process. I'm happy to provide further details on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you for reading the note, Minister. In comparison, Minister Coure—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, you're reading a question. Do you not form that off top of your head?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, you're not answering the question, with all due respect. In the same period, Minister Coure met with more than 40 organisations to discuss Multiculturalism portfolio matters. Is it the case—and we see from the bureaucrats you've got behind you—that you've just got too much pressure and too many jobs to be able to look after the Multiculturalism portfolio?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't accept that. I think we're doing a great job in Multiculturalism. We're doing a great job across the board.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't even get my name right.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm sorry, Mr Fang. I apologise for that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, you'd be aware, of course, of the ongoing tensions between the Sikh and Hindu communities here, interstate and internationally?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am across tensions and most issues across—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, on 10 June 2023 your office released a statement responding to inquiries on the Khalistan separatist movement tensions in Sydney that stated, "The Minister for Multiculturalism and Multicultural NSW are continually engaging in ongoing dialogue with community leaders to mitigate risks to community harmony and to de-escalate tensions." Can you explain what your office meant by "continually engaging in ongoing dialogue"?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The tensions within the Indian community of New South Wales have recently escalated, especially around the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May and the unofficial Khalistan referendum in Sydney on 4 June 2023. The NSW Police Force, Multicultural NSW and other agencies have been working with Hindu and Sikh communities and religious leaders to de-escalate tensions. My agency, Multicultural NSW, continues to implement arrangements under the New South Wales Community Resilience and Response Plan to mitigate risks to community harmony.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, it took you over three weeks from that statement to actually sit down with Sikh and Hindu organisations. Do you think that was an acceptable time frame, considering the tensions?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, I might pass over to Joe.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thank you, through you, Minister, to the Chair. Mr Farlow, thank you for your question. It's been an incredibly challenging and difficult time for our Hindu and Sikh communities, particularly over the past few months—well, to be frank, over the past 18 months since the farming legislation reform back in India, which I know that you are well aware of.

With respect to the support to the Indian and Sikh communities in New South Wales, we saw the violence that broke out in Melbourne around Federation Square with the proposed referendum and the violent attacks on those two different religious organisations. We then saw the largely successful execution of the referendum up in Queensland and we worked incredibly closely with colleagues across Home Affairs, New South Wales police, Queensland Police Service, Victoria Police and others to make sure that because of the size of our Indian diaspora here in New South Wales, which is one of our fastest growing communities now with Hindi in the top five languages—we realised that the magnitude of the size of the community could be quite destabilising if we didn't manage the referendum in the most appropriate manner possible.

Using that interjurisdictional support from the other States, and then working very closely with Home Affairs, ASIO, AFP and others, we tried to set up the best framework that we possibly could. To the specifics around the community members that we worked with, we worked incredibly closely with the Hindu Council of Australia, the Hindu clergy, the Australian Sikh Association and any of the different groups that were out there—the gurdwaras and the temples—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Understand, Mr La Posta, this is no disrespect to Multicultural NSW or the work that you do. But I note our time has expired on this one.

The CHAIR: Perhaps you can provide the further details on notice, if the member's happy with that.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Certainly.

The CHAIR: I'll pass to Dr Cohn.

Dr AMANDA COHN: How much funding is apportioned in the 2023-24 budget to continue the Emergency Relief Support Grants program, which was previously administered through Multicultural NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Emergency Relief Support Grants for financial year 2022-23 were made to 15 specialist NGOs to provide support to people seeking asylum and vulnerable temporary visa holders who faced significant hardship because of COVID-19 but were excluded from Commonwealth COVID-19 support payments. These payments, as the name suggests, were for emergency relief during the worst impacts of the COVID pandemic. The ERS Grants provided COVID-19 relief that included financial support to meet essential needs such as food, essential housing, medical, transport and telecommunication support and case management services. The funding for the Emergency Relief Support Grants concluded on 30 June 2023. The cessation of this temporary funding was made clear from the commencement of the ERS program. Funding to support people seeking asylum is a Commonwealth responsibility, so the funding has pretty much dried up in relation to that.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Will the New South Wales Government be working in partnership with the Federal Government to redirect unspent Federal funding from the Status Resolution Support Services program towards extending the Multicultural NSW Emergency Relief Support Grants program, or have any discussions to that effect been entered into between the New South Wales and Federal governments?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, there have been a number of discussions to try to reinstate funding from the Federal Government. I've had a number of meetings and am actively involved in trying to do that but, unfortunately, it wasn't forthcoming. I might pass over to Joe to give you greater detail in relation to how we're managing.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thanks, Minister. Dr Cohn, excellent question. As the Minister very comprehensively answered, the funding became available during the exigencies of government during COVID. We heard reports of people eating food out of the back of Woolies and Coles that had expired and hit its use-by date. At the time, we wanted to respond. We responded quite swiftly and, over the first couple of years of COVID, we were able to allocate a total amount of $20 million to support our asylum seekers and temporary visa holders. I think we all famously remember the then Prime Minister at the time making a comment to the effect that temporary visa holders can just go home; the Australian Government's not responsible for providing their support. So I think the fact that the New South Wales Government stepped into what was an abandonment of the SRSS policy at a Commonwealth level and the changing of those guidelines is something we should all be very proud of.

With respect to this budget—and I have to be very clear—I was very transparent with all of our NGOs, and I continue to be to this day, about the likelihood of the continuation of that funding. To be frank, the $20 million the New South Wales Government gave is nowhere near enough for what our asylum seekers and temporary visa holders need. I've been really proud of our Minister in terms of his representations to the Commonwealth Minister on this matter. We had in this very room an interjurisdictional multicultural ministerial forum with the Commonwealth Minister where our Minister made strong recommendations to the Commonwealth Minister on this. We continue to work with colleagues in the Commonwealth around revisions to the SRSS policy to make sure that these people receive the support that they deserve.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I'd like to follow on from the earlier questioning by the Hon. Emma Hurst. On 23 August this year the Legislative Council passed a Greens motion calling on the Government to commit to initiatives to improve access and remove barriers to participation in sport, including equal prize money, equal pay and equal conditions for women in any programs or events that receive New South Wales Government support. What actions has the Office of Sport taken to implement that, specifically looking at equal prize money, equal pay and equal conditions for women rather than infrastructure?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said earlier, we had a meeting in relation to that, and I pledged full support as the Minister to pursue equal pay and equal prize money. I have engaged with Karen Jones in relation to what we need to do moving forward to promote equal pay and equal prize money for women. Karen, if you could just give us some greater detail in relation to where we've landed there.

KAREN JONES: Sure. Thank you, Minister, and thank you for your question. I do have to commend the ongoing advocacy of the two women who are behind Equal Pay for Equal Play, and that includes Lucy Small and Kate Allman. From the Office of Sport's perspective, equal pay and equal prize money is a really complex issue in sport. However, I am pleased that we have moved and the Government has moved forward on this initiative, and in particular through our Organisation Support Program. You might recall through the election commitment process for the current Government there was a commitment to increase the money that went to State sporting organisations, so that was year-on-year funding that we provided to them. In fact, this year it increases to $5 million, and it actually doubles next year.

Conditions on that funding do actually go to equal prize money. I've mentioned already as part of my evidence this morning that State sporting organisations—we recognise around 96 of those. For each one of those

who access money through the Organisation Support Program, they now need to work towards a commitment for equal prize money for any events within their sports, as well as also looking at improving female participation. In particular, they need to complete our Participation Planning Tool, which is available on the Office of Sport website and is an initiative under our women in sport strategy.

I know you didn't specifically ask about infrastructure, but then, of course, there is the $30 million Level the Playing Field grant, which is an increase on previous funding for women's sport facilities by $5 million. Again, conditions around that funding go towards equal access to those facilities. So there are a number of levers—particularly funding levers—that the Government, through the Office of Sport, is pulling to make sure that we can work towards equal pay and equal prize money for women and girls in sport.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I appreciate the Minister's support for that issue and that the Organisation Support Program is a step in the right direction. Under the Organisation Support Program, organisations have to have a plan to move towards equal prize money. How is the Government actually tracking whether or not an organisation is implementing that plan?

KAREN JONES: It's a condition of their funding agreement. When they do apply for funding under the Organisation Support Program, they need to give us a copy of that plan, and then there are certain milestones in which we will check progress against that plan. As I said, it's actually year-on-year funding, so there is at least one checkpoint every year where we would go back through those plans to make sure that they're achieving what they set out to do—what they committed to.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Why was equal pay not considered as a requirement for those grants?

KAREN JONES: Equal pay is a complex issue. Equal pay is something that is often negotiated through sporting organisations, not specifically at the State level. We work in a federated model here in terms of sport, so you have State sporting organisations, national sporting organisations, and then also they're often overseen by their international governing bodies. Often there are enterprise agreements that are actually developed at that international level, which then filter down through to the State level.

I am pleased to say, though, that there are a number of sports that already have plans in place working towards equal pay. You just need to have a look at some of the professional sporting organisations who are not only trying to improve the profile of women's sport and the commercialisation of women's sport, so that they actually have the funding base, but there are record-breaking broadcast deals happening, which again improve the funding pool—so the availability of equal pay for women, hopefully in the near future.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Specifically, what is the New South Wales Government or the Office of Sport doing to progress that work?

KAREN JONES: Through our women in sport strategy, we have had a number of initiatives around trying to improve the profile of women's sport and the visibility of women's sport, and also to support initiatives around the commercialisation of women's sport. I point to our Trendspotter Forum that we hosted just before the FIFA Women's World Cup. During that forum, there were a number of commercial entities and sporting organisations all talking about the same goal around trying to work their way towards equal pay. It's very refreshing to see that conversation and that dialogue happening.

Dr AMANDA COHN: The Bondi Bowling Club, which sits on Crown land, has received a 400 per cent increase in its rent. That bowling club has been a community hub for 19 years. It's not for profit, pokie free and run by volunteers. Is the social and economic impact on the local community considered when rent is determined by Crown Lands?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The former Government implemented legislation in 2016 but failed to maintain the requirements, which were rent redeterminations required to occur every three to five years. Now, the Bondi Bowling Club's rent—can I continue?

The CHAIR: Yes, if you are halfway through the answer.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Bondi Bowling Club's rent was last reviewed over 15 years ago. The clubs on Crown land are entitled to a rent rebate or concession if their revenue is below $1 million. If they earn between $500,000 and $1 million, they're entitled to a 20 per cent concession. If they earn revenue under $500,000, they're entitled to a 50 per cent rebate. The Bondi Bowling Club has indicated that it generates well over $1 million in revenue per annum, so the club is therefore not eligible to receive that concession. Historically, they did receive the concession because they were below the threshold. That's what's further created that escalation.

MELANIE HAWYES: We're actually meeting with the Bondi Bowling Club in the coming weeks to have a discussion with them about the rent settings, but we have a statutory obligation to charge fair rent and to redetermine that rent on a regular basis.

The CHAIR: Minister, I want to turn to White Cliffs dugouts. It has been a bit of a festering sore for a number of years. What are your department or yourself doing to assist those residents of the 121 dugouts to ensure that they don't lose their homes?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Thank you, Chair, for the question. By way of background, in 2015 the Federal Court recognised that the Barkandji people held native title over the land where the dugouts are located. Now, this decision means that conversion of the dugouts to freehold title is not possible. In 2021 Crown Lands entered into a landmark Indigenous land use agreement with the Barkandji people, and the agreement has enabled the residents of dugouts at White Cliffs to continue living there. After 121 former occupancy licences were terminated at the point when native title was recognised in the Federal Court, Crown Lands is undertaking work to enable perpetual leases or licences to be granted to dugout residents. Perpetual leases are the most secure form of tenure available that can exist in harmony with the native title rights of the Barkandji people. Perpetual lease can only be offered where an appropriate survey of the property has been undertaken. Crown Lands has provided free surveys to dugout residents and a licence will be offered where the appropriate survey has not been undertaken.

The CHAIR: Just on those perpetual leases, will the dugout residents be able to sell any interest in those perpetual leases to someone else?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might throw to Mel to cover that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Thanks, Minister. We've actually been working intensively with the community to facilitate this change. We've offered no-cost surveys of the properties and have completed 116 surveys out of the 121 residences to date. Those remaining residents opted not to have a survey and have preferred to opt for a perpetual licence rather than a lease. In terms of sale, the leases can be passed on to family as part of the resident's estate. If a resident wishes to sell their lease, they may do so, provided they offer a first right of refusal to the Barkandji. That is the arrangement that we have, and will be formalised in the leases. I believe the leases are being shared with residents this week—they may already have been. We are at that point.

The CHAIR: Can you just explain the difference between the lease and the—what was the other one? The other five, they went for a—

MELANIE HAWYES: Perpetual licence.

The CHAIR: What happens with that perpetual licence, in terms of it being different to the lease? Is there a time period on those licences, and what happens if that licence expires?

MELANIE HAWYES: Well, they are perpetual.

The CHAIR: They are perpetual? Okay.

MELANIE HAWYES: The lease is the more form secure of tenure. The current arrangement is licensing. Some residents didn't opt for that change. They may, in due course—it's an option that is available to them—but at this point we're working on formalising 116 perpetual leases. That gives certainty to the residents and to the Barkandji, and harmonises the rights and interests of both parts of the community in that area.

The CHAIR: Will these leases allow them to modify the dugout?

MELANIE HAWYES: With the permission of the Barkandji. If they wish to excavate further, they just need the permission of the Barkandji to do so.

The CHAIR: There is a process in place for that permission?

MELANIE HAWYES: We will broker those arrangements with the tenants, yes.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Can I just go to the border fence, Minister? Obviously it's an important piece of infrastructure in terms of stopping wild dogs. I'm not going to ask about wild dogs specifically, because that's probably tomorrow. But my understanding is that you're increasing the levy for the border fence maintenance. Can you explain to us why you are doing so?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Thank you very much for this important question. For anybody not aware, the border fences are a 600-kilometre dog-proof fence constructed along the New South Wales, Queensland and South Australian borders. That is significant in mitigating the impact of wild dogs on the viability of farming in western New South Wales through the loss of stock. The board is responsible for maintaining this fence to a

dog-proof standard. It is primarily funded by rates collected from landowners in the Western Division of New South Wales who have a property greater than 1,000 hectares.

The Border Fence Maintenance Act 1921 requires the board to establish a fund and use that fund for the purpose of maintaining the fence. These rates must be paid into the fund. The maximum rate that the Border Fence Maintenance Board can charge landholders for payment towards the maintenance of the border fence has not increased since 2009, and there have been significant cost increases of maintaining the border fence. These have resulted from inflationary pressures such as increasing staff and material costs, including steel and energy. Increasing the maximum rate to 7 cents per hectare will ensure that the border fence maintenance board can continue to maintain the fence to a wild-dog-proof standard.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well read, Minister!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Smart-arse.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you just call me a smart-arse? That's not very nice.

The CHAIR: You're increasing it by nearly 30 per cent. What guarantee will there be for the residents that this won't increase further?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I will pass on to Mel for that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Thanks, Minister. The reg change basically enables the board to move to a potential maximum of 7 cents per hectare. It's at the board's discretion whether they do that. But those funds are used to maintain and keep the fence at a wild-dog-proof standard. That is the purpose of the reg: the board can make that choice. We consulted with the Farmers Association Western Division Council, the Pastoralists' Association of West Darling and the western board of the Local Land Services, who all provided support to increase the potential maximum, knowing that it will be used to sustain the fence into the future.

The CHAIR: Am I right to assume that the other States are making similar contributions?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't comment on what the other States are doing. This is about our contribution in New South Wales to that part of the fence. I would imagine they have similar arrangements.

The CHAIR: I'm just curious as to how our rates compare to what they're charging.

MELANIE HAWYES: I can take that on notice and get you some more information, possibly this afternoon.

The CHAIR: Yes, that would be great. Lastly, to close that, there's obviously a significant hole. I think it was reported as 32 kilometres in length along the South Australian border, which is obviously a big hole for wild dogs to wander freely through. I'm just wondering where we are at in terms of plugging that hole?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I understand that while maintenance of the fence sits under my responsibilities, the border fence extension project sits with my colleague, Minister Moriarty.

The CHAIR: I'll hit her up.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You might put that in your pocket and ask her tomorrow.

The CHAIR: No worries.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Questions about the extension of the border fence would be best directed to Mel.

The CHAIR: In the two minutes remaining, I've got a question on multiculturalism. Feel free to direct it to Mr La Posta if you need to. Post-pandemic, there's been a rise in multicultural events. More communities are seeking money to run these events. Some of those cultural groups are probably more sophisticated in their operations, or larger in their operations—still recognising a lot of these groups are run by volunteers and English might not be their first language, or they might not be very proficient at it. But some of these bigger groups, we're hearing, are paying consultants to write their application processes for them. I'm just wondering what the department is doing or what you are doing, Minister, to make sure there is a level playing field so some of those smaller multicultural groups get their fair bite of the cherry and they are not disadvantaged because they are smaller or are not as proficient in English?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's a great question, Chair. We've recently distributed funds to a number of groups—smaller-type grant funding. But I will pass you on to Joe to give you the greater detail on what we're doing in that space.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thanks, Minister. Thanks, Chair. It really is an operational matter, so it's probably best directed to me. We're aware of it. I appreciate you flagging it, because it's a constant challenge where you don't want to give money just because the grant's really well written. You want to give money because the grant delivers on what it says it is, which is either supporting new and emerging communities or engaging a large audience or whatever. The long and the short is we do two key things. We have capacity-building programs where our staff will run grant-writing sessions, particularly targeting new and emerging communities. We ran one the other day for the women of Afghanistan because of the size of the increase of that population. We wanted to make sure that community was getting its just deserts in terms of grants. We ran one with a network of women in and around that Blacktown area.

Likewise, we're also looking at a community that I know Mr Farlow is close to, the Korean community, where we're actually thinking, because of some members of that community having low levels of English proficiency, about running the grant programs in Korean to help them break down some of the barriers to being able to understand how to access the grants and so forth. The last part is that we have members of our community engagement team as part of the grant decision-making process to help run the ruler on it, not just because it's well written but that community has a significant impact. It's not perfect; we've got to keep getting better at it. But it is front of mind.

The CHAIR: I'm looking to the Government for their 15 minutes of questions.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: We're very satisfied with the Minister's answers. We don't have any questions.

The CHAIR: We will break early for morning tea. We will break now for 15 minutes and come back at 11.15.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Before I throw to the Opposition, I believe Ms Hawyes has an evidence clarification she wants to make regarding Ms Faehrmann's questions.

MELANIE HAWYES: Ms Faehrmann asked when the land at Varroville was reserved as Crown land. That was actually February 2023, rather than December 2022. My memory failed on that. Thank you for the opportunity to correct it.

The CHAIR: No problems at all. We'll throw back to the Opposition for questions.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, to save us all the time, do you think you might be able to table all those answers you've been reading off? It might save everyone a bit of effort.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order—

The CHAIR: What is the point of order, other than bad jokes?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not compelled to do that anyway.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: He needs to treat the witness with courtesy and respect, Chair. That's just not respectful.

The Hon. WES FANG: He keeps reading off notes.

The CHAIR: I'm hearing the point of order, and then I've also got the Minister jumping in in the background. I'll hear the point of order.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: All witnesses before these committees must be treated with courtesy and respect. What he should be doing is asking the Minister a genuine question and allowing the Minister to answer. That's not a genuine question.

The Hon. WES FANG: I could not be more genuine when I asked him to table the notes that he's reading from.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: It's disrespectful—

The Hon. WES FANG: He's reading so poorly—

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: —and I ask you to call him to order.

The Hon. WES FANG: —that I would actually prefer to read it myself.

The CHAIR: I'm not going to get into the debate about whether it was a genuine question or not. If that's really your first question, I think the Minister was pretty much answering it when he said, "I'm not compelled to do so."

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's right.

The CHAIR: Let's move on to the next question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Let's go to the speedway, Minister. What's the state of play with the speedway?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The speedway falls under the responsibility of Minister Scully.

MELANIE HAWYES: It's within the Greater Sydney Parklands.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you've got no interaction with the speedway whatsoever?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can probably take that. This is for a different session, with Minister Scully. But Greater Sydney Parklands is part of the portfolio that I am responsible for. I have made the Minister aware of progress with negotiating a new operator for the speedway, but those questions are probably better directed to Minister Scully.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But within the Sport portfolio, you don't have dealings with motorsport in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I do have dealings with motorsport. It was great to get out to Bathurst. It was a wonderful experience, and I've got a true appreciation—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You enjoyed the corporate hospitality?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —of motorsport there. I've been out to Top Fuel as well and experienced that. I do suggest that if you go out there you get some real solid earplugs. It can trouble your body. As I said earlier, that issue is under the responsibility of Minister Scully.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, how long did you spend at the Bathurst 1000? Cumulative time-wise, how long were you there for?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I didn't run a stopwatch.

The Hon. WES FANG: It was minutes though, wasn't it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I didn't have a stopwatch, but I was—

The Hon. WES FANG: It wasn't hours, was it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe I was there for three or four hours. Does that offend you, the three or four hours Mister—

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Fang.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Fang, I said. I said, "Mr Fang".

The Hon. WES FANG: Seriously, do you think you can get my name right? You're the Minister for Multiculturalism.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Mr Fang—

The Hon. WES FANG: I think it's a little bit insensitive that you can't even get my name right. I have got a nameplate here with my own name. Let's move on.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, in terms of your responsibilities in motorsport, has the Government developed a motorsport strategy?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're working with motorsport on a number of issues. We've got issues around the Newcastle event. We're engaging on a number of issues. But the motorsport strategy is probably best explained by Karen Jones.

KAREN JONES: The motorsport strategy is on the Government's agenda for development. The process has not yet started around the motorsport strategy, but I can say that it is an election commitment of the Government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So there is no motorsport strategy at this stage? It was an election commitment, but there's no strategy at this stage.

KAREN JONES: The strategy in itself will be under development sometime this year.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you started it?

KAREN JONES: Have we started it?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

KAREN JONES: We do have a framework, which was done—

The Hon. WES FANG: When you said it starts this year, that sounds like it's not even factoring into any of the work commitments that you're—

KAREN JONES: In terms of motorsport, at the Office of Sport, we actually look after the regulation of motorsport. The attraction of events is done through Destination NSW. As you can appreciate, there are different facets of motorsport around the State. For us, we need to pool all of that information together and work across a number of government agencies before we can then start the development of the motorsport strategy.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, with respect to motorsport, we know that there's not a motorsport strategy on foot at the moment. Is it correct that it will cost $70 million for the redevelopment of the speedway?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said earlier, maybe put that question in your pocket and ask Minister Scully when you get an opportunity to do that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If I can ask Ms Hawyes in terms of that, is that correct?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think it's more appropriate that it's directed to Minister Scully's estimates session, but the construction—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You know the cost.

MELANIE HAWYES: The construction of the speedway is being done by Sydney Metro rather than Greater Sydney Parklands. We are the landholder, but the details of that work would be Minister Haylen from the Sydney Metro portfolio. It's better placed in different Ministers' estimates sessions, I believe.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: For the benefit of the Committee, I can say that it cost $70 million at least, in terms of what the Government has outlined, for 7,000 spectators at the speedway. But now I turn to something which hopefully is in your portfolio, Minister, which is with respect to Penrith Stadium. Minister, does that fall within your portfolio?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, it does fall within my portfolio of projects.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That stadium was to seat between 25,000 and 30,000 people. It was estimated to cost around $300 million and, of course, be built on the site of the Penrith Paceway. On 25 August the New South Wales Labor Government spent $309 million on refurbishing Penrith Stadium on the existing site, citing estimates that the cost of the project would be at over $900 million, so a huge increase. Do you stand by that projected cost of $900 million for that stadium site?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. We've committed an amount of $309 million for the refurbishment of the Penrith Stadium. The Penrith Stadium is located on Crown land. It's an aging suburban ground used mainly for professional and amateur rugby league matches. The New South Wales Government will deliver a $309 million refurbishment of the existing Penrith Stadium to support the growing population of Western Sydney and improve the event experience for venue users. The New South Wales Government is working with key project stakeholders to confirm the project's scope, capacity and delivery time line within the committed budget. The community and stakeholder values and feedback gathered during the 2022 Have Your Say campaign will inform the refurbished stadium's final design. Infrastructure NSW will deliver the project on behalf of the Government and Venues NSW will manage the stadium. The New South Wales Government—

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you just reading the press release?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Do you want the information or not, Mr Fang?

The Hon. WES FANG: I can get the press release and get the same amount of detail.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The New South Wales Government's decision to proceed with the refurbishment of the existing Penrith Stadium provides certainty for the project and ends the Government's proposed acquisition of the adjacent Penrith Paceway site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Can I ask that Ms Mather come forward please to answer some questions? Thank you, Ms Mather, for coming forward. I just want to ask, as part of the Hunter Park master plan, there is the relocation of the Newcastle harness track, which is currently located to Newcastle stadium. Is that correct?

KERRIE MATHER: That's correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How much have you provisioned for the planning of the Newcastle harness track?

KERRIE MATHER: What has been done so far is the development of a high-level master plan for the site including a strategic business case which would see the development of Hunter Park over a series of stages. As part of the work that we've done on that master plan, we've also developed business cases for the development of a new entertainment centre and also looked at the business case for the relocation of the harness racing track. That is estimated to cost in the order of $50 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So $50 million in terms of the construction costs.

KERRIE MATHER: But nothing has been provisioned for that at this stage.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With nothing provisioned—okay. Do you have any indication around potential sites of where the harness racing track could go? Do you know what the respective land values are for those locations?

KERRIE MATHER: No work has actually been done on that, other than to, in consultation with Harness Racing NSW as well as interested stakeholders—they've identified that an area in the Hunter region would be appropriate and close to where their key stakeholders are.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the speedway, we understand that for a 7,000-seat speedway it will cost $70 million. Is it reasonable to assume you could locate the Newcastle harness racing track for less than $70 million?

KERRIE MATHER: I can't comment on that. That work has actually been done by experts.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. You had already indicated the $50 million before. Are you doing any budgeting as to what that cost would be at this stage?

KERRIE MATHER: That cost would be for the development of a replacement harness racing track in another location, but no provisions have been made for where that location may be or the cost of the associated land.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much. So, Minister Kamper, you've publicly stated that to relocate the Penrith Stadium site to the Penrith Paceway site would cost three times what you're going to spend. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Essentially, when you look at the cost of doing a total rebuild, accommodating the paceway requirements and relocating the paceway, the estimates that were coming my way were around $900 million.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you still got the napkin you've done the numbers on?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So how much value did you attribute—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We actually focus on getting things right. We saw a number of blowouts on every project that your previous Government embraced, so we're not going to blow the taxpayer's dollar. That's why we were focused on what the commitment is, on the dollar value—

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't even focus on meeting with Golf NSW before they get their golf clubs taken off them, so let's just be serious about what we're doing here.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We focused on the cost and getting that right.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Chair, please—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't even focus on meeting with the constituents that you impact.

The CHAIR: Order! I will hear the point of order, although I was already calling you to order.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Please call him to order.

The CHAIR: Enough with the talking over the top and yelling across the table between you two.

The Hon. WES FANG: He started it.

The CHAIR: I'm not going in to get into this childish game of who started what. I gave up doing that when I got into this position. Can we keep it civil please? Ask a question and receive an answer—it's pretty basic. Mr Farlow had the call in terms of questioning. We do not need the constant interjections from the other member over the top of his own colleague.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister Kamper, how much value did you attribute to the Penrith Paceway land in the total cost of that estimated $900 million?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass you on to Tom Gellibrand, who's been managing the issue.

TOM GELLIBRAND: Thank you, Minister, and thank you for the question. A really important word that we reflect on in responding to this is the word "estimate", because we were asked to commence commercial negotiations with the paceway for the acquisition, and a commercial negotiation is a discussion between the parties to see if you can come to terms on acquisition. We undertook a land valuation for the site. The paceway also got their own advice. Offers were never made between the two parties. The Government decided not to progress with—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Did you have any input in coming up with that $900 million figure?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Myself, not personally. We engaged the services of a qualified valuer.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So a qualified valuer provided a value that led to that $900 million?

TOM GELLIBRAND: We have a valuation, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So, of course, under the New South Wales Valuer General's website, it demonstrates that the site is worth $2.39 million. Are you aware of this?

TOM GELLIBRAND: That number is familiar but I wasn't aware of what was on the Valuer General's website.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So in Newcastle you can build a racing track for, say, $50 million to $70 million. We can build a speedway in Eastern Creek with a grandstand for 7,000 spectators for $70 million. Surely the cost to relocate the Penrith Paceway can't exceed this number, can it?

TOM GELLIBRAND: If I may, Minister—

The Hon. WES FANG: I'd like to hear the Minister's response first.

The CHAIR: It's up to Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I am happy for the Minister to answer.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What we need to consider is that the $900,000 includes a total rebuild—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's $900 million, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The $900 million includes a total rebuild of a brand new facility there at Penrith. If you think that $300 million is going to build you a brand new stadium based on the rates of what it was for Parramatta at the time, those days are gone. There's been an enormous price escalation—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But, Minister, you seem to think it's going to be in excess of $830 million to build the stadium.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, it's a brand new facility now, rather than the refurbishment that we're looking at at $309 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, if you divide $830 million by 25,000 seats, that equals $33,200 per seat. Is that what you're saying a stadium costs to build these days?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not sure. I might refer back to Tom in relation to the cost of the stadium build per square metre.

TOM GELLIBRAND: I think the cost per seat is sometimes referred to when you're trying to work out cost estimates for stadiums, but it is highly variable. Your questions around the cost for relocating the paceway are different to the cost per seat for a new stadium.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So, Mr Gellibrand, in terms of the cost of relocating the paceway, in terms of your estimations on that, what was that cost?

TOM GELLIBRAND: It was in the order of $150 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Then we are looking at—to the Minister's point, $750 million is what you estimated to build a new stadium at Penrith?

TOM GELLIBRAND: When we commenced commercial negotiations with the paceway, they made it clear that they didn't actually want to move. They said, for them to move, they would want to receive fair compensation for the value of their site, and they would also want to be relocated to another site, enjoy the same facilities, and it needed to be located in the municipality of Penrith. Our estimate, based on advice from cost planners, was that the relocation could cost in the order of $150 million. The valuation of the sale, because the sale would be dependent upon the purchaser agreeing to a price, could be in the order of $50 million.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's 200, so we're now at 700 for the stadium. Is that right?

TOM GELLIBRAND: The new stadium on the new site—the basis we were working on was that it would be operated by Venues NSW and it would be a brand-new stadium. For Venues to take on that stadium and operate it effectively, it needed a minimum level of provision for commercial facilities, it needed appropriate facilities for—

The Hon. WES FANG: You're not helping me bridge the gap between the $309 million that the Minister has indicated and $700 million, which is where we've landed at about now.

TOM GELLIBRAND: The budget for $309 million was in relation to the existing site where Penrith stadium currently is. And it is now going to be used for the purposes of refurbishing that stadium.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

TOM GELLIBRAND: The $700 million, which is an estimate, was for building an entirely new stadium on the paceway site.

The Hon. WES FANG: And the estimate you had for the stadium on the paceway site was $700 million. Is that correct?

TOM GELLIBRAND: It was one of several estimates actually because there was a number of options considered.

The Hon. WES FANG: What was the range of those estimates?

TOM GELLIBRAND: The range of estimates—my understanding was they were considered as part of a business case, an updated business case that was prepared for a new stadium out at Penrith.

The Hon. WES FANG: We talked about $900 million being the paceway and then the new stadium on the old paceway site. Where's the factoring in of the value of the current stadium and the land?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I might not understand your question, sorry.

The Hon. WES FANG: You've said that it's going to be a total cost of $900 million. You've got the cost of repositioning the paceway at $200 million or thereabouts, give or take, and you've got the cost of building a new stadium at around $700 million, although you were going to come back to me with some numbers as to what the variable is there. That's the $900 million the Minister has indicated. What you haven't accounted for is what the value is of the current land where the current stadium is and the current stadium. That's surely got to come off the cost, has it not? If you're building a new stadium at a new location, you still own the land and the stadium where the old one is, so you're being a bit, I don't know, tricky in your accounting by saying it's going to be $900 million, but you've then got another asset on your books, which is effectively the old site.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're still required to expend the 900 million in the end, whether the asset is sitting there, it's still not relevant when you're saying there's a cost that's going to be incurred—

The Hon. WES FANG: When you buy a house and you're living in another house, you only talk about the cost of buying the house that you're going to move into; you don't talk about the fact that the house that you're in is an asset as well and it has retained value? You don't factor that into the purchase? I mean it's good if you can buy houses like that, Minister, I mean you're pretty—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yeah, it's a simplistic way of looking at it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of what we saw, and I think the Minister has outlined it is not the same cost as Parramatta, but when it came to Allianz Stadium, we saw the cost of a seat about $19,000. Is that correct, Mr Gellibrand?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Yes, the total cost for Allianz was $828 million when you factor in start to finish, and it's got 42,500 seats. I don't remember the exact figure, but that's the algorithm.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Seriously, the suggestion that you came up with was that it would cost more to build a stadium in Penrith of 25,000 to 30,000 seats than to build Allianz Stadium.

TOM GELLIBRAND: The timing for building a new stadium on the paceway site would—we don't have a program for it, but you wouldn't complete a stadium on that new paceway site if you started today for about another five years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But these are all considerations about the location of the existing organisation, the timing, but not about the finances of it.

TOM GELLIBRAND: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How does it change in terms of the 25,000 to 30,000, and we're looking at the difference between $700 million, which is what we effectively get to in terms of the paceway, compared to about $300 million, which the Government has indicated?

TOM GELLIBRAND: In a word, escalation. Allianz was finished by—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But $300 million is what you're saying it will cost to build on the existing Penrith site.

TOM GELLIBRAND: No, no, that's the budget that has been made available for refurbishment. The substantial cost differential between the price per seat, Allianz versus a brand new stadium on the paceway site, is very much impacted on by escalation because you've got probably about seven or eight years between those two projects.

The Hon. WES FANG: These figures are rubbery at best.

The CHAIR: Sorry, Mr Fang, the bell has gone. I did allow the witness to finish his answer and also Mr Farlow to get another slight question in there. I will pass to the crossbench and you guys can pick it up later.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I want to ask some questions about the property sales information that Valuations NSW sells to authorised information resellers, and I understand some of the more detailed aspects of this might go to Mr McLachlan, but I do have some specific questions for you first, Minister. Minister, are you aware that New South Wales is one of the only States that includes personal information, like names and the datasets, that's sold to the authorised information resellers?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You are aware of that. Are you aware of some of the concerns associated with that? Something that has come to our office is that personal data that has been provided by the commercial information resellers is actually being matched up against court lists to target vulnerable home owners. In fact, there was a former lawyer that was even running courses, teaching other people how to use these lists to target people and their homes while they're going through the court process. Does it concern you that New South Wales is selling this personal data?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass on to Stewart.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might ask that question to you first and then I'll get some more detail from Mr McLachlan. I'm just wondering if that's a concern, or a concern that's been brought to you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's a concern that's just been brought to me. I might pass on to Stewart if he has information.

STEWART McLACHLAN: Certainly. Under the Valuation of Land Act, the Valuer General is authorised to provide that information. I think it's certainly concerning and certainly concerns the Valuer General as well as the Privacy Commissioner. We have met with the New South Wales Privacy Commissioner and, as a result of that meeting and further reviews undertaken internally, we've introduced new licence agreements. Until recently, New South Wales does not charge for the supply of property sales information and New South Wales was the only State in Australia to do so. As a result of that review and implementing new privacy protections

throughout a new licence agreement, which will come into effect on 5 January, we've undertaken and taken further steps to stand up, or are standing up, an associated probity compliance and privacy team that will monitor the new contracts that we are putting in place to ensure that data resellers are compliant with those, and these steps that we've taken in consultation with both the Minister and the Valuer General have been accepted by the Privacy Commissioner.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: My understanding though is that the issue isn't so much the resellers but rather the people that are buying from the resellers. Even with the new licence agreement, my understanding is that personal data like names will still be included. Is that correct?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes, that's correct, and that's in line with other States and jurisdictions, and I'm happy to take on which ones and provide that, but I think the important thing to recognise here is that that information is entirely critical to underpin a variety of things in New South Wales, specifically the mortgagee industry—when a property is transacted, there are lots of things that the mortgage industry relies on. One of them is how that transaction occurs, particularly for related party transactions, so without that supply of that information, that can significantly affect the mortgage industry in terms of how they assess lending and whether or not that lending would be appropriate. For instance, if a related party—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Why do they need people's personal names to be able to assess mortgage information?

STEWART McLACHLAN: In a related party transaction, without having who actually undertook the transaction, it could be—for instance, you sell a parcel for $500,000 to your parents or similar, but without the names, those related party transactions aren't picked up and then that could skew the market in terms of what properties are worth.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: How does it work in the States that currently do remove personal data, like names? Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and the ACT all remove personal data entirely. How do they get around it and why haven't we picked up the model that they're using?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I'm not sure if that's entirely correct. I'd need to take it on notice, as to how that works. I imagine there would be some confidentiality things we'd need to grapple with with other States, but I can take it on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. The other concern I have—and I don't expect you to give me any information about the particular case that I'm talking about—my understanding is in the case that has been in the media a fair bit about the courses on how to target vulnerable home owners going through the court process that particular person still has access to these lists through someone associated with her. That's going to be a continuing problem, isn't it, that people are still going to be able to access these data sets and misuse them, even with the new licensing agreements? I'm just wondering if the privacy work that was done or—what else is going to be done to stop this abuse of information?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Sure. I can provide a more fulsome answer on notice, but I would say the important part here is that we're aware of those concerns. The new licence agreement that we've put in place in consultation with the Privacy Commissioner as well as the Valuer General and the Minister addresses those concerns in terms of the protections that are there, and the team that we are establishing as a result of those new agreements will be there to monitor compliance and, obviously, audit how that data is being used, to ensure that the contracts are, in fact, implemented appropriately.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes, and if you could also take on notice, if the personal information is still going to be available, how is that information going to be protected beyond those contracts? Obviously, this is a situation where that personal data is actually being included and is outside that contract and is still available. I'm just wondering how we stop situations like this, where people can run courses and provide students with data of whole lists of people's personal identifying information to be targeted through different processes?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes, I'm happy to take that on notice. I would say, though, the other part is that it's not just the property sales information that is part of that overall problem. There is also personal information on court lists and registers, and that's obviously another step in the process. But I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. Minister, there was a news release on the Small Business Commissioner's website about the agritourism business guide. I'm just wondering how this guide came about and what was the impetus for the guide?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass on to the Small Business Commissioner to provide us detail in relation to that.

CHRIS LAMONT: Thank you for the question. The guide was developed many years ago in response to concerns particularly from small businesses in the agricultural sector that were facing not only drought but peaks and troughs in terms of seasonal issues in response to their businesses. It was a way of actually promoting, particularly, cellar doors and other agritourism activities for, essentially, businesses who to that point in time had been agricultural in their focus only. It was, essentially, an assistance tool to provide, potentially, an augmented source of income and revenue for those businesses, particularly those businesses that were particularly vulnerable, as mentioned, to seasonal and related issues.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do you know how much was spent on the development of the guide?

CHRIS LAMONT: No, I couldn't. It was actually developed prior to my time as commissioner. But we could certainly try to take that on notice for you.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes, if you could take that one on notice. This is also something to take on notice—how many staff worked on the guide and how long did it take to develop the guide?

CHRIS LAMONT: Sure.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do you know if there are any ongoing costs associated with administering that guide?

CHRIS LAMONT: Not for the commission.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, has the Government allocated any additional funding towards this project in the budget, or are you planning on any further funding going forward?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not that I'm aware of.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I note that animal welfare is not referenced in the guide, and there is no guidance about the need to take animal welfare into account when opening agritourism businesses. Can you explain why there appears to have been that oversight when putting this guide together?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, there are other regimes that provide for animal welfare and animal cruelty, so I will take that on notice, if that's okay?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sure. Are you aware if any animal welfare stakeholders or experts were consulted in the making of this guide?

CHRIS LAMONT: Not to my knowledge. As mentioned, it was a guide that was developed prior to my time as commissioner.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Could you take that one on notice to confirm?

CHRIS LAMONT: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: And, also, if no stakeholders were consulted, could I ask—and perhaps this is on notice, if you weren't in the position at the time—why somebody wasn't included or consulted in regards to animal welfare?

CHRIS LAMONT: Sure.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Who signed off on the 2022-23 Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund grants?

KAREN JONES: The 2022-23? It was the former Government, the former Minister for Sport.

Dr AMANDA COHN: The former Minister—just to clarify?

KAREN JONES: Yes.

Dr AMANDA COHN: In that program, $3.64 million was granted to the Northern Suburbs Football Association for the North Turramurra Recreation Area. Which criteria informed the approval of that grant?

KAREN JONES: Sorry, through the Minister—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, if you can.

KAREN JONES: The actual guidelines around the Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund were published on the Office of Sport website and that detailed all the criteria and the weightings around each assessment phase for the grant.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Is the loss of use of facilities for the general public or for casual players considered when looking at upgrades to community sporting facilities?

KAREN JONES: What was that, sorry?

Dr AMANDA COHN: Is the loss of the use of those facilities for the general public or for casual players considered?

KAREN JONES: The overall loss of public open space, is that whether you're referring to, for then the use of community sport facilities?

Dr AMANDA COHN: Correct.

KAREN JONES: That is actually an issue for the local council, particularly if they're a council-owned facility, to manage the uses of those sites.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand that there is an independent review of the grant. Is this particular project going to go ahead?

KAREN JONES: Look, I have been advised that there is actually a review undertaken for that grant at the moment. In terms of whether or not it is going to go ahead, I can't provide comment on that at this stage.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand that this particular upgrade includes building office spaces for up to 15 people. How does the provision of office spaces benefit the community?

KAREN JONES: So, generally, if you are talking about office spaces in conjunction with sporting facilities, typically they would be used by the sporting organisations as their office or for administration purposes, perhaps for the marshalling of volunteers, and also by coaches and officials.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Residents in the Ku-ring-gai area paid for the initial upgrades of the North Turramurra Recreation Area over several years of special rate payments. Is that taken into consideration when professionalising the community facility that takes it away from recreational public use?

KAREN JONES: That's a matter for the council.

Dr AMANDA COHN: The demographics of Ku-ring-gai include that it has an higher rate of over-60s than the average for Greater Sydney, including a dozen aged-care facilities within a kilometre of the North Turramurra Recreation Area site. What recreation will be available to them at that site after these upgrades have taken place?

KAREN JONES: The details of that I would have to take on notice for you, in terms of the actual details around that specific grant.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thank you. With $100 million allocated in round two for the Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund, as I understand, will the Office of Sport be independently reviewing whether the other 38 grants meet the criteria?

KAREN JONES: The Office of Sport is comfortable with the assessment process that was in place for those grants.

Dr AMANDA COHN: What is the expected time line for the review that's currently taking place?

KAREN JONES: I'll have to take that on notice. It's done independently, so I'll have to take that on notice.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Okay. Will any works progress at the NTRA site while that grant is being reviewed?

KAREN JONES: Again, I'll take that on notice.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thank you very much. Does the Office of Sport have any data about how many synthetic turf fields exist in New South Wales and how many have been proposed pending approval?

KAREN JONES: In terms of synthetic surfaces? In terms of if there has ever been an audit done around how many synthetic surfaces are available in New South Wales, the answer is no—not from the Office of Sport's perspective anyway. However, the provision of synthetic surfaces for community sport does continue through proposals that are considered by government through grant processes.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Has any work been done to implement the recommendations of the chief scientist's report into synthetic turf that, I understand, was completed in October last year and not released publicly until a couple of months ago?

KAREN JONES: Yes. That chief scientist's report was actually commissioned by the planning Minister, so that would be a question for Minister Scully.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand that open spaces is working on guidelines for synthetic turf, which were due in September. What's the progress of the guidelines?

KAREN JONES: Again, it's probably a question for Minister Scully and the Planning portfolio. But my understanding is that the department of planning is in the process of looking at the recommendations that have come out of the chief scientist's report and is looking at providing a government response to those recommendations. Then falling out of those could potentially be some guidelines around synthetic surfaces.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand that one of the recommendations of the chief scientist's report was improved implementation of best practice for natural turf management. Is there any work being undertaken by the Office of Sport to improve the management of natural turf?

KAREN JONES: Not at this stage, not until the Government's response to the chief scientist's report has been officially adopted.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Do you know if the Government would consider a moratorium on new installation of synthetic turf to protect communities while this work is being undertaken?

KAREN JONES: We are still receiving applications and proposals for synthetic surfaces.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Are they being approved while this work is being undertaken?

KAREN JONES: At the moment, we have grant applications that are currently open. We're receiving applications. I can't determine whether or not they're being approved. They haven't gone through an assessment process yet.

Dr AMANDA COHN: But there's been no pause or delay to any proposals for synthetic turf—

KAREN JONES: Correct.

Dr AMANDA COHN: —while the health risks are unknown?

KAREN JONES: Not necessarily the health risks are unknown. But, obviously, the chief scientist's report is out there. The Government's response has not yet been formalised.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand that the State's most recent—or publicly available, anyway—concussion in sport policy and protocols is from 2018. Is that correct? Is there a more recent version?

KAREN JONES: In terms of the issues around concussion in sport, if I can actually talk to what the New South Wales Government, particularly the Office of Sport, has done, again, if the Minister is comfortable for me to do that—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's right.

KAREN JONES: In terms of the Office of Sport's position on concussion in sport, we did actually support Sport Medicine Australia a number of years ago in terms of some research. Following on from that research, a number of sporting organisations have actually adopted their own protocols and their own requirements around concussion management within their sport, which is more than appropriate. Nobody knows their sport better and the impacts of their sport than the sporting organisations themselves. The Office of Sport, under the former Government, made representation to the Commonwealth Government around the issue of concussion, understanding that it is not just an issue that's isolated to New South Wales.

It is something that is more broadly across a number of sports that are being played. The current Government, particularly the current Commonwealth Government, has picked up on that issue of concussion and, in fact, held a Senate inquiry. The outcomes of that Senate inquiry report were actually handed down on 5 September. We are awaiting the Commonwealth's response, the Government's response to that inquiry around concussion, to see whether or not there are any recommendations that are relevant for New South Wales to pick up on.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Is the Office of Sport collecting any data on head injuries since the 2018 policy?

KAREN JONES: No. We don't see that as our role, in terms of doing any data collection on concussion activity. As I said before, there are a number of universities and researchers that are looking at the issue around concussion. There's been a Senate inquiry. Each individual sport also has their concussion protocols in place.

Dr AMANDA COHN: In the context of the Senate inquiry, which I was going to bring up, does the department play a role in disseminating information, particularly on significant research findings or recommendations, to sporting organisations in New South Wales?

KAREN JONES: We will actually await the outcome of the Commonwealth Government's response to the Senate inquiry around concussion before we then formulate what the Government's position would be in terms of dissemination of any information or any other requirements that we might want to follow through on.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Is it possible for the department to play a role in binding return-to-play protocols and other such rules?

KAREN JONES: It is challenging. As I mentioned a number of times in this Committee, we do have a number of sports that we do actually cover. As I mentioned before, the actual issue around concussion management best lies with the individual sport, simply because they understand their own sports and the risks associated with each sport. Then they, of course, have their own protocols in place. They also carry the burden of that risk.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand that you've said multiple times that you're waiting for the Commonwealth's response to the Senate inquiry. Once that response has been received, is there an intention for the Office of Sport to be involved in facilitating that work between sporting codes or disseminating information or education?

KAREN JONES: Potentially. If there is a role there for the New South Wales Government to play, I'm more than happy for the Office of Sport to be involved.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I take it you're familiar with the Hungry Point Reserve site at Cronulla.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You're aware that it's Crown land and that it sits on the State Heritage Register?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You're also aware that the previous Government announced funding totalling around $7 million to build a walkway from the esplanade around Hungry Point, to connect it with Darook Park. Is that correct? You're familiar with that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You're also aware that Marine Rescue NSW occupies part of the site as its State headquarters and for its Botany-Port Hacking unit?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, is it true that you're now considering truncating the proposed walkway so that, heading south from the esplanade, it will terminate short of the reserve?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Thank you for the question. I've recently met with the Opposition leader and a group over there at Hungry Point to look at the situation there. My greatest concern is in terms of the integrity of the Marine Rescue operations there. That's something we'll look at. The future management of the reserve has also been reviewed by Crown Lands, and any proposed walkway needs to consider those operational requirements of Marine Rescue, including the access to the wharf and any traffic impacts and safety and security for pedestrians. I think that's very important, that we look at the risk there. On 22 September, as I said, I met with the local member and other key stakeholders to discuss the path moving forward. We're awaiting Sutherland Shire Council making their intentions on the future of the site clear. We're waiting on that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So your changes to the plan all relate around Marine Rescue's concerns that they've expressed.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's the New South Wales head office of Marine Rescue. It is very important to appreciate that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Those concerns largely revolve around the walkway, don't they, and the movement in terms of car movements in that area? Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. It's safety of pedestrians. It's also access. We need to appreciate how important Marine Rescue are and the fact that that site is well located, uniquely located to service the peninsula there, whether it's to service Botany Bay, Port Hacking and all the risks that may be associated there. I've personally had an experience where Marine Rescue saved the life of an uncle of mine and his young children at the time. So I've got enormous respect for what Marine Rescue do. So I do take it on board.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of course. None of us question what Marine Rescue does and what role they play.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If there's a solution there, we will sit down and work it through. We'll see what the intentions of the council are and work through a solution where there's continuity in terms of a pathway.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, have you been briefed about how many vehicle movements there are at that proposed crossing point?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You haven't? Okay. You'll take that on notice?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, did you agree that, when Marine Rescue made its section 60 application, it endorsed the walkway?

The Hon. WES FANG: It's not in the note, is it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, it's not in the note, because Marine Rescue made that decision historically. But my understanding is that the proposed walkway is going to interfere with their operations and how we can get a final outcome there where the integrity of Marine Rescue operations is not put at risk. Then we're comfortable to move forward with the solution there.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, are you aware of anything that's changed since that section 60 application was put in by Marine Rescue?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There are concerns about the risks for pedestrians and also interference with the integrity of the operations.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, are you aware that Marine Rescue had a proposal to build a training academy on that site?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I was familiar with that proposal. There was a proposal, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And that they put an application under section 60 of the Heritage Act for that purpose?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass to Mel to go into detail there.

MELANIE HAWYES: Through the Chair, can I elaborate on the response? It's a design question, really. Marine Rescue have a very operational site there, as you'd appreciate, with boats, traffic and emergency vehicles moving and toing and froing. Marine Rescue have always been supportive of public access and a walkway. The contested issue is where does it go and what is the actual final design of that walkway? That is still under deliberation and consultation, particularly between council and Marine Rescue now.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: At that time Marine Rescue put forward a parking study—a traffic movements study—which was put by McLaren Traffic Engineering and road safety consultants, which showed, in the worst case, 20 vehicles travelling through the boom gate between 5.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. in any one day. Is that similar to the projection that you've received from Marine Rescue in terms of vehicle movements a day?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think those are questions to be put to the Emergency Services portfolio. We are aware—we're the landholder in this scenario, seeking to broker a resolution that works for Marine Rescue's operations and public access to a site that is a highly valued and beautiful place to spend time. It's a public space. We're seeking to broker a resolution. Questions about the details of marine operations should be put to the portfolio that runs marine operations.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But Crown Lands are assessing this. What's changed since that section 60—

MELANIE HAWYES: Crown Lands is not assessing its vehicle access; Crown Lands is seeking to broker a resolution as to a final design that will work in that site.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, have you got the budget papers with you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. Have you?

The Hon. WES FANG: You've come to budget estimates but you didn't bring the budget papers with you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My job is not to sit there and read every line, line by line, of the budget.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, you're reading every other note that's been given to you, so let's just—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you read the budget?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, have you read the budget papers? I mean, I wanted to ask you some questions on the budget.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're reading notes when you're asking questions. Let's put that—

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, they frame the questions but I don't always follow the questions. Minister, I am asking you the question: Are you within arm's reach of the budget papers? Because I'm about to ask you some budget questions.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I am not in arm's reach.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, jeez, isn't this great. A Minister comes to budget estimates without the budget papers. Have you read them at all, the budget papers?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've read what I was required to read.

The Hon. WES FANG: So, selectively, is what you're saying?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know what you're getting out of—

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order: Under paragraph 19 of the procedural fairness resolution, questioning should not be aggressive or personal. The facts are that Mr Fang may not be aware that we have things called computers and whatever now, which actually allow us access to budget papers without actually having the documents present, unlike some of his predecessors of his party in earlier estimates.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, that's a bit of a sledge, Mr Primrose.

The CHAIR: Hang on. The point of order has been made so I've got to rule on it. I do uphold the point of order in terms of the point about the questions being not personal and not aggressive. I would just caution the honourable member about not what he's saying but the tone of how he is saying it, which is equally important as what you are saying. If we can minimise the sarcasm, that would probably go a long way.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm sorry, Chair. I'm obviously just not as experienced at all this. Minister, in that case, do you have a computer or an iPad or a laptop in your possession that has the budget papers on it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't.

The Hon. WES FANG: Point taken. There you go. Thanks, Primrose. Minister, let's go to the community language schools. I was going to ask you about the $17.8 million that was allocated in the budget for the community language schools, but I assume you know that that's there, right?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, that—

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, you don't have to give him the answer. He can live or die on his own feet.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am quite familiar with that. It was part of an election commitment that was made prior to the election. It falls within the education Minister's portfolio and may be—

The Hon. WES FANG: Does it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. I know that you just said you're new at the game, so I could appreciate why you've asked the wrong Minister. The truth is that it was a great announcement. It enhances the amount that is paid to a student that participates in a community language pathway to around a 30-odd per cent increase in the rebate that the language school does actually receive. There's also an enhancement—there's a payment to parents when their child completes a component. But I might hand over to Joe—

The Hon. WES FANG: No, what I'll do is let Mr La Posta answer it later when we've got the bureaucrats, because he can dig you out of the mess that you're digging yourself into.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not in a mess at all.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: Oh, come on! Stop trying to save him. He's burying himself. Just let him go.

The CHAIR: A point of order has been taken so I've got to hear it.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Well, as reluctant as I am, he's cavilling what was effectively, whilst not said as a direction, a strong encouragement in your last ruling about showing respect and asking questions appropriately. He doesn't seem to have understood that. I'm just wondering, Mr Chair, if you could reinforce that point you made.

The CHAIR: I will and I just stress that—it wasn't a direction—my encouragement probably also extends to the little quips after the Minister has given an answer too. Thank you.

The Hon. WES FANG: All right. Well, I just want to say—so, Minister, while you say it falls under the Department of Education, the budget says it forms part of the Government's Multicultural Communities Support Package, so I think you're actually incorrect. I'll move on.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm actually not.

The Hon. WES FANG: I understand that the policy includes a number of—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can I answer that? Was that a question?

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, no. It was just clarifying your non-answer.

The CHAIR: I think it was a statement more than anything, Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm just going to go to my next question. I understand the policy includes a number of initiatives. Can you provide a breakdown of where the funding is going across areas of improved security of tenure, professional pathways for community languages school teachers, increase of the per capita grant to $200 per student, $100 of a community languages rebate and the online lessons for regional and rural children?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That is a pretty extensive question.

The Hon. WES FANG: I know. It's pretty good. We've got great shadows.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think what we're talking about really falls under the education Minister and you've continued to ask a question.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you think it falls under the education Minister? You've got no involvement in it as the Minister for Multiculturalism?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Community languages.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you saying you have no involvement in it and it's not under your department?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It doesn't—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can—

The Hon. WES FANG: No, no. Let the Minister bury himself.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I engage with multicultural communities but, I mean, that funding and that program is managed by the education Minister. It falls under that portfolio.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But, Minister, you surely have engagement with the Federation of Community Language Schools on these issues? This is squarely one of the key issues for multicultural communities across New South Wales.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Of course we have engagement. Multicultural NSW has ongoing engagement and there's an advocacy there, but the responsibility of that program and that funding falls under the education Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But, Minister, I would say, squarely, in my experience, that the Minister for Multiculturalism has been front and centre when it comes to funding community language schools and working with community language schools on their implementation of programs throughout New South Wales. Are you taking a different approach to that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've said to you earlier, this was an announcement that was delivered through Education so I don't understand why—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So this is a hands-off approach from you when it comes to a key issue for multicultural communities?

The Hon. WES FANG: Hands off, eyes off, ears off.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I know it's difficult for you to appreciate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It is difficult for me to appreciate, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll pass on to Joe if it will give some further clarity.

The Hon. WES FANG: He should be the Minister, I think.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let's seek some—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, with all due respect, we have Mr La Posta this afternoon and we'll will be asking more questions on community language schools this afternoon. Mr Fang, do you have anything else you want to ask the Minister?

The Hon. WES FANG: No, you can—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'll turn now to some questions around JobSaver and Micro-business Grant audits. Are you concerned that potentially thousands of small businesses have been asked to repay funding that was provided to support small businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Thank you for that question. I was heavily involved during the COVID lockdown period and the crisis for the small business community that was asked to shut down their businesses during a very difficult time. I personally managed many of the applications and assisted business throughout the whole period in opposition. I came across a number of situations and settings where the Government at the time was inconsistent in the way it was funding grants for a lot of businesses. During that whole period I think I personally assisted 300-odd businesses through the process where there was misunderstanding in terms of—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, now that you're in Government, are you concerned about businesses having this clawed back from them?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am concerned about businesses having it clawed back. There's a number of them that are going through the process. It does fall in the hands of the Minister for Finance, Courtney Houssos, in terms of the collection of this money.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So as the Minister for Small Business, you haven't—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But as the Minister for Small Business, I am advocating on every business that challenges the debt that's been raised. There are certain circumstances there where we have been able to get results, and the Small Business Commissioner has been quite vocal about those debts. We're proactive in managing each and every one of those debts. But I think what you'll find is that what you've got now is the tail end of the debts—the ones that haven't been cleared up, where it's probably not a real challenge as to whether they should have repaid the grant funds.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, are you aware how many businesses are being forced to repay funds through JobSaver or the Micro-business Grant?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass, in terms of the total number, to Greg.

GREG WELLS: Thanks, Minister. We'll come back on notice if that's okay, Mr Farlow, even this afternoon with the exact number.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, if you could this afternoon, that would be good.

GREG WELLS: In addition to what the Minister just said, though, we administer those grants and the audit process for those grants for the policy owners. In this case the policy owner for those grants is Treasury, so there is an audit and compliance process that goes with them. We do make every effort, as the Minister has also said, to make sure we really show concern for customers' situations. There are processes to appeal those things. We have really looked at the criteria to make sure we consider hardship, businesses that are no longer operating and a range of criteria that go with them as well, so we're making every effort to make sure that that's done in a sensitive way.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Does that include a quality assurance process or an appeal process?

GREG WELLS: It does, yes. It does indeed.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But I must add that I'm deeply concerned by any businesses that are suffering and being asked to repay. On a case-by-case basis, my office is more than happy to review any case that you may want to refer to us, because I think it's gone through a long process where they've established the ones

that were potentially being asked to repay when they shouldn't have or there was that confusion in terms of the criteria at the time. I do reinforce, though, that during that period it was a moving feast. The Government was changing the criteria daily, and I was personally involved in dealings with the then Treasurer and the then finance Minister where there were changes to criteria on a daily basis. At some stage it became a little bit muddy in terms of whether businesses were entitled to re-evaluate or not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It was a challenging time, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was a very challenging time.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And you have the privilege now of being the Minister representing those small businesses.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: So there is a legacy there of some that really probably shouldn't have received the funding, but the problem is they're left with that debt now. Managing that and managing that process, that's in the hands of the finance Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, looking forward, what policies is your department bringing forward to support small businesses who may be forced to close their doors on account of decisions this Government is making to recover that COVID-19 assistance?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I must say that those liabilities there, on account of the decisions the previous Government made—we're cleaning up the mess, like we're doing right across the State, like we're doing right across the budget. We're working closely and engaging with small business. We're properly engaging with small business at that grassroots level, and we're looking after the small business community by working towards developing a business charter to work with them so we have enough information.

The Hon. WES FANG: Chair, I'm going to interrupt the Minister. This is enough of a sound bite, and I've only got a few minutes left. I've got to cover some more points.

The CHAIR: You can interrupt and ask a clarifying question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Chair, the interruptions have just been—

The CHAIR: If you would like to redirect, Mr Fang, you are able to do that. But do so politely.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm going to ask the Minister a couple more questions.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: No, come on, don't waste my time. You can take your point of order later.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: You can't have it both ways.

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order quickly.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: My point of order is that Mr Fang or Mr Farlow will ask a question, the Minister answers and then, without asking a further question—

The Hon. WES FANG: Stop wasting my time, Murphy. Come on, champion. You can only defend him so far.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: —like he is right now—Mr Fang just keeps talking over the witness and interrupting. I ask you to call him to order.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. Mr Fang, you've got 50 seconds to redirect politely.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, in February of this year, the first sod was turned in the sports hub indoor stadium at the Charles Sturt University in Dubbo. Where is the project up to?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: While you're taking things on notice, the project was on track for the turning of the first sod. What do you say to the PCYC user groups, including local gymnasts and the Dubbo Basketball Association, which say that there has been no progress in eight months?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said, I'll take that on notice in relation to—

The Hon. WES FANG: How much are you investing in the project?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said, I'll take that on the notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't know how much you're investing? Has someone got a note for the Minister?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order: Asked and answered by the Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can someone save him?

KAREN JONES: If it's okay, I'd like to respond.

The CHAIR: Yes, I'll allow the question to be answered.

KAREN JONES: That Dubbo project is a project that was approved under the Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund. The initial investment from the New South Wales Government was $9.3 million. Because of complexities around the negotiations—particularly the involvement of Dubbo Regional Council, Charles Sturt University and PCYC—the project now has progressed to a point where there have been additional funds from Regional NSW contributed to the project, and the project is currently underway.

The Hon. WES FANG: What is the sum of those funds?

KAREN JONES: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Minister, I might just ask a quick question about the Wakefield Park Raceway. Obviously, it closed in 2022 due to some poor decisions by council. Your Government committed $1 million to assist in the reopening, and I note that the Office of Sport and the Department of Planning and Environment have been out there to talk to the owners. Can you update the Committee about where we're up to in getting that raceway reopened and sourcing another revenue stream for Regional NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Thank you, Chair. The Department of Planning and Environment is continuing to work with Goulburn Mulwaree Council and the Office of Sport to reopen Wakefield Park Raceway, given the complex planning system issues that have been brought to the fore in this matter. The aim is to strike a balance between the noise impacts of motor racing on the community immediately surrounding Wakefield Park and the economic benefit the facility brings to the wider region through the visitor economy. The new owner has commenced noise mitigation works and other improvements and intends to restart events at Wakefield Park under the existing consent by May 2024. The new owner is developing a staged master plan for the site and has commenced discussions with Goulburn Mulwaree Council, NSW Department of Planning and Environment and local residents. At the completion of the current noise mitigation work, we will consider the inclusion of Wakefield Park in a statewide motor sport strategy.

The CHAIR: I might pick up on Dr Cohn's questions on synthetic turf. I note that some work is being done to respond to the chief scientist's report, but the chief scientist stated:

> Many of the commissioned experts, from diverse research areas, identified a singular major knowledge gap - that chemical constituents of synthetic turf components, and their associated human and environmental health impacts are not fully known.

If we don't know the potential health impacts and the environmental impacts, why are we continuing to assess grants for synthetic turf on sporting fields? You don't know what you don't know, but the fact that you don't know should probably put a pause on approving such synthetic turf grant applications. I note Ms Jones said that they're still receiving them.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I might get Ms Jones to answer.

KAREN JONES: Yes, I do note the outcome from the chief scientist's report. However, the position is that we still will consider synthetic turf fields. I appreciate your sentiments on the matter. For the Office of Sport and particularly for the sporting sector across New South Wales, synthetic turf does actually play a role in a number of sports. If you think about tennis, if you think about hockey or if you think about lawn bowls, a lot of those have historically been played on synthetic turf, so any sort of disruption to the ongoing supply of facilities for those sports will be highly disruptive. On top of that, particularly in areas where there might be inclement weather, synthetic turf does also provide some certainty around the ability to have ongoing competition, week on week, whilst the sporting season continues.

The CHAIR: Are you taking any of the chief scientist's report into consideration when you assess these applications, noting that obviously there are some sports that are traditionally done on synthetic turf, like tennis and lawn bowls, but there are others, like soccer fields and football fields, that aren't, and there is a credible alternative, which is natural grass. We can get into the environmental impacts later. But are you considering, when assessing these applications, what the chief scientist has said about the unknown health impacts?

KAREN JONES: We are awaiting the Government response in relation to the chief scientist before we make that decision.

The CHAIR: Minister, as Minister for Small Business you would obviously be aware of the health impacts of silicosis. Why are we not learning from the mistakes we made with asbestos, silicosis and now potentially synthetic turf? Why are we not putting pause?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said, we will take that on board. We're going through the process at the moment of where to take a position as a government in relation to synthetic pitches. That will be happening in—

KAREN JONES: That's right. It is about understanding what the chief scientist's recommendations are and the impact that they have on sport—also about understanding what the actual risk is to human health, and then balancing that, of course, with the sporting facility needs of the people of New South Wales.

The CHAIR: Do we have an estimated time as to when the Government will respond to that chief scientist report, given you've got open applications for synthetic turf? It's probably pressing that we get a position.

KAREN JONES: I will clarify that by saying that we've got open applications for sport facilities in general, not just for synthetic turf, and that that question in terms of timeliness and delivery is a question for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

The CHAIR: Just looking at some of the impacts we do know, the NSW Treasury costed the urban heat island effect, in terms of lost revenue and productivity, upwards of $12 billion annually. Given that the synthetic turfs do create an urban heat island effect, is that factored into your applications, Ms Jones, when you're looking at how much money you give to these applications?

KAREN JONES: I think we need to be very careful around the heat island effect. The heat island effect doesn't impact all synthetic surfaces. It may impact some. It does depend on the design facility, in the actual option of having shading opportunities around synthetic—also natural watercourses, natural cooling methods throughout the environment. I don't agree with the characterisation that the heat island effect applies to all synthetic turf or all synthetic surfaces. It does actually go to the design.

The CHAIR: I guess that's to my point, though. We don't have an actual standard on synthetic turf, do we, in this country or in this State? We don't actually have a standard—

KAREN JONES: There is no Australian standard, that's right.

The CHAIR: There is no Australian standard. Do you think, Minister, that should be part of the Government's response to the chief scientist's report—that there actually be a standard set for how we install this stuff, how it is made, what it is made of, what it can be made of?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. And I think the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is—as I said, we haven't formed a Government position yet, but it is something that is an issue that we definitely need to get across in the near future. I mean, it's a big issue. Synthetic pitches offer greater utilisation and communities have really relied on them, especially for football and a variety of other sports. If the impact is where it's going to change, we've got to look at how we address that in the future—how we address those concerns that come out of the chief scientist's report. What sort of construction or material difference we need to look at. But most likely, whatever the solution is, there's going to be a cost impost on any new type of approach.

The CHAIR: Through you, Minister, to Ms Jones: You mentioned different models in terms of installation and water cooling—you know, shading and stuff like that. Are preferences given to applications that are asking for money for synthetic turf if they provide adequate shading and they can demonstrate that they're not having that urban heat island effect? Or they're doing stuff to mitigate that heat island?

KAREN JONES: The actual design and the deliverability of the facility is actually a consideration under the assessment guidelines—primarily because of utilisation, more so than environmental impacts, but I do take your sentiments on board. It is something that I'm prepared to take back to the office and perhaps have input through the chief scientist response in relation to that.

The CHAIR: Have you approved any synthetic turf grant applications that don't provide an offset in terms of shading and cooling in most recent times?

KAREN JONES: I'd have to take that on notice for you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I've only got about 40 seconds, so I will pass—

Dr AMANDA COHN: I've got a question—I would love to follow up one of your questions. How can you include shade and natural watercourses, for example, at a football pitch or an oval?

KAREN JONES: It all depends on the location of the facility and whether or not there are natural watercourses within the vicinity that you can take advantage of in terms of design. And then, of course, there is the planting around the perimeter of the facility to provide shading opportunities.

Dr AMANDA COHN: To the Minister, in regards to his comments about capacity in use—I quote from the chief scientist's report. It says:

> The adoption of best practice guidelines and benchmarks for natural turf in open spaces will support the capacity of natural turf sporting fields to meet demands for use.

Do you have a comment on that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The bell has rung. There you are.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I will send it to you as a supplementary question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, just—it's too fast.

The CHAIR: Would you like to take that on notice and come back with a thought?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The CHAIR: I pass to the Opposition.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much. In the spirit of following on from crossbench questions, I will—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Isn't it our turn? It's still crossbench, sorry.

The CHAIR: My apologies, I skipped the Hon. Emma Hurst. I got excited.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. Minister, in regards to some of the funding grants for sports—and I notice that there is a general funding grant for all sports and then there's a specific grant program for sports shooting programs. Why are sports shooting programs treated separately and different to the other sports grants?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Those sports shooting grants—that was settings from the former Government.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You don't know what policy rationale was behind keeping that separate to other—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. I will pass it on to Karen, who was there with the former Government, so can definitely provide you the history there.

KAREN JONES: The Safe Shooting grant program is $800,000, and it was actually closed for applications on 14 April 2023. There were 24 projects that were actually approved as part of that grant. New South Wales actually has a really good track record in terms of representation at Olympic and Paralympic Games in the sporting discipline of shooting. But, on top of that, there are a number of shooting facilities located around the State, in addition to a number of shooting clubs. Of course, when you are dealing with firearms, it is incredibly important that the standards and the operating standards and policies and procedures and any practices in place at all of these shooting clubs are kept contemporary and up to standard.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: But is that the reason why it was kept separately—because it needed a different process for approval?

KAREN JONES: Correct—and hence why it is also called the Safe Shooting program.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. We talked a bit before about gender equality in sport. Was any consideration given to women being able to access these sporting shooting facilities in regards to those grant programs?

KAREN JONES: Yes. For all of our grant programs, there are objectives in our guidelines that actually prioritise the opportunity for women and girls in sport.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. Minister, I wanted to ask some questions about the Aboriginal Business Advisory Initiative. Can you advise how much funding has been allocated to this program and over how many years?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The program's been run—well, I haven't got it on how many years. I've actually met up with some of the successful businesses that were assisted through the program and can really talk to the value of that—

The Hon. WES FANG: Wait for the notes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I'm not waiting for the notes—talk to the value of that program for small businesses within the Aboriginal community. I probably will ask Cass Gibbens from Service NSW to answer in terms of the history of that program, because I think we could appreciate that was prior to us being in government.

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: Thanks, Minister. The Aboriginal advisory program is an initiative that Service NSW runs, and we've been running that for just over a year now. This year, funding for that program is $1.2 million.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do you know what the uptake of the program has been so far?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: So far, the Business Connect program and the Aboriginal advisory program have supported close to a thousand and a half, with Aboriginal businesses starting up their business.

The Hon. WES FANG: Sorry, a thousand and a half—is that 1,500 or is that 1,000 plus a half?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: It's 1,500 approximately.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Has there been any evaluation of the program, or is one planned, in regards to the effectiveness of the program?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: There has been an evaluation of the program. That has just been finalised, and we're reviewing the outcomes of that review.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Is there anything you can give us today in regards to that evaluation in regards to the benefits of the program?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The benefits of the program are that there are six different regions around Australia that have culturally appropriate business support for business intenders and Aboriginal businesses, and they are able to access support free of charge through any stage of the life cycle of that program.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: That $1.2 million—how many years is that across?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: That's one year.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Will the program then complete soon or are you expecting more funding?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: I'll take that on notice in terms of the intent for future.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might throw that to the Minister as well. Minister, do you know if there's any further funding that is being proposed to expand this particular program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At this stage, the current funding is in place—

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: For this year. And then we'll take it on notice.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —for this year. We'll take it on notice in terms of—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I've just got one more question to Ms Gibbens. Are there also grants being made available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders seeking to establish small businesses specifically? Or is it just advice and guidance?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: It's just advice and guidance through this program.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, I've got some questions. In the 2023 New South Wales budget, $30 million was allocated to multicultural capital partnership funds to deliver community infrastructure projects. Are you able to provide some more information about what this funding will involve and what the time line is for the distribution of this funding?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: During the period in opposition, we went around and met with an enormous amount of groups and faith communities. We saw that there was great value in investing in those multicultural communities in terms of facilities and assets that are going to assist the communities to further engage and to assist with the wellbeing of their communities.

The Hon. WES FANG: What an answer!

The CHAIR: Continue, please, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In relation to the $30 million fund, that's there for capital works to assist the communities. I might pass over to Joe to assist with the breakdown of that.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Ms Hurst, the $30 million is broken up into 11 developments that will ultimately be available and benefit the wider community. The 11 big projects include the Sydney Jewish Museum, which will receive an additional $5 million of funding to help complete that project; the Australian Sikh Association, which will receive $2.5 million to upgrade the facilities of Glenwood Gurdwara; the united Muslim association, with $5.5 million to support the development of an educational complex and youth hub; the Hindu Council of Australia, with $3.5 million for the establishment of a Hindu cultural and education centre; and the Muslim Women Association, with $500,000. I want to give a shout-out and acknowledge the outstanding work of Maha Abdo and Nemat—two wonderful humans that do fantastic work throughout our Muslim community but also to our wider women that are seeking support and are often vulnerable at times. It's certainly an important cause. So there's half a million dollars to them to build a multicultural family support centre in Revesby.

There's $5 million to support the Maronite aged-care facility in Harris Park; $200,000 to support the Maronite Catholic eparchy with some new solar capabilities and also movements of people through a new bus; and $2.5 million to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to deliver new community facilities at its site in Redfern. It's an outstanding facility down there but, unfortunately, it has been damaged by fire and is also quite aged. There's the Melkite Catholic Eparchy, with the construction of the St Elias Catholic church in Guildford for $2.5 million; the completion of an 80-bed aged-care facility, which the Minister and the Premier recently opened down in Punchbowl, for the Antiochian community for $2.5 million; and $300,000 to the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah. The funding will be used by the parish to undertake renovations and restorations. That brings it pretty much to the end of the—

The Hon. WES FANG: That's how you answer the question, Minister.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: What's the time line for the distribution of this funding? When can there groups expect to receive the money?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That is a great question. These are projects which are capital projects. What we will look to do is have agreements in place with all of the different parties. The funding will need to be staged because it's not necessarily prudent for government to give all of that funding up-front if there are project delays, cost delays, issues with co-contributions, bank loans et cetera. I have personally met with almost all of them, except for one. Most of them now have either funding agreements being drafted or are in place. All of them have been communicated to. All the projects will be completed before 2027, but already, as I mentioned before, the Antiochian community has been opened, the Maronite community has been opened and we're well advanced with the Melkite project. That'll finish towards the end of this year. But others are still getting their finances and other things sorted as well. Sorry, it's a bit of a convoluted answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, Mr La Posta just outlined some of the funding grants. One of them was a church. Do you go to the churches that have received a funding grant just announced by Mr La Posta?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Which church in particular? I go to a number of churches, and I've used a lot of—

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you attend one of the churches that Mr La Posta just read out? The Greek church?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Minister, through you, there are two partnerships that we're supporting for the Greek community. There's the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah, and there is also the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, which is the site in Redfern.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you attend any of those sites, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I would attend them to go to a funeral.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you fill out a disclosure form and absolve yourself of that issue when it was determined?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I manage all conflicts of interest.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, I'm asking you did you file a disclosure before that grant was given to the church that you attend?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't. What's the definition of "attend"?

The Hon. WES FANG: It's not up to me to make a determination.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If you asked me which church I attend—

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you fill out a disclosure before your ministerial office and your department issued a grant to that church?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Fang, if I can just clarify—

The Hon. WES FANG: No, I'm asking the Minister first, Mr La Posta.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: What's the point of order, other than your Minister is now being caught out?

The CHAIR: I'm the Chair, so I'll ask. Mr Donnelly, what is your point of order?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: The Minister, first of all, can answer the question as he sees fit. The other point is that the question is completely ambiguous in terms of "do you attend?" How do you define "attend"? The honourable member didn't even allow the Minister to answer that part of it to provide some clarification. I think the question should be asked and answered in that order.

The Hon. WES FANG: I would let the Minister answer the questions because I reckon he's in a deep hole right now and he needs to get himself out.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not in a deep hole.

The CHAIR: I'll rule on the point of order, Mr Fang, so you can actually ask him more on this line of questioning. I'll just say that the Minister was actually answering the question. I don't think Mr La Posta needed to jump in and answer there because I think the answer was directly to the Minister. Obviously, the Minister is free to defer back to the public servants, but I don't think this is a question that the public servants could possibly answer. I'll let you finish your answer, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, I don't see a conflict there. I don't regularly go to those churches. I have attended for a funeral recently.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you attended as a parishioner?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ever?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. I've attended whenever I've gone to an event there—a wedding or a funeral.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is your church then?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Gymea Greek Orthodox church is close to my place, and my late mother used to do a lot of work at the Gymea church.

The Hon. WES FANG: If it was a Greek Easter service, where would you attend?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, this year I attended the Antiochian service at Punchbowl.

The Hon. WES FANG: And in previous years? Have you attended there?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have attended. I did attend there. I actually attended this Easter as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: You've just attempted to mislead us.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I did not attempt to. You know something, Wes—

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, let me know. At least you got my name right this time. What do I know?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't see a conflict in attending a church service. I've attended many different churches, and there is no conflict there.

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't see a conflict. Well, it's not up to you to determine if there is a conflict.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: Under point 19 of the code, witnesses have to be given respect. The honourable member has asked a question and is failing to allow the Minister to answer, before he even gets two words out. I am very interested in the exceptionally good answers that this Minister is giving to

these questions, but I can't hear them because they are being constantly interrupted by the honourable member. He should be called to order for doing so.

The CHAIR: I am less concerned about whether you, Mr Murphy, are enjoying the answers. I am more concerned about Hansard being able to record the answers. I was letting a bit of back and forward go there, but it was getting to a ridiculous level. Minister, do you have any further response to that question?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I think I've responded well enough.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what commitments did you make under the Local Small Commitments Allocation for your electorate?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There was a commitment for some lights for Ilinden soccer pitch in my electorate and also $80,000, I believe—just off the top of my head—for a noise pollution camera.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How did you make this determination, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I made the determination based on need in the community.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Did you have any process in terms of reaching out to community organisations and seeing where the need may lie?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I saw were there was definite need there, at the Ilinden stadium, for proper lighting facilities.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So these were your hand-picked organisations?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: These are the organisations that I felt had the greatest need.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And following your decision to fund these organisations, how did you communicate that to the then leader's office and now Premier's office?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I provided the details of that commitment.

The Hon. WES FANG: To who?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To who in those offices?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was part of—

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: There is no point of order. Stop wasting time.

The CHAIR: I have to hear the point of order, Wes.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: I have let this run a little bit, but I am struggling to see how these questions are about this Minister's portfolio responsibility. They are about the Local Small Commitments Allocation, which, as I understand it, isn't this Ministers purview.

The Hon. WES FANG: Look, Murphy, they don't need the barrister to come in and save them.

The CHAIR: Let me rule on the point of order. The questions have to be within the remit of the portfolio that we are examining here. We have wide latitude that it doesn't necessarily have to be about money, but if these grants don't fall within the Minister's portfolio, I would question them. I would expect that the Minister would inform us of that and we can move on.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, they don't fall within my portfolio, but, for me personally, as the member for Rockdale, the commitment that I—

The CHAIR: I now throw to the Government for questions.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I just have two, Minister. There was a lot of confused questioning early on by the Opposition, in relation to golf. I just want to clarify with you some of the things that you were not allowed to clarify then. The first question is can you please clarify whether the New South Wales Government is planning to sell any golf courses on Crown land?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is no intention to sell any golf courses on Crown land. If I could just go into the Moore Park Golf Course, which is on a lease—the lease is set to expire in June 2026, and we will work with the operator on the future of the remaining nine holes, driving range and clubhouse. On 1 May 2023 all New South Wales Ministers were asked to direct their agencies to immediately pause the sale of

government-owned land and property. There are currently no plans to sell Crown lands that currently hold a golf course.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: And I didn't interject once as the Minister was clearly able to enunciate a good answer. The second question is what briefings did you receive as part of the Moore Park Golf Course announcement?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The land is owned by Paul Scully. It is a matter for Mr Scully.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It is owned by the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, this is the way that Labor members think. They think it belongs to themselves.

The CHAIR: Questions are in the hands of the Government and not the Opposition at this stage.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is a meeting at Moore Park Golf Course on 20 November. I met with Golf Australia on 13 September. I met with Golf NSW on 11 August. I have regular discussions with the Premier and Minister Scully, including on this issue.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Thank you for those clear answers, Minister.

The CHAIR: Are there any further questions from the Government?

The Hon. WES FANG: Can we take the time?

The CHAIR: No. Are there any questions taken on notice that you can answer to get rid of some homework before we get to one o'clock?

CHRIS LAMONT: Can I correct the record for Ms Hurst—questions in respect to the guide? The Small Business Commission assisted in showcasing agritourism activities with the intention of providing a broader industry guidance. The guide that you referred to is not a Small Business Commission guide. That work commenced prior to my tenure as commissioner.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Where was that from?

CHRIS LAMONT: The guide?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes.

CHRIS LAMONT: The guide is a department of planning guide.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am advised that the reference to the funding for safety and security for places of worship was on page 29 of the *NSW Budget 2023-24 – Our plan for Western Sydney* and also on page 37 of the *NSW Budget 2023-24 – Overview: Our plan for NSW* budget paper.

The CHAIR: We will all rush back to our offices and read that page 29. If there are no other questions on notice that you have answers for now, we can do this again at the end of the day. We will now break for lunch and return at 2.00 p.m.

(The Minister withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back after our lunchbreak. We now return to questioning of our public servants. I will throw to the Opposition in a second, but I indicate that at some point during the afternoon we might make a decision to let some witnesses go, as we've done in previous times. I will look to the guidance of other members in terms of how they are tracking with questions.

The Hon. WES FANG: We've got so many questions.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'm not sure if this goes to Mr Walker or Ms Hawyes, in terms of the audit of government land with potential for housing. Is that with you, Mr Walker?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Walker, the Premier announced this program in May and said it would be completed within months. When is the audit set to be completed?

LEON WALKER: The audit won't be finished in months. The audit will be an ongoing process. I think the New South Wales Government owns approximately 42 per cent of New South Wales by land area and has

about 280,000 lots, so this will be an ongoing process for a period of time, but we are well progressed. I think, if you don't hold me to a number, we're at about 2,600 lots assessed so far.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How have you gone about assessing that lot? Has that started using the Government Property Index as a basis or—

LEON WALKER: No, the Government Property Index is a different tool. We've developed a new tool, a digital tool called Land iQ, which draws information from a range of database sources from across government, particularly or notably the Government Property Register. The Government Property Register, I think, is what you're referring to. That holds the information on all of the Government's property landholdings, so we basically need to identify an area to focus our efforts or our search on. We work through lots held in that area, run it against a set of criteria to determine what might be suitable for residential use and, from that, shortlist opportunities for Government consideration.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to that shortlist of opportunities, you said you have analysed 2,600 so far. Is that the shortlist, the 2,600, or—

LEON WALKER: No, that's the longlist.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That is the longlist. So how many have come out of that 2,600 for the shortlist?

LEON WALKER: I can't actually say. It is subject to Cabinet in confidence.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. When it was announced originally, it was said that Ministers would bring forward land within their portfolios. How has that process worked? Have Ministers and departments suggested land and then that's been assessed by your department, or has there been another—

LEON WALKER: Yes. It's essentially a dual process, so we've selected areas where there is maximum opportunity near transport nodes, but equally government land-owning agencies and their Ministers have been able to bring forward sites that we consider as well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has there been any number requirement on Ministers in terms of sites to bring forward?

LEON WALKER: No, because it depends totally on the land-owning agency.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was there any time line for Ministers to bring forward land within their department?

LEON WALKER: Best endeavours. Some agencies have more resources available to concentrate on this process than others, so we understand that, and the workload is such that we're progressively working through them as they come through in any case.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think you mentioned this before in terms of the dual process. What do you define as priority locations under the audit?

LEON WALKER: As I said, it's looking near transport nodes where the Government has previously stated there's an opportunity for increased density, where if residential properties are created, they have access to transport that can take them to places of work or places of employment—I mean it's a fairly commonsense filter.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have any site-specific delivery strategies been identified under the audit?

LEON WALKER: Sorry, what exactly do you mean by that?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Any site-specific delivery strategies? In terms of those sites you have identified, have you developed any delivery strategies for how you would develop new housing on those sites?

LEON WALKER: That is a second phase. The work that we're doing at this point is to identify sites that meet the criteria that would make residential development a possibility, because there's obviously a lot of government-owned land that is needed for hospitals, schools, open space, and there are a lot of sites that have planning constraints, environmental constraints or other limitations on them that don't make them suitable for residential in the first place. Once we've identified those sites, they go through a second stage of review, which is a more detailed, hands-on review that brings in some experts to look at different attributes of the property, and from that we develop the shortlist that is put forward to Government for consideration. The actual work then to realise the opportunity will be passed to Homes NSW and Landcom.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What are the governance committees that have been put in place for this audit?

LEON WALKER: There was already a framework, a government property framework, established by the previous government that's been utilised for this process. With the creation of Homes NSW there is also a new entity called the land asset working group that is considering the residential opportunities for allocation between LAHC, Landcom and Aboriginal Housing Office.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is it just those bodies that sit on that working group?

LEON WALKER: No, it's a cross-agency committee, so I think the Cabinet Office and Treasury sit on that, in addition to the land-owning agencies or the development agencies.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have any recommendations been submitted for funding and approval to transfer land to any delivery agencies, like Landcom or Land and Housing Corporation?

LEON WALKER: As I say, there's a shortlist that will be considered by Government for sure.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But there's nothing on that shortlist at the moment that's already been submitted to governance committees for any consideration?

LEON WALKER: There have been proposals that have been through the governance committees, but they haven't been considered by the Government itself at this point.

The Hon. WES FANG: When the Premier said that it would be a matter of months before we saw an outcome here, in effect, nothing really has progressed at all, has it?

LEON WALKER: I think a lot has progressed. I mean, as I said, we've already analysed 2,600 lots—

The Hon. WES FANG: In relation to people being able to buy—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The CHAIR: I will hear the point of order.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Now listen, it might be a long afternoon. The question is asked and the witness is entitled to answer and complete the answer before getting cut off and, through you, Chair, I ask that the member be reminded of that.

The Hon. WES FANG: Now listen, Mr Donnelly. I was clarifying my point in my question to the member. The member was clearly answering a different part of the question and had misinterpreted my question, so I was clarifying that point to him, so unless you've got a problem, I'm going to continue asking my question.

The CHAIR: How about I rule on the point of order?

The Hon. WES FANG: Sure, Chair.

The CHAIR: The Hon. Greg Donnelly is correct in terms of how we should treat witnesses. If I accept the point that Mr Fang is trying to make that he was trying to redirect, I just ask that he at least gives them, you know, three seconds to get the first word out before he redirects. Mr Fang, I don't know exactly what you were redirecting and how quickly you interpreted that they were answering the wrong part of the question, but maybe give them a moment and, if you are going to redirect, I remind you to do it politely.

The Hon. WES FANG: It could have been interpreted by people prior to or—sorry, just after the Premier made the announcement that it would be a number of months, in effect, that they would be able to use the process to access land, what is the time frame for people to access land under this Government commitment?

LEON WALKER: Who are the people that you're referring to?

The Hon. WES FANG: Whoever can buy land in order to build a house or develop accommodation or housing for the people of New South Wales.

LEON WALKER: I think it's a case-by-case situation, because there will be—

The Hon. WES FANG: Best case scenario?

LEON WALKER: Next week. It's not a very valid question. The lots that are being identified—

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Walker, I will determine what's a valid question.

LEON WALKER: The lots that are being identified—

The Hon. WES FANG: I won't have you tell me what you think is a valid question or not. I'm asking when will people be able to buy land or access land that the Government has released under this commitment from the Premier?

LEON WALKER: Yes, so, it could be in a very short term if it's an individual site that's already residentially zoned and, say, a single dwelling can be built on it, or it could be months or years if a planning process needs to be gone through to design a multi-storey building for social housing use. So it's not possible to have a single answer to that; it's a case by case.

The Hon. WES FANG: So was the Premier misleading the public when he said that it would be months before this scheme would be operational—given that it's already around, what, six months?

LEON WALKER: I'm not sure that's for me to answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, you profess to—anyway, I'll leave that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Walker, in terms of the sites that have been assessed, have you assessed them just for the provision of housing on the site or have you assessed them to support housing in neighbouring areas, for instance, such as public open space or roadways to support housing? Have you made that assessment?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Or is it just for housing on the site?

LEON WALKER: No. It's a very good question. What the early stage of the land audit has identified is, as I said, that there is some land that isn't suitable for residential development, and it doesn't make sense just to cast those aside and not consider what their alternate uses might be if they're not required for ongoing government use. So we will be putting those sites forward, in time, to consider open space and other uses—employment land, environmental land, other potential uses.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Walker, have you assessed the usage of golf courses, for instance, in this, for either housing or for public open space?

LEON WALKER: The actual audit doesn't restrict the sites, the government-owned land, in terms of what goes into the top level of the filter. But I think what would quickly come through the audit process is that if the golf course is being used for a public purpose subject to a long-term lease it's not going to be suitable for residential development because it's constrained by those uses.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Would bowling clubs fit into the same sort of parameters when it comes to assessing the viability of that land for housing development?

LEON WALKER: It might actually be a good question for my colleague Mel Hawyes. There are constraints over Crown land which mean that it's not always readily suitable for alternate uses anyway, because of the constraints, so maybe I can pass to Mel to respond to that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, I'm happy for that explanation, thank you.

MELANIE HAWYES: Sure. Crown land is obviously a very diverse public resource, and there are various arrangements in place. Parcels of Crown land may be reserved for a particular purpose. They may be leased. At the time of the expiration of a lease it may be an appropriate time to talk to the community about what they want the future use of that site to be. The portfolio is, inherently, quite dynamic in that sense. But as Leon discussed, it is used for a variety of purposes across the State, so suitability for alternate use depends on the current use and occupation and when those arrangements expire as to when you might think about "Is this the continued use we want or does the community want to do something else with this land?"

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. Mr Walker, shortly after this was announced, Minister Jackson told Sky News that the land the asset sits on "will be retained in government hands most of the time". Is that your understanding when it comes to this audit?

LEON WALKER: That doesn't sit within my area of responsibility, so I couldn't say.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's with respect to the land audit, though. That is what Minister Jackson said about the land audit, that when it was used to realise housing that it would sit within government hands?

LEON WALKER: Yes, so, that sits within Minister Jackson's portfolio, not within Minister—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So that will sit with Homes NSW, the development opportunities, or Landcom?

LEON WALKER: Yes, so not Minister Kamper's portfolio.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay.

LEON WALKER: And, yes, the land can go to Land and Housing Corporation, Aboriginal Housing Office or Landcom. I think, two of those entities, it's probably very unlikely that it would be transferred to public hands. In the case of Landcom, they develop for both private and public use. It depends, again, on the particular site.

MELANIE HAWYES: I might add to that, if I may? There are instances where Crown land has been used for housing supply. There is only a small proportion of the whole portfolio that's suitable for housing uses and we are contributing to the land audit at present, but we have done a couple of projects in the past. Most notably, there is a project at Cooma underway which is a partnership between Crown Lands, Land and Housing Corp and the Aboriginal Land Council that has brought online new land for supply, and, similarly, there is a project underway in Forbes under the same arrangement. So there are times when Crown land is appropriately used for housing, and we tend to do that in partnership with other agencies and land councils where they have an interest in that land.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: While I have you, Ms Hawyes, I might just turn back to Hungry Point in Cronulla and some of the challenges around Hungry Point Reserve. If the walkway is truncated, will the leftover money from the $7 million be allocated to improvements to the Hungry Point Reserve?

MELANIE HAWYES: That's not really a matter for me to answer. As I think I mentioned this morning, we're trying to broker a set of outcomes at that site, and at the moment we are in deliberation as to whether the council will become Crown land manager for some or all of that site, along with the future role of Marine Rescue. As you know, there has been funding set aside for a walkway, but how much that will cost will depend on the final design and how it's implemented.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Where does that $7 million funding sit at the moment?

MELANIE HAWYES: Some of that was—bear with me. I think some of it sits with council. Sorry, just bear with me. I might have to take that on notice, but I know there was an allocation of funding for the purpose of that walkway. Some of it was administered through Crown Lands, about $2 million, but I will take it on notice so I get you the precise figures.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. You were talking about the brokering of the deal and that's the role that Crown Lands is playing at the moment. In terms of that brokering, is Marine Rescue still advocating for a training academy on the site?

MELANIE HAWYES: Again, that's a matter that is more appropriately put to that portfolio, because I can't really speak on their behalf. My understanding is they had plans for that, subject to funding and the design of an appropriate facility, and I think that's still the case. But there is an estimates session with the Minister for Emergency Services that could potentially answer that more fulsomely. I found my note about the funding. There was $6.9 million of grant funding allocated to the board. Some of that is sitting with the council, some of that was with the reserve trust.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, thank you. With respect to the Hungry Point Reserve land manager, is that something that falls under your purview in Crown Lands?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you agree that apart from the Sutherland Shire Council CEO, ex officio, the former members of the board were all unpaid volunteers?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. Many of the Crown land trusts comprise volunteers, who do an amazing job around the State running reserves and contribute an enormous amount to public good in the management of those reserves.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has Mr Simon Spicer now been appointed as the administrator of the reserve?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What work is he doing?

MELANIE HAWYES: Administering the reserve—I can probably take on notice the exact nature of his daily duties, but he is administering the reserve in that role.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How much is he being paid in that role?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to take that on notice. I don't have that to hand.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. Thank you.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Jones, I'm going to go back to the topic that I was discussing with you when the Minister was here, which is the sports hub in Dubbo. I believe you indicated that, after the sod was turned on the CSU site, work is continuing. Is that a good precis of the information?

KAREN JONES: My understanding is—just during the lunch break I've been briefed—that there is a tender process underway at the moment.

The Hon. WES FANG: So when you, I think, provided the answer prior that "work is continuing"—

KAREN JONES: Work is continuing in terms of the project steering committee. They are meeting quite regularly, talking about the project and the progress of the project and making sure that all the contractual arrangements are met.

The Hon. WES FANG: Were you able to get some clarity around the budget that the project has?

KAREN JONES: I'll get that for you before the end of this afternoon's session.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have there been any changes to the scope of the project?

KAREN JONES: Several times, over the duration of the project. Exactly what those changes of scope are and when they were actually made, I'd have to take that on notice for you.

The Hon. WES FANG: What about since the sod turning in February 2023?

KAREN JONES: Again, I'd have to take that on notice for you. I can provide some context in relation to that. The Office of Sport administers over 700 grant applications. So when you talk specific projects and specific grants—I'm not across the full detail of each individual one.

The Hon. WES FANG: Neither was the Minister.

KAREN JONES: But I am happy to take that on notice so I can then provide that information for you.

The Hon. WES FANG: No worries. Has there been any consultation with stakeholders since the election and now? Do you have any details on that?

KAREN JONES: Again, I'd have to take that on notice. I would imagine that that would be the realm of the steering committee that's in place.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you have a time line for the delivery of the project?

KAREN JONES: I can take that on notice. There'll be a contract in place via a funding agreement that will have milestones and dates associated with those milestones.

The Hon. WES FANG: If you're able to come back to us with some details before we finish today, that would be fantastic.

KAREN JONES: I'll ask the team to do that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I've just got one other one, Ms Hawyes, with respect to the maintenance at Hungry Point. We've got some information that lists observations about various buildings at the site and what is called required action with respect to the maintenance on the site. Do you know if that required action has been undertaken?

MELANIE HAWYES: I know that a range of works have been undertaken at that site, including some heritage restoration works. But I can take that on notice to get you an account of the current works that are underway.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: While you're taking that on notice, in the 10 seconds remaining can you also advise if there's any advice as to whether Marine Rescue is in breach of its contractual obligations in relation to its directions for required action? If so, what action will you take to ensure that the required action is undertaken by Marine Rescue?

MELANIE HAWYES: I might take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Indeed. Thank you.

The CHAIR: I might start with questions for you, Ms Hawyes. Last estimates, we were talking about Yarrie Lake, and you mentioned the Deloitte report and, I think, on notice you provided us a copy with that. Have there been any regular health checks on that trust since the Deloitte report? Is there anything you can update us on in terms of how they're—

MELANIE HAWYES: How they're tracking?

The CHAIR: How they're tracking, particularly against the key recommendations of what the Deloitte report said.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. I think they found room for improvement in their administration—we have appointed a new board—as in, steps they could take to improve the way that they do their reporting. We are expecting this current year's report shortly. It hasn't come in yet. It's not due yet. We'll have a good look at that to understand how they've lifted their game in terms of reporting. Other than that, the Deloitte findings were that there was no evidence of maladministration. It was more that there was room for improvement in the way they prepared their reports. As I say, we'll probably be best placed to assess that when the current report that's due comes in.

The CHAIR: What's the process if they haven't taken on board those learnings?

MELANIE HAWYES: We'll go to them and try to find out why, and whether we can improve that and work with them to get them to a better standard. We're not at that point, because we haven't seen the report yet.

The CHAIR: I might just ask Ms Mather to come up, if possible—Venues NSW. I forgot to say this at the start. If you're a witness from the back, when you do come up, can you just bring your name tag up just so Hansard can see it and the five people live watching us can see it.

The Hon. WES FANG: No point having name tags made. The Minister can't get your name right, so why anyone else.

The CHAIR: I've just got some questions around the funding announcement that was made for the WIN Stadium sports precinct in 2022, to do a master plan and, obviously, improve that facility. Have you got any information in terms of where that is up to? Have they completed the master plan? Are they seeking more funding to go beyond that? Any sort of details would be great.

KERRIE MATHER: Thank you, Chair. We were allocated the funding for the master planning and development of a strategic and final business case for that in last year's budget. The funding came through in September—about September, October last year. We formed a project group to commence the master-planning process. The master plan has just been completed, in the last month and a half. There was a two-stage stakeholder process that actually informed development of the master plan for the site. It's a fantastic site, as you know. The sporting and entertainment precinct has such a strategic location. So we want to make the most of that opportunity. Working with the stakeholders in the region has very much informed the development of that plan.

In addition to the planning for the stadium itself, the other key aspect that's informed the thinking around the entertainment centre has been the demand for concerts and a wide variety of entertainment that that entertainment centre hosts. What it shows is that there's demand for an entertainment centre that would be almost twice the size of what we currently have. So we are now in the process, having adopted that master plan, following that extensive stakeholder consultation, of now commencing the strategic business case. That work is underway. That will continue. We will go through an Infrastructure NSW assurance process. Following that process, there will be the development of a final business case.

The CHAIR: What work was done, as part of that master plan, around parking and accessing that facility? If you talk to any stakeholder on the street in Wollongong, first thing they whinge about is how they actually get there and park there, particularly with young families. Parking is a big bugbear of that facility. While it's a nice location, parking is non-existent, pretty much.

KERRIE MATHER: We've worked really closely and collaboratively with a number of other agencies in the region, working closely with Transport for NSW and the council. A very strong focus has been around what we can do to actually reduce the reliance on private vehicles and focus more on public and active transport. This is actually part of a broader strategy, as I say, working closely with Transport for NSW and the council, to look at what can be done to improve public transport and access to public transport and also active transport. That means a more holistic strategy for the region in creating better boulevards, better wayfinding and so on.

The CHAIR: That's not really a body of work you're doing but probably a body of work that Transport for NSW is doing?

KERRIE MATHER: There's another working group that's actually dedicated to looking at all the transport and access, yes.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I might turn my attention to Mr La Posta. During our birth trauma inquiry, we heard from witnesses around the interpreting service. There were some concerns from a few women that had medical qualifications in other countries. They came to this country, and they felt that the interpreting service probably wasn't correctly interpreting some of the medical information. I'm just wondering what work is done with your department in terms of making sure the interpreters that we provide to provide those services have some level of knowledge in what they're interpreting.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's apt. It's only going to become more difficult, Chair. The first thing I'd say is we have 1,100 interpreters and translators at Multicultural NSW. They currently do work with the New South Wales courts, the New South Wales police, Service NSW. Colleagues like Greg Wells and Cass have been wonderful advocates—and Emma Hogan and others—to utilise our interpreters and translators more in all of their department. But we don't do Health. Health has its own separate interpreting. They have their own health interpreters.

The premise of your question is excellent, though, because the reality is that to find and source interpreters outside of our main languages—being Mandarin, Cantonese, Farsi, Arabic, Vietnamese—is becoming increasingly difficult because of the sheer breadth of the number of languages that we speak. We now speak over 280 different languages in New South Wales. Equally, it's a challenging profession for a lot of them because they're not full-time. They're plug-and-play when you need them. If you need someone to go to a police station to do Mandarin interpreting, you do. If you need someone to go to the hospital, you do.

I always am quite sensitive with medical and legal professions because sometimes there are really well-meaning family members that will offer their support or services, and they should never be used as interpreters or translators in any of those settings. You should always have a professional interpreter there. There are challenges within the Arabic-speaking community with the different dialects of Arabic. Even in my own Italian community, there are different challenges between the north and south of the country. You could have an Italian interpreter there that's from a different region of Italy and there would be a breakdown or a miscommunication.

That's often compounded when you are talking about specific medical, legal or police language because of the nuances that are involved. My undertaking to you is that we will continue to work with the profession holistically, but a lot of it is advocacy, education and information, rather than the direct remit that they're our interpreters and translators doing the work.

The CHAIR: My wife is Italian, so I do appreciate the reference to the different dialects. You were talking about doing work with different departments. Do you do interpreter work across all the departments? If a department requires a document translated into another language, would you do that work for them as well?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: If it's whole-of-government messaging, yes, but each department should have its own budget for interpreting and translating work. If it's a critical issue—like, for example, during COVID we were funded specifically to do whole-of-government communication messaging. If there was a whole-of-government campaign that the Department of Customer Service was leading around, say, voluntary assisted dying or single-use plastics or these sorts of things, then we would be able to do that on behalf of that whole-of-government messaging. But, specifically, departments should have that budgeted for translated material. As you would know, you don't just translate a document and then it immerses itself within the community. It's also what is the awareness building campaign and other things that sits around that.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I might pass to Ms Hurst.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Mr McLachlan, I just want to go back to our earlier discussion around personal information being provided to commercial authorised information resellers. Before you mentioned that you didn't believe that Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and the ACT remove personal data and you took that on notice. I'm just wondering if you had any updates, or if you had further information?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Sure, happy to provide both. I think I took about three on notice, so I will go through them all. Names are provided in Western Australia and Queensland. In Victoria they're also provided, but only to property valuers, as well as a data download to real estate agents but that's on a read-only access. In Northern Territory names are also provided to the valuation industry and real estate agents under strict terms and varying agreements but, again, that would be a matter for them. In South Australia, Tasmania and ACT, they do not, to our knowledge, provide names. But I'm not aware of how that is—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: How it runs.

STEWART McLACHLAN: How it runs specifically. We do align to Victoria, Queensland and WA broadly. In terms of the New South Wales model, following discussions with the Valuer General, the approach that we took was obviously weighed against considerations of both the industry and the privacy protections for New South Wales landholders. We're of the view that this model is a marked improvement to what previously existed. It complies with the privacy legislation in place in New South Wales and it's fair to say that it was welcomed by the Privacy Commissioner, who raised the concerns that were referred by the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General.

The other point I'd like to make is that there's always improvements that we can make. Valuation NSW, on behalf of and in consultation with the Valuer General, will always look to make those improvements. We think this is a really big step forward and it's something that we will be looking to do a three-year trial on, which has also been communicated. Following that we'll look to what opportunities there may be.

I think you raised a point about a person targeting various home owners and going through court lists. I think the point I would make there is that there are other avenues to obtain that information other than from the Valuer General's data. Specifically, there are title search providers in New South Wales and they obtain that information, I'm advised, through Land Registry Services, and so there's always going to be avenues for people to exploit things if they so wish to try and find them. There will be people in New South Wales who try to do that, or people in the world, in fact. What we have done, in consultation with the Valuer General and the Privacy Commissioner, is enhance those protections.

Specifically, the new licence agreement prohibits customers using data for direct marketing. It also requires customers to comply with the Privacy Act and the provisions of that Act. It prohibits the onselling of data, which previously wasn't prohibited and the sub-licensing, disclosing or otherwise providing property sales information to any other person than is so licensed. It also prohibits the customers from altering the format, meaning or substance of the data. It requires the customers of those clients, being the people that sign on, to notify both us and the clients of any privacy complaints and act in accordance with reasonable directions of our agency and the Valuer General. It requires immediate compliance with any suppression notices that may be issued by the Privacy Commissioner. The client is required to provide us relevant copies of how they are embedding those protections that we've put in place through the agreements, and they can be obviously audited.

The last point I would make is—and I've probably already touched on these—that these are steps that we've taken in consultation with the Privacy Commissioner. They are steps the Privacy Commissioner has confirmed meet the intention or the relevant provisions of the Privacy Act and are afforded to the Valuer General as an independent statutory officer.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You mentioned just now as well, and I think you mentioned it before, the updating of those licensing agreements. Didn't the existing contracts prior to this already have prohibitions on the use of data for direct marketing purposes?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I would need to take that on notice but my understanding is those were probably not as enhanced as they are in the current licence agreement and they've been further enhanced, as I said.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: When you take that on notice, could you also indicate how that has been enhanced—if there was already prohibitions on the use of it, how specifically that would be enhanced. That would be useful.

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes. I think the key feature there is that not only is it enhanced in the licence agreements, which I have gone through, but the Valuer General, through Valuation NSW, is afforded the ability to audit and monitor compliance with those licence agreements, which was not previously available to the Valuer General. That is a big step forward.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You mentioned the report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General that was done in 2021. In one of the supplementary questions it was stated that a new agreement was due to be made with commercial clients distributing sales data to ensure that vendor names would no longer be included and that commercial clients would also be asked to delete vendor and purchaser names from the historical data sets they've received.

What's being put forward now is—I agree with you that it's an improvement from where we were, but it obviously hasn't gone as far as what was originally being proposed by the Office of the Valuer General. I'm just wondering why that position changed and what happened in the background there for that to then become something quite different.

STEWART McLACHLAN: Sure. I would imagine that that answer was given by a former Valuer General and I can't speak on behalf of the thinking of the former Valuer General.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes, that was before your time.

STEWART McLACHLAN: What I can say is that both the former Valuer General, Mr Josh Etherington, who was the Valuer General previous to Ms Sally Dale—I have been in discussions with both valuer generals and I would say the view taken was that the approach that we have taken balances the needs of both industry and the people of New South Wales and obviously enhances those privacy protections but does comply with the Privacy Act and the relevant provisions within it.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: In the previous answer, and correct me if I'm wrong, it sounded like what you were saying was that the mortgage industry was concerned and wanted to have those names available. Why did we pick this approach, which still does leave people vulnerable? I take what you're saying about there being potential other avenues where people can misuse data. I understand that, but obviously this is one specific area which has specifically been abused and has been in the media. You mentioned that Victoria and some of the other States have still made sure that those private details are only available in very limited circumstances or to limited groups like property valuers. Why didn't we take that route in New South Wales to just provide that extra protection for people who are vulnerable?

STEWART McLACHLAN: As I said earlier, it was a balancing act. The balancing position that we've arrived at in consultation with the Valuer General is that those provisions or property details will continue to be afforded to any reseller who signs on to the new provisions or licence which comes into effect on 5 January.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: When you say balance, what I'm trying to understand is that the balance has fallen towards those mortgage industries or property valuers to have less privacy for those details. But why was that position taken instead of what other States have done, which would have provided more privacy for individual citizens?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I don't think that's a fair statement. I would say the position that we've taken enhances privacy protections significantly. I'm not aware of how Queensland, WA or Victoria manage the provision of names specifically, because they would have confidential agreements with the relevant people that sign on to them. What I can say is the advice we received is that the privacy protections we've embedded meet the tests of the privacy Act and comply with those provisions.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: What organisations were involved in any sort of consultation process to come to the position that was taken in New South Wales?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I'm not aware of any consultation with industry. It's not something that I would probably advocate for when developing a provision or a licence agreement that has privacy protections. But, as I said, we have consulted with the Privacy Commissioner at length, and those reports would be given to the upper House Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might move to Ms Jones. When I was asking questions to the Minister regarding the $30 million grant, you had some further information about that grant.

KAREN JONES: Yes, I do. The $30 million grant is called the Level the Playing Field grant. It specifically targets sporting facilities for women and girls. The overall objective of that is to provide access to safe, welcoming and inclusive sporting facilities and also to remove the barriers to participation for women and girls. In terms of the question that you had previously around how we can ensure that there would be equal access to those facilities, that's embedded into the guidelines and the requirements of the grant. In particular:

> … applicants must commit to a Statement of Intent that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

They also have to demonstrate what initiatives have been delivered already to increase the participation of women and girls, and how they plan to increase the participation of women and girls in sport and recreation into the future. They also have to provide, as part of their application, an equitable access and usage policy or existing relevant policy if they've already got one. Those policies are to address the aims of equitable access and usage. The policy must demonstrate how applicants will effectively drive gender-equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure to improve the outcomes for women and girls who want to participate in sport. Finally, the policy must also address how it will be monitored and evaluated via a supporting action plan.

The Hon. WES FANG: Before I ask some questions around cemeteries and crematoria, Ms Jones, I wanted to come back to you on the issue about the Dubbo sports hub. When you said that the tenders are being evaluated or called for now, was that just for civil work or civil and construction work?

KAREN JONES: I'm getting all that information for you. As I mentioned before, I've taken it on notice and I've instructed the team. Hopefully I can get it for you by the close of session today but, if not, I will have to take it on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: No worries. I would appreciate that. Regarding cemeteries and crematoria, how much money was paid to the executive recruitment firm that saw Mr Ken Morrison appointed to the administrator role?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not sure I have it to hand, and I can take that on notice. There was a competitive market-based process run, which culminated in the appointment of Mr Morrison as the administrator. It was Meritos who were commissioned to do that. I don't think I have those figures with me. Can I get them to you during the course of the session?

The Hon. WES FANG: I would appreciate that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Can I update my answer about Hungry Point?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, you can.

MELANIE HAWYES: The grant—$4.9 million of the $6.9 million is with the council, and $2 million is now with Mr Spicer in the role of the administrator. So that money is there for the purpose of the walkway at the point in time at which the design is agreed.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Lee Shearer found out that she was replaced in the role after she received a call from Ben Fordham on 2GB. Do you know if any support or mental health support was provided to her, given that she learnt that she had lost the role from a media inquiry from 2GB?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I understand. At that time, the Minister apologised for the manner in which she learnt of that.

The Hon. WES FANG: He probably should have done more than that, but anyway.

MELANIE HAWYES: Well, the term of her administrative arrangement, the tenure of her contract, was due to expire, hence the process. She was a party to that process, but Mr Morrison was successful in that process. That is an unfortunate way to find out that result, but the Minister apologised to her at the time.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's a bit more than unfortunate, though, isn't it?

MELANIE HAWYES: It's not ideal.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's probably a gross error of judgement.

MELANIE HAWYES: I would say it was an administrative error, and the Minister owned it and apologised at the time.

The Hon. WES FANG: But it creates a raft of HR issues as well, doesn't it?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

MELANIE HAWYES: I think at the executive level, when your contract is due to expire, you have to expect that it may not be renewed.

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order. I think I might know what it is.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It's sort of putting words in the mouth. Once again, the question gets put without the member letting the witness get a word in and allowing the answer—

The Hon. WES FANG: Greg, I only hear from you when there is some desperation to protect.

The CHAIR: I want to hear the full point of order. Just do it quickly; I'm conscious of the Opposition's time.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I think that's the way it's proceeded.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's what he's doing; he's wasting our time. You're better than that, Greg.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: To the point of order: It was asked and answered, and then it was just asked again and again.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, it wasn't.

The CHAIR: They weren't the points of order that I was expecting. I was suggesting that the member was probably sailing very close to the wind in terms of eliciting a personal opinion on what was essentially a Government policy.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Paragraph 13—procedural fairness.

The CHAIR: I don't think that's necessarily fair.

The Hon. WES FANG: Procedural fairness should have been given to Ms Shearer, shouldn't it?

The CHAIR: I'm not debating procedure fairness for Ms Shearer; I'm here to adjudicate procedural fairness for the witnesses here. I think Ms Hawyes handled the question okay, but I ask the member to be careful about seeking personal opinions in that way.

The Hon. WES FANG: It wasn't a personal opinion.

The CHAIR: Continue.

The Hon. WES FANG: Who was responsible for notifying Ms Shearer that she was not continuing in the role? Whose job was it?

MELANIE HAWYES: She was a ministerial appointment.

The Hon. WES FANG: So the Minister should have, in effect, been the person to let her know that she wasn't continuing.

MELANIE HAWYES: She was a ministerial appointment. I think perhaps you might have asked these questions when the Minister was here. The Minister contacted Ms Shearer.

The Hon. WES FANG: We had so many questions for the Minister. Unfortunately we will have to bring him back for a supplementary hearing so that we can ask those questions.

MELANIE HAWYES: My understanding is the Minister contacted Ms Shearer on that day. I'm not party to the conversations they had, obviously.

The Hon. WES FANG: After she found out from 2GB?

MELANIE HAWYES: My understanding is that he contacted her.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has a process been put in place to make sure this doesn't happen again?

MELANIE HAWYES: There is an established process for recruitment.

The Hon. WES FANG: So it shouldn't have happened in the first place, so something went wrong?

MELANIE HAWYES: At the time, it was acknowledged as a mistake. I don't know what else you'd like me to add to that.

The Hon. WES FANG: It seems like a bit more than a mistake, but I'll pass to Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Up to seven board members are expected to be appointed, including a chair of Metropolitan Memorial Parks, for an initial period of three years. Have any board members been appointed to date?

MELANIE HAWYES: No, we're in the middle of the recruitment process. I'm the chair of that panel.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What's the anticipated cost of those seven board members over the three years?

MELANIE HAWYES: I may need to get that for you on notice. The remuneration of boards is conducted by the Public Service Commission, so that is on the public record, but I can get you the breakdown. It's consistent with the Public Service Commission guidelines.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. The media release that was put out on 19 May mentioned the amalgamation of three Crown cemetery managers, being Rookwood General, Northern Metropolitan and Southern Metropolitan. It was later confirmed in another media release on 23 June that it would be called Metropolitan Memorial Parks. Why was Rookwood Necropolis not amalgamated in the end?

MELANIE HAWYES: The other entities are operators that conduct burials. Rookwood Necropolis is more like a strata manager. Because they are not conducting the same service, that's been retained as a separate entity, with its future to be determined as the final, end-state operating model for the CMCT is also determined. It is a little bit different to the other trusts. It does a completely different function. The others actually conduct burial and interment services.

JENNIFER HICKEY: It looks after the roads and walkways jointly with the CMCT. It wasn't considered —a new model needs to be developed that will satisfy that going forward.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Approximately how much money will it cost the Government to deliver the new 136,000-plot Crown land cemetery near Bowraville?

MELANIE HAWYES: That is the first major new Crown cemetery development in decades. As you know, construction is underway. I don't think I've got the full amount of the cost of construction, but I can get that for you, hopefully this session.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many more plots is the Government expecting to make available in metropolitan areas?

MELANIE HAWYES: Obviously, Bowraville coming online is a very welcome development from the point of view of certainty of future supply.

JENNIFER HICKEY: It's 136,000.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, 136,000 plots. Opportunities to bring new space online are under consideration. We have looked at various sites and there are options to be put to Government in the near future.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is the Government working with any Crown cemetery managers in regional New South Wales in order to find more available space?

MELANIE HAWYES: The focus has been on the metro area for obvious reasons, because that's where, particularly for some—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Constraints are.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, where the constraints are—and particularly for faith-based groups that are reliant on burial for cultural and religious reasons. The focus has really been there. But there are regional areas where there are cemeteries with space available.

The Hon. WES FANG: Could I ask you about the backlog of Crown land disputes—do you acknowledge that there is quite a large backlog?

MELANIE HAWYES: Of?

The Hon. WES FANG: Crown land disputes.

MELANIE HAWYES: What do you by mean Crown land disputes, sorry?

The Hon. WES FANG: Disputes around, say, Indigenous land claims.

MELANIE HAWYES: Okay, Aboriginal land claims. Yes. It is important to understand what the Land Rights legislation is and does. It was established to compensate Aboriginal people for dispossession. It was established in 1983. Since that time, something like 55,000 claims have been lodged—since that time. We are working through them. It's not as simple as there are 38,000 claims over 38,000 parcels of land. That's not how it works. I have multiple overlapping claims. They overlap in terms of space and time. For example, there's one single claim for the whole of the South Coast, and then numerous claims for parcels of land on the South Coast. That does complicate people's understanding of the—what people call the backlog. But there are a large number of claims on foot, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: In relation to how many are unresolved, what do you have as an unresolved figure?

MELANIE HAWYES: Some 38,515. Can I confirm that? I am just looking through my notes. Approximately 38,500.

The Hon. WES FANG: I will put down 38,500-ish. What is the average length of time to resolve it? I understand the part of your answer before where you said it was complex.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. We administer this part of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. To assess a claim, the premise of the legislation is that it enables land councils to claim unused and occupied land. Part of our assessment process is to gather evidence and determine whether that land was used and occupied on the date of the claim. It very much hinges on what was going on on that land—its use and occupation on the date of the claim. Referencing out is obviously something that we need to do, and we contact people who have an interest in that land and look for documented evidence as to what was going on on that land. That can take some time.

The Hon. WES FANG: How do you triage the claims? Do you have a process of prioritising?

MELANIE HAWYES: We do, and we're actually consulting with the land council network at the moment on a more contemporary prioritisation framework. But some of it is common sense. For example, if

there's a claim that is really important to a particular land council, we will prioritise that. We ask them, "What are the most important claims to you?" Similarly, if we have a government agency that needs certainty of tenure over a piece of land in order to construct a hospital or a road, then we'll prioritise that. There's an element of common sense.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you established a plan in order to be able to tackle the 38,000-odd number of unresolved claims?

MELANIE HAWYES: We have done a lot of work and are seeing the results of that work now. We've cleared more land claims in the last two years—as in resolved and determined and granted land back. We've done more land hand-backs in the last couple of years than have been done in the preceding decades. In the last year, 726 claims were successfully granted to land councils. That's a record for an annual year.

The Hon. WES FANG: Sorry, 726 is the period from—

MELANIE HAWYES: In the last year.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is that from today?

MELANIE HAWYES: The last financial year.

The Hon. WES FANG: In the 2022-23 financial year?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. I will get you the breakdown of the last two years. We have also made a number of business improvements to the process. We have built far more positive relationships with land councils. We've introduced what we call the LALC20 project, which is, as I talked about before, an opportunity to work with land councils to understand the claims that are most important to them and prioritise those. And we've doubled the size of the team that does assessments. We have made progress in the last couple of years to speed up the pace of claims processing itself.

The Hon. WES FANG: Since 4 July do you have a figure of how many have been—to date, to now, do you have a figure of what's been, I guess, processed?

MELANIE HAWYES: Of land claims assessed in 2022-23, 776 were resolved.

The Hon. WES FANG: And in the current financial year, 2023-24, do you have anything?

MELANIE HAWYES: The current financial year—I might have to get you that one on notice because I can't readily see it. In 2022-23, 776 claims resolved and 545 lands granted. And the figure for total on the books is 38,518.

The Hon. WES FANG: What's the average length of time taken to resolve a claim?

MELANIE HAWYES: It depends on the complexity of use and occupation on the land. For some, particularly where there are also native title interests, it can take a lot of time to resolve the different interests at play on that piece of land. Some are more straightforward. For example, if there is absolutely no use and occupation of land, it is a bit easier to make that assessment.

The Hon. WES FANG: But on the figures that you have available, I imagine that you've got an average time.

MELANIE HAWYES: An average? I will have to get you that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: How many full-time equivalent staff do you have working on this issue?

MELANIE HAWYES: In the land claims team overall, 20. And working exclusively on assessments, 15, which is an increase from the six that were in that role when I became the deputy secretary.

The Hon. WES FANG: How many do you have working for Crown Lands in total, between—

MELANIE HAWYES: Total staff?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

MELANIE HAWYES: I think it's 479. Hang on a sec. I think it is 479 FTE.

The Hon. WES FANG: And that's currently—that's as of today?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. Just let me confirm that, if you will, because I don't want to get it wrong on the record. It was 489 as at 30 June.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has that increased or decreased since 2021-22?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to check. I don't know. I think it's relatively stable, but I can get you the figure for last year.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are Indigenous land claims the only sort of Crown lands disputes, or have you got other land disputes?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not sure why you categorise them as disputes. They are things that we are responsible for processing. They are not necessarily in dispute.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. I guess, in that context—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the terminology you use for it, then?

MELANIE HAWYES: They are Aboriginal land claims. They are not disputed as such. I was a bit confused by what you meant when you asked the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: But in relation to other claims of Crown lands—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Contested claims.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes. Is there any other that you oversee?

MELANIE HAWYES: We administer land claims under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, even though the Act belongs to Minister Harris. We also work in the native title space. There are claims and interests in land, and there are numerous native title claims emerging across the State, too. But we are not the lead agency in that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Were prospective rent increases issued to tenants that would come in to early effect as of January 2024?

MELANIE HAWYES: For Crown lands?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: For Crown lands, yes.

MELANIE HAWYES: Sorry, what was your question?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has there been advice given to tenants of prospective rent increases to come into effect as early as January 2024?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. That is a part of our regular rent determination. Our statute obliges us to charge market rate and to redetermine those rents on a three-year to a five-year basis. It is part of our statutory obligation. Yes, we have signalled to some tenure-holders that their rent has been redetermined.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many prospective rent increases are forecast to occur?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think we had about 11,000 tenures total, but out of those, I think it was around 1,800 that had their rent redetermined. In that group there are different categories of tenure-holders, and some of those tenure-holders have had a rent increase.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the total value of these rent increases?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't have that to hand.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Would you be able to provide that on notice?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I can. The total figure of tenure holders who had rent increases above 10 per cent is 1,851 out of a total of 11,000.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And 1,800, you said, were redetermined and 1,851—

MELANIE HAWYES: It is the number.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's the exact figure?

MELANIE HAWYES: Redetermined, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the average rent increase? Do you want to take that on notice as well?

MELANIE HAWYES: It depends on the type of tenure holder. Some are commercial—you know, the bowling clubs we referred to before. There's a mix. Some are farmers. Some are individuals. An average is a little bit of a distortion.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In dollar amounts, would you be able to supply us with the single largest rent increase? What was this for?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to take that on notice. What I would say to that is that we have a provision for a minimum statutory rent, which is the absolute minimum, which is $579 a year. There are provisions there. Because the land is used for so many different purposes, there are many occasions where a not-for-profit might use the land, for example, and we don't seek to charge them market rent. There's provision for a minimum rent. We also have a concessions policy that provides for a 50 per cent concession where your revenue is between $500,000 and $1 million, and a 50 per cent concession if your revenue is below $500,000 a year. There are also hardship provisions. With every tenure holder that is going through a rent increase at the moment, we've offered them a two-year phase in if it's a significant increase. There are hardship provisions we can work them through if they need a payment plan or they want to make a case for hardship.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Did any consultation occur prior to these rent determinations being made?

MELANIE HAWYES: We've personally spoken to all of the tenure holders who have had a significant increase—by that, I mean more than 10 per cent. But it's a statutory requirement to redetermine their rent.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is there any support that's being provided to these organisations with a more than 10 per cent rent increase—considering community bowling clubs and the like—

MELANIE HAWYES: Absolutely.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —and community organisations?

MELANIE HAWYES: As I mentioned, we have a concessions policy that's based on their revenue. We talk to them about their revenue. They also have the ability to make a claim for financial hardship and to extend the terms of their payment over more time. We have offered a two-year phase in, but there's also opportunities to create a payment plan if they want to contact us and talk about that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much. I think, from our perspective at least, that is all the questions we've got on land and property. I don't know if the crossbench has any questions to ask.

The CHAIR: I've got a couple of follow-up questions from Mr Fang's—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: From our perspective, we don't need land and property witnesses any further.

The CHAIR: Just following up on Mr Fang's questioning—

The Hon. WES FANG: It was great questioning.

The CHAIR: I won't go that far. The Audit Office laid down a report in 2022 that set out some recommendations around land claims, particularly around recommendations for DPE. I want to go through them, if you could give us an update as to where you are at with them.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, no worries.

The CHAIR: It said DPE should implement a resourced, 10-year plan that increases the rate of claim processing and includes an initial focus on land grants. Do we have a 10-year plan?

MELANIE HAWYES: As I mentioned, we have increased the number of people working on land claims by reprioritising internally. We're also working with our colleagues in the central agencies—DPC, Aboriginal Affairs, the land council network and Treasury—to try to scope out the 10-year plan that the Audit Office recommended that we look at.

The CHAIR: You haven't actually—

MELANIE HAWYES: It has not been completed at this point, no.

The CHAIR: It hasn't been completed. Do you have a time frame for when you think you'll have it completed?

MELANIE HAWYES: No, because we need to cost our different options for government and do a business case.

The CHAIR: It also said you should implement a five-year workforce development strategy. You don't bundle it up as part of the 10-year plan as well? It seems very similar.

MELANIE HAWYES: We have already done work on our own training and development. We've done a whole lot of cultural immersion training for people in the department to understand their role in land rights and the land rights framework within our current resourcing. We do have more work to do in terms of future workforce planning with that group.

The CHAIR: The other main one was finalising updates to your land claim assessment procedures.

MELANIE HAWYES: We have done that at the moment. We're working with the land council network to confirm that some of those procedural changes work from their point of view.

The CHAIR: Excellent. That was all of my questions regarding that. I might go back to Mr La Posta about the NSW Faith Affairs Council. Nominations closed for that on 22 September this year. Has that been finalised?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: There's two parts to the recruitment of the faith councils, noting that this was a commitment of the new Government, so it was pretty binary in terms of how the Government wanted to structure this. It was quite transparent in terms of processes in the lead-up to the election. The first 12 members of the faith council are from our largest faith denominations in New South Wales by the 2020 census data. The Minister wrote to the heads of each of those 12 faith institutions and sought a suitable nomination, to which we then did due diligence around those nominations. They've been finalised. The second part of the nomination process was an open expression-of-interest process, as you quite rightly said before, which closed at the end of last month. We're at the final point now. We have 20 expressions of interest from that process. A decision around that is imminent from the Minister around announcing the new members that will complement the existing 12 on the Faith Affairs Council.

The CHAIR: The 12 that have been chosen so far, has that been publicised anywhere? I can't see it on your—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. I can run through them. You've got Rt Reverend Dr Michael Stead from the Anglican Church of Australia; Associate Professor Gawaine Powell Davies from the Buddhist Council of NSW; Mr Surinder Jain from the Hindu Council of Australia; Mr Darshan Singh Gill from the Australian Sikh Association; Mr David Ossip—and I'm thinking of David and the broader community during these very difficult times—from the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies; Imam Shadi Alsuleiman from the Australian National Imams Council—likewise, I'm offering my solidarity and support to those facing very difficult times on the other side of the equation—Very Reverend Father Christophoros Krikelis from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese; Reverend Dr Steve Bartlett from the Baptist Churches of New South Wales and ACT; Reverend Ralph Estherby from the Australian council of churches; Reverend Dr Kamal Weerakoon from the Presbyterian Church of Australia; Reverend Dr Manas Ghosh from Uniting Church Australia; and Ms Monica Doumit from the Catholic Church in Australia.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can the Minister pronounce their names?

The CHAIR: Have they been tasked with a body of work or are they there purely as a consultative body? Do you know?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: At this stage, they've had an initial meeting with the Minister at Parliament. We're still finalising the terms of reference for that group and also the code of conduct in terms of the behavioural framework upon which they'll operate. It's an excellent question. Once we finalise the terms of reference, we can probably provide a clear answer.

The CHAIR: Do you have a time line on when you're going to have the terms of reference finalised?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. The current conflict is quite a focus. I'm happy to take that on notice, but I would be saying certainly before the end of this year. My assumption would be within the next month.

The CHAIR: I might quickly turn to the regional engagement programs that you offer. I'm looking online at your website. It seems that a lot of them are only offered online or in a hybrid sense. I'm wondering how you ensure good engagement with our multicultural groups when you're largely dealing with them online, given that some of them do struggle with ICT.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: My preference is clearly face to face, for obvious reasons. For any of us that have spent time in regional areas, you will know that you build more sustainable relationships sitting around a table and understanding what the issues and the trends—

The CHAIR: I note that most of them are online. The listening tour is hybrid online and in person.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sorry, the listening tour—as an example, we were out in Wagga. I was out in Griffith a week ago.

The Hon. WES FANG: Nice part of the world.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The listening tour was certainly—beautiful part of the world—in southern New South Wales, where we've got primary settlement locations. The listening tour was all face to face, particularly in primary settlement locations. Where we're settling new refugee or refugee-like cohorts, the majority of our work is face to face. To your point around the regional community networks that we are establishing and expanding at the moment through the leadership of the Minister, they will be a blend of hybrid and face to face. In terms of when we would see it as appropriate to do a hybrid session, it would be if we're giving them an information update in terms of a priority or a change in government or an opportunity for them to, as a collective, engage directly through the Minister or the Minister's office on key themes and issues. My strong preference will be that our engagement will be face-to-face wherever possible. So it would be a hybrid approach.

The CHAIR: Are you reaching out to them through multiple modes of communication? Obviously, another issue with consultation with communities is that you need multiple modes of communication.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. We also know there are leaders out there in community that position themselves as the leader of the community, and then you get out to the communities and you realise that they are a part of the leadership within the community. It's not just about having 10 people sit around a table and they're the 10 authoritative voices that need to guide us. It's more around how we leverage off their skills and networks and relationships. How do we bring other government departments to the table? How do we bring police to the table, or Service NSW and others to come and sit there and listen to—we're a pretty small humble agency. Listening to Mel's workforce, I'm envious.

We've got 105 at Multicultural NSW. We've got about 25, 30 in our community engagement and resilience teams. It's equally about how we bring Crown Lands, how we bring Sport, how we bring all the different parts of government so that culturally and linguistically diverse voice is heard by all parts of government, not just Multicultural NSW. That is a key focus of the regional community networks. It is about bringing different parts of government to the table to listen to the lived experience and voices of our culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse community.

The CHAIR: Just on the staffing, now that you have mentioned it, how many of your—was it 105?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Full time.

The CHAIR: —full-timers are in our regions outside of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: None. All of our staff are based at Parramatta.

The CHAIR: They're based at Parramatta. If they need to do work—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Jump in the car, jump on a plane, car share, rideshare—whatever they need.

The CHAIR: Is there a view to try and expand your workforce out into the regions, given the lessons that we've learnt from COVID that you can actually do a bit of work from home?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's a really good question.

The CHAIR: I'm hoping for a really good answer.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. Well, I'm open minded, is the short answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: The Minister is not here. We're likely to get one.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm open minded, is the short answer, and I think part of it depends on what—as a country and as a State, we're about to massively open up our borders to migration, and we're going to increase the number. This is a Commonwealth policy in terms of the number of refugee settlement. Under previous iterations of different governments—former governments—there was a position around 50 per cent of those refugee or refugee-like communities settling in regional areas and 50 per cent in the city. If the current Commonwealth Government says, similarly, that we've got to focus on regional areas for migration growth and those things, I think it's apt for our staff to be based there. But, equally, we've got a really strong partnership with our ethnic communities—councils based in Wagga, based in Illawarra, based in the South Coast, based in the Hunter and regions beyond. We have strong relationships with Northern Settlement Services. It is equally about those stakeholder relationships and the management exercise as it is having multicultural officers in the regional areas.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Mr McLachlan, you said before that industry groups like the mortgage industry weren't consulted. I'm just wondering how the impact on these groups was determined in regards to the effect of no longer providing names if they weren't consulted?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Within Valuations NSW, we have about 200 FTE.

The Hon. WES FANG: Does the Minister hate multiculturalism? Is that what we're hearing here?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Of that staff base, we have about 100 valuers internally. Those valuers have significant experience both within the mortgage industry and across the valuation sector and have worked, in fact, for a variety of valuation firms that provide those services as well as the Valuer General, who is obviously significantly experienced in how valuation practices work across New South Wales as well as across Australia and international jurisdictions. That's how we have garnered that experience.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Ms Jones, I just want to go back to the $30 million grant. Thank you for your additional information. I think some of the concerns around the grants for lighting have come about because there is a concern that women are often given non-popular times to play sport on the fields.

KAREN JONES: Correct.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: And the concern then is that the lighting is just provided to keep them at those non-popular times. But I know you said there needs to be equitable access and usage. Will there still be then a push to share popular times?

KAREN JONES: Absolutely. Part of equitable access means not just the hourly rate, if you like, divided up between men and women participating in sport, but it is also around those prime times and making sure that they're sharing those prime times. The addition of lighting, like the Minister alluded to earlier this morning, does actually extend the availability of a playing field, for instance. So instead of having to stop play when it gets dark, they can actually continue playing on into the night-time. But that's not to say that women will be then relegated to 10 o'clock at night playing. Under the Level the Playing Field requirements, there will be a just sharing of available time across both men and women.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you so much for that. I will go to Mr La Posta. Earlier this morning we were talking about any support services that Multicultural NSW were putting forward during the difficult time of events overseas. Could we return to that?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sure. Absolutely. It is an excellent question. My team is now working with over 100 different stakeholders in the community, and that's not just members of the Jewish community, Jewish Board of Deputies, rabbis, rabbinical council, et cetera, and not just members of Islamic community. We are working with Middle Eastern bishops. We are working with a broad cross-section of the community, because this is impacting on all of us. More than one in two of us now in New South Wales was born overseas or has a parent born overseas, and nearly 30 per cent of us are born overseas.

This geopolitical issue is one of the most sensitive, I think, that impacts global politics, and, right now, I think the majority of the community are feeling this indirectly or directly in some way, shape or form. From the stakeholder engagement to date, the critical thing they want is to feel safe at the moment here in New South Wales. The members of the Jewish community and the members of the Islamic community are very strong with regards to the support of the police, particularly within the Jewish community, around the ongoing responsibility and support of Operation Shelter led by the NSW Police Force. They are very complimentary of that approach.

Similar to the questions of Mr Farlow and Mr Fang before around safety and security funding, how do we continue to make sure that our places of worship and associated structures are places where people can feel safe and secure? A really important point around balanced messaging and really considered messaging—how can the Government continue to play a really kind and compassionate role to support communities? And then the last thing that we've heard is—and we have done this when we stood up—designated hotline and support numbers around people returning from Afghanistan off the back of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

There is a potential program, akin to those two instances, which is called Witness to War, that's been run by STARTTS, which is a mental health qualified organisation group, for those that are vicariously impacted by this trauma, to be able to call someone and have that support. I spoke with the CEO of that organisation last week. He and I were texting this morning. He wants to roll that out nationally. Should that fail, the first door that I will open is the Minister's office to look to stand up something similar in New South Wales to be able to provide that support to the affected communities.

The Hon. WES FANG: What are you going to do when you can't actually understand what you're asking for?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you for that. I just want to go a back. We were asking questions about the $30 million multicultural capital partnership fund. Is that fund open for applications or is that closed now?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No. The multicultural capital partnership fund was predetermined before the election. That $30 million was committed to those 11 community organisations that I mentioned before. Our job is just to make sure that we do due diligence on the appropriateness of that funding to make sure that if, for example, the Sydney Jewish museum—do they have the appropriate co-contributions to be able to complete that project? What are the time lines for that, to do that sort of work and those sort of things? It's not an open grant process. It's very much just our agency direct dealing with those organisations to fulfil the election commitments.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Was there a cap on what people could apply for within that grant, do you know?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Again, it wasn't an open grant process. It was a commitment made by the then Opposition leader and the shadow Minister for Multiculturalism in the lead-up. It went through all of the parliamentary budgeting office costings and, now the Government is there, it falls to our responsibility to fulfil those new government priorities.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The Government also announced $17.8 million investment in community language schools to make learning a language more affordable and accessible.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm just wondering how that funding is going to be distributed and what the time line is.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's an excellent question. To sort of build on the Minister's answer earlier around community language schools, it is the responsibility of the Department of Education in terms of the $17.8 million. I sit on the steering committee that the education department has established on this, with others in this space, to provide the advocacy and also the support for the Federation of Community Language Schools. My numbers are a little bit rusty, but I think there's in the vicinity of about 500 to 600 language schools across New South Wales. They're broken up into a myriad of different languages, but they sit loosely aligned to three different federated entities. You've got the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools. You've then got the Hunter-Newcastle group and then you've got the Illawarra group.

We have funding at the moment to provide capacity-building exercises with those three different federations around shared language learning, shared experiences, how to find efficiencies, what are their membership costings and all of those sorts of things, ongoing financial sustainability of those organisations. So we give them a grant at the moment to help support them for the coming year, but that sits separate to the New South Wales Government election commitment, which was about trying to bring New South Wales with parity to other States—and the Minister answered this before—around the amount that each child effectively is supported with to help them with their language learning.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Just to clarify, that second part that's outside—is that the 17.8?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, so it's managed by the Department of Education. My role is to sit on the advisory group that the Department of Education has to bring the lived experience of the language schools into the equation. But they also have their own team within the Department of Education that administers the funding for the 17.8, so it's probably best directed at Minister Car.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You don't have any information around the time line and eligibility for funding, or anything like that? That's something for them?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We advocate strongly—I mean CEOs, people like Michael Christodoulou and others that are the CEO of the federation, and I speak regularly. When he's not even in the country, he finds a way to contact me from Cyprus or wherever in the world he is. I can advocate on things, as Mr Farlow was saying before, like the memorandums of understanding with schools. If there's breakdowns or issues to school access points or the community language schools feel like they're being unfairly treated, I can advocate on their behalf, but the direct responsibility sits with the Department of Education. We're more of an advocacy and a brokerage to help mediate issues where required.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Let's continue in Multiculturalism for a minute then, shall we? With respect to the Faith Affairs Council and the questions that were being asked previously, how different is the Faith Affairs Council to the former Religious Communities Advisory Council?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: They both link to our legislation in the Multicultural NSW Act of 2000. The Faith Affairs Council reports directly through to the Minister on matters pertaining to faith affairs. The Religious Communities Advisory Council was chaired by the chair of Multicultural NSW, who then provided an intermediary voice to the Minister for Multiculturalism. It's very much around trying to streamline the perspective of faith directly through to the Minister. The Faith Affairs Council will also nominate and select their own chair with the Minister's concurrence.

They will self-elect the chair in a sense—again different from the Religious Communities Advisory Council where Mr Nick Kaldas, APM, was the appointed chair of that group, by the Minister, and then that group worked there. The membership will be different. We're still finalising the membership numbers, but there will be slightly more on the Faith Affairs Council than on the Religious Communities Advisory Council. The Minister has made it very clear that he wants to have a greater level of female representation on the Faith Affairs Council than on the Religious Communities Advisory Council. These are some of the nuanced differences between the two groups.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is there a difference in the cost profile for both organisations? Is it going to cost more or less for the Faith Affairs Council?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Pleasingly, whether it was the former or the current government, both have agreed that the members of the Faith Affairs Council are not to be paid. So they volunteer their time. That was particularly important to us. We didn't want members of the faith community being paid for by the New South Wales public or the New South Wales Government to hold roles that could then have perspectives, or influence the Government directly, so they're volunteering in terms of the time and the roles that they play. Both of those—the Religious Communities Advisory Council and the Faith Affairs Council—are uniform in that respect. In terms of the burden on our time, no, they're apples with apples, Mr Farlow. They both require secretariat support from my agency, and I sat on the Religious Communities Advisory Council and I will sit on the Faith Affairs Council as an ex officio.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Considering there were people who were already appointed to the Religious Communities Advisory Council, who were in place and effectively have been in limbo while the Faith Affairs Council is established, what has been their role—those people who were originally appointed—and what interaction have you had with them in that period?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The Religious Communities Advisory Council, again under the previous Government, came from the perspective of how do we streamline—remembering we practise over 140 different faith traditions in New South Wales. During COVID, and this was one of the things that I am incredibly proud of and that I think was very successful, we had a religious communities forum where we had somewhere between 250 and 300 members working with us during the pandemic. I don't need to take you two gentlemen and others in the room back to where we were debating the number of people who could sing, the distance between singers, whether singers had to wear masks et cetera. The faith communities and the faith leaders were one of our greatest assets to help us get people vaccinated, keep people safe, and also keep them housed and fed and sheltered and so forth during the pandemic.

I think both the former and the current governments realised that the voice of faith communities needed to be elevated, and that's pretty much what we've done. So whether it's the Religious Communities Advisory Council, which was a priority of the previous Government, or now formalising that through the Faith Affairs Council and streamlining that voice directly through to the Minister, which is the priority of the current Government, for us it's more just about leveraging those established networks and making it as easy as possible for our faith leaders to have direct access to our agency, and to the Minister, more importantly.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Considering the Religious Communities Advisory Council effectively had set up a process for nominations and the like and for people to come on board, wouldn't this have been a much faster process for the Faith Affairs Council to be established quicker than what we're seeing now where it's not in place at this very critical time?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Not necessarily. I think one of the advantages, and the Minister's thinking around the Faith Affairs Council, has been how do we—we only had two females on the Religious Communities Advisory Council out of a membership of 15. In addition to that, there were some questions around the process to have those people put onto the Religious Communities Advisory Council. Were they actually in fact the spokespeople on behalf of those religions? That was contested in a number of different faith traditions. The Minister sought to streamline that process. He's spoken with the peaks within the various 12 biggest faith institutions, empowered them to put forward nominations, as long as they are not incongruent with government processes or priorities or any of those things, to give them that voice around the table.

I can see a lot of logic in it and, for us, it's more just about getting on with it and making sure that that voice is heard around the Government. All of you, as elected officials, hear this when government makes big decisions around voluntary assisted dying, religious discrimination, religious freedoms or conversion therapies. It's more around formalising that vehicle so that it's there and it feels like it can engage in two-way dialogue more frequently with government.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, you spoke earlier when the Minister was here about grants that went to a number of organisations, one of which was a Greek church. I questioned the Minister around his disclosures on that issue. He gave varying answers, one being that he attended at certain times—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: Look, don't interrupt.

The CHAIR: A point of order has been called. I have to hear it. I will allow the question.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It's a misrepresentation of what the Minister did. The Hon. Wes Fang said "varying answers", and that was not the case at all.

The Hon. WES FANG: I am coming to the answers that he gave, which were varying. He said that he attended at certain times, for a funeral, and then he indicated that he had been a parishioner there from time to time, particularly during Greek Easter services. Did the Minister provide, at all, any disclosure that he had—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: The point of order has to be ruled on, Chair.

The CHAIR: Let me just rule on the point of order.

The Hon. WES FANG: I've got thirty seconds.

The CHAIR: I will allow the question to go ahead. I don't think the member was mischaracterising the varied answers. He did make a wide range of comments. I will ask the member to get to the bottom of the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: That is exactly what I am saying. He indicated at different parts of the answer his connection to that church. Did the Minister at all provide you with a disclosure as to his connection with that organisation and was he aware of the grant, or the shortlist of that grant process, before the grants were issued?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I, honestly, was listening intently to that discussion and I couldn't ascertain, because of the sort of by-product that was going on, which of the two sites he was talking about. One of the sites he hasn't been briefed on and he hasn't signed off or offered concurrence with me in terms of the agreement.

The Hon. WES FANG: Which one was that?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can take the specifics of this on notice. The other side I will need to take on notice as to whether he has approved that proposal or whether I approved that proposal under the Cabinet guidelines around which sites were to be authorised. I'm happy to take the specifics of that on notice, but I was trying to pick up which one of the sites you were referencing.

The Hon. WES FANG: Given that you are taking some of those details on notice, are you able to provide—and I don't know if it's possible—by the end of the session today, some of the details around what disclosures were made and whether he was made aware of those projects, just so that we can follow up some things with questions?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, I'll do my best. I can't commit to that time frame—

The Hon. WES FANG: No, you've only got 105 staff. It's not like you're Crown Lands or—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order: It's just sarcasm.

The Hon. WES FANG: I mean, genuinely, like, you've got 200-plus and you've got 400-and-something that are stuck—

The CHAIR: On that note, Ms Hawyes is signalling that she may have something for us.

MELANIE HAWYES: I would like to augment a number of my answers, if that's okay, Chair. I am happy to do it after the break or whenever is convenient for the Committee.

The CHAIR: Let's just do it now, quickly.

MELANIE HAWYES: In terms of workforce, you asked about last year. Last year we had 487, so we've grown by two. That is a workforce that is responsible for land and asset management over almost 40 per

cent of the State. You asked about remuneration for the MMP board. It is in line with Public Service Commission remuneration. It is a category 1 Crown land manager with, obviously, a significant portfolio in terms of its social service but also a significant commercial portfolio to run. The remuneration is $70,000 annually for the Chair and $40,000 annually for members. And you asked about the number of land claims resolved this year—so far, 60, with 23 granted. There is no average time to determine a land claim, given the nature of referencing out, but it generally takes us between six to nine months, which also allows for a period of appeal in the Land and Environment Court.

Last but not least, if I may—the rent redetermination. The reason that a number of tenures have had rents redetermined this year is that we have been working through a legacy backlog of undetermined rents which have been that way for many years. We are now up to date, but some of the tenures had previously not had their rent redetermined for sometimes 20-28 years. Out of that group, we have just done the final group of tenures that had not had their rents redetermined—that's the 185 one I mentioned—and, of those, 360 have had an increase greater than $2,000. For those tenure holders we have offered payment plans, a phased-in period of two years and there are hardship provisions, as I mentioned. I just wanted to round out those answers. Thank you.

The CHAIR: We will now break for afternoon tea.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Chair, can I just confirm, the indication was that the Lands and Property questions have been completed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's from the Opposition's perspective. I don't know about the crossbench.

The CHAIR: They're satisfied for me as well. Ms Hurst?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Chair, you're satisfied if I take my team—

The CHAIR: Yes, absolutely. When we come back there may be some further rolling dismissals—probably a wrong choice of word with the department—or pardons.

(Melanie Hawyes, Leon Walker, Kiersten Fishburn, Stewart McLachlan and Jennifer Hickey withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back to this afternoon's session. I will now hand over to the Opposition. Before I do, I indicate that the crossbench doesn't have any further questions, so there is no need to count time.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is there anyone else we want to let go? No, we've got a grilling. We've got folders for you all.

The CHAIR: We will just have untimed questioning until the Opposition indicates whether they want to dismiss any witnesses and then we'll go from there.

The Hon. WES FANG: We'll have to extend the session tonight. We'll see how we go—maybe again tomorrow? We have got plenty of questions.

The CHAIR: We are live on air. Let's go, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: For Small Business, who would I be best to direct these questions to?

EMMA HOGAN: We have Service NSW, who do the majority of delivery, and we have the Small Business Commissioner, depending on your line of questioning.

The Hon. WES FANG: When will the NSW Business Bureau be established? Who would be responsible for that? Ms Hogan?

EMMA HOGAN: Service NSW. The CEO is with us: Mr Wells. Service NSW is providing support on that, but I wouldn't want to share anything the Minister wouldn't want to share, so I'll just check with Greg.

The Hon. WES FANG: Go ahead. It doesn't matter. I'm sure he won't know.

The CHAIR: In the meantime, we will get some additional microphones as well.

GREG WELLS: We are in the process, Mr Fang, of just doing consultation on the make-up of that, so the announcement of that is pretty much imminent.

The Hon. WES FANG: It was an election commitment, though, wasn't it?

EMMA HOGAN: Yes.

GREG WELLS: It was, yes. The election commitments around Small Business were establishing the bureau, putting together a charter for Small Business that goes with that and a range of those things, which we are actively working on and doing consultation around.

The Hon. WES FANG: Will there be transitional arrangements for the services that will be moved into the NSW Business Bureau?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The services provided by the Business Bureau will be delivered by Service NSW on behalf of the bureau.

The Hon. WES FANG: So in relation to the existing services, there is nothing going to be moved into that bureau? There is no transition from existing services?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The functions of the bureau are still being worked through. Service NSW will be delivering those functions. We have core focus areas that we're working towards and working with the Minister around.

The Hon. WES FANG: How much of this plan has actually been developed? It was an election commitment from the Premier.

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: I believe the Minister is very close to announcing some information on the Business Bureau.

The Hon. WES FANG: When you say "announcing some information", what are we talking about—the plan, the structure, the people, the delivery, or all of it?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The plan.

The Hon. WES FANG: We're going to start making a plan.

EMMA HOGAN: No. He's close to announcing a plan.

The Hon. WES FANG: Everything seems to be close to in this place. How does this impact the NSW Small Business Commissioner?

CHRIS LAMONT: Mr Fang, my and, indeed, the commission's responsibilities and objects, I don't believe, change. The legislation sets out what my obligations and delivery is.

The Hon. WES FANG: There's no overlap in relation to the plan, the secret ministerial plan that he's going to announce at some point—but obviously didn't want to do that before estimates—and perhaps the current commissioner, who probably doesn't really know where he's sitting? Is that a fair assumption?

CHRIS LAMONT: I've been consulted on a range of documents in respect to the bureau and the charter.

The Hon. WES FANG: No overlap?

CHRIS LAMONT: I don't believe so.

The Hon. WES FANG: Co-exist?

CHRIS LAMONT: I think we will continue to provide engagement on a range of issues. I think the requirements on the commission, whether it be retail leasing, all the way through to advocacy to the government of the day, don't change for the commission.

The Hon. WES FANG: So we've basically now have got two organisations that look after small business. Is that, effectively, the way we're going to be looking at it?

CHRIS LAMONT: I think it's really important to actually distinguish between the roles of the commission historically and currently to what is proposed with the bureau.

The Hon. WES FANG: The differences would be?

CHRIS LAMONT: Other than mediation and other than Small Business Month, I don't administer grants. My primary purpose is to either resolve disputes that small businesses may be encountering or to provide policy and advocacy advice and representation to the government of the day.

The Hon. WES FANG: Would it not have been better to perhaps provide you with a bit more clout, funding, and the imprimatur to do the things that the Business Bureau may or may not do? Of course, we don't know what that is, because the Minister hasn't announced the plan. Would that not have perhaps been a better outcome for the taxpayers, given that, in effect, we're now creating another entity?

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: This is a policy question for the Minister, Chair, not for the department.

The CHAIR: Yes. I would suggest that the way you were phrasing the question is trying to elucidate an opinion on a Government policy, and you're asking the witness to propose an alternative to that Government policy. So I would encourage you to—

The Hon. WES FANG: No. I think you've—I'll move on.

The CHAIR: That is how it's being interpreted. If you want to rephrase the question, I'll give you that opportunity. But, the way you're phrasing it at the moment, it is elucidating an opinion, which is out of order.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's all right. I'll take the cover from opposite, the protection racket they're running for the Minister. I'll pass to Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Hogan, I might return back to the JobSaver and microbusiness grants. What's been the default position in response to requests for assistance or reviews from the Department of Customer Service?

EMMA HOGAN: Might direct those questions to Mr Wells and Ms Gibbens, if that's okay, as they represent Service NSW, who are delivering that.

GREG WELLS: I might start again with just reminding you that again we're administering these grants on behalf of policy owners. In this case, I think both of these were owned by Treasury. We're bound by the eligibility rules, the compliance and audit processes and numbers that go with those grants, so we've been following that in terms of a position. Those, Mr Farlow, rules are set at the commencement of the programs, and we work through those things. We're still seeking those actual numbers on the amount of businesses that have been asked to pay back some of that money. We'll try to get that by the end of today. If we can, we'll get that to you.

But, as we said before, what we've done, particularly on microbusiness grants, is—that compliance exercise started. I think it was late last year. We paused that in about March this year to consider some of the hardship and other issues you'd raised. What that's meant is we've removed, for example, businesses that now earn less than $30,000. We've removed businesses that are now insolvent. We've taken hardship into consideration. That's considerably reduced the cohort of the compliance activity, from about 50,000 people to about 22,000 people we're looking at under the guidelines of the grant. But, as we also said this morning, taking customers' situations into account is paramount for all that Service NSW does and, in particular, this as well. There are processes and procedures for appeal through the process. We always speak to customers to understand the situation and work through those issues.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. I'm going back to those rules and guidelines at the beginning. If the small business wasn't eligible at the time for JobSaver, was it then retrospectively assessed and deemed to be eligible for a microbusiness grant?

GREG WELLS: I'd have to take that on notice in terms of the detail, but each of those grants were assessed on merit and as we went.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I've got questions around the Retail Leases Act review. Mr Lamont, these might be for you. In terms of the Retail Leases Act review, how many recommendations were made? Are you aware of that?

CHRIS LAMONT: Thirty-two recommendations.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many would require legislative amendment?

CHRIS LAMONT: Twenty-three of those recommendations.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Always across your brief?

CHRIS LAMONT: Just to be really clear, Mr Farlow—there may not be 23 legislative amendments required, but there were 23 recommendations that would require, if they were to be endorsed, legislative amendments.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are you aware of any time line of legislation to enact those changes at all?

CHRIS LAMONT: No, Mr Farlow, I'm not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Nothing's been communicated to you on that? Have you had any discussions about that at all?

CHRIS LAMONT: I've had discussions with the Minister. The Retail Leases Act review was, I would argue, a comprehensive review. It would need to find a legislative program going forward. The Minister and I have discussed primarily the specifics of those recommendations.

The Hon. WES FANG: I want to return back to Hunter Park. Ms Mather, you indicated that Venues NSW had planned for about $50 million to relocate the Newcastle harness racing track. You mentioned earlier $50 million didn't include the land. Is that correct?

KERRIE MATHER: That's correct.

The Hon. WES FANG: What is included in the $50 million?

KERRIE MATHER: The rebuilding of a new harness racing track. The current harness racing track is smaller than current compliant requirements. I understand that will be the cost of actually redeveloping a new harness racing track.

The Hon. WES FANG: That includes the rebuilding of the track and also facilities located at the track?

KERRIE MATHER: It includes the track and associated facilities that are harness—

The Hon. WES FANG: Car parking, roads, stables, facilities?

KERRIE MATHER: It includes the facilities that Harness Racing actually identified that they would need as part of the redevelopment of a racing track.

The Hon. WES FANG: So that's, effectively, the all-in cost minus the land.

KERRIE MATHER: That's my understanding.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you consult with Harness Racing NSW on that costing?

KERRIE MATHER: The team that were involved in developing the business case did.

The Hon. WES FANG: Was that consultation done by Venues NSW? Or was it done using an external consultant?

KERRIE MATHER: We had a project director that was actually working on that. In fact, he was seconded from Infrastructure NSW. A project team was actually pulled together, of subject matter experts in a range of different disciplines. It included some internal Venues NSW people that could opine on the specific facilities. But, otherwise, there were subject matter experts that were involved in the development of the master plan.

The Hon. WES FANG: And that was all done in house.

KERRIE MATHER: There were specialist experts that were actually brought in as part of the project group.

The Hon. WES FANG: As consultants or on contracts?

KERRIE MATHER: As consultants, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you have any budget allocated towards further planning and delivery of the master plan for Hunter Park?

KERRIE MATHER: What we've done so far is the development of a strategic business case. We've also developed a final business case for a new entertainment centre, which is actually our highest priority on Hunter Park. We don't have any funding allocated for the development of the entertainment centre. We have McDonald Jones Stadium. McDonald Jones Stadium has a relatively new western stand but the eastern stand actually needs some work. We are doing some work on McDonald Jones at the moment to actually ensure that it remains fit for purpose, and that includes upgrading about 9,000-odd seats. We are putting in two new screens. We are putting in some new LEDs and there have been some other small works to keep the facilities upgraded as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Gellibrand, this morning you said that Penrith Paceway was priced at $150 million. Can you give us some insight as to why there's such a difference between what's proposed at Newcastle and what's proposed at Penrith?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Thank you for the question. When I gave the answer this morning it was in relation to relocating the Penrith Paceway in Penrith on a like-for-like basis. We sat down with the Penrith Paceway club and spent time with them to understand what they currently had on site—that is, a registered club, a commercial kitchen, a bar, boardrooms, a racetrack, lights, car parks, other space, member facilities, stabling, lighting—

The Hon. WES FANG: But those things were all included in the Newcastle one, that's why I was quite specific as to ask if it's an all-in price.

TOM GELLIBRAND: I'm not sure if they are but effectively we asked the paceway for a return brief on what they would require and then, once we understood what a like-for-like basis would look like, we then got a cost planner to say how much would it cost to build the registered club, to build the racetrack and to meet current standards for lighting and all of those facilities. We generated an order of cost of $150 million to do that. That's just for the facilities, the like-for-like facilities.

The Hon. WES FANG: And that $150 million included all of the things that you've identified in that previous answer—the commercial kitchen, the stables, car parks and the facilities itself?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Yes, we invited the paceway to actually tell us what they had and we used that as the basis for undertaking the cost plan, which came out as an order of cost of $150 million.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. How much was allocated to land and how much was allocated to the building of facilities?

TOM GELLIBRAND: The $150 million that I just referred to was only in relation to replacing the facilities on a like-for-like basis.

The Hon. WES FANG: So then the land?

TOM GELLIBRAND: The land component, I would have to take that on notice—

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay.

TOM GELLIBRAND: —because the difficulty, I recall, at the time with land was it needed to be within the municipality of Penrith. It needed to be between 10 and 15 hectares. It needed to be largely flood free. The issue with creating a value for it was that we wouldn't have had a "public purpose" for undertaking that position. They are particular words because a public purpose enables the State to advance an acquisition. In the event you can't come to terms, the State, if it has a public purpose, can then advance to a compulsory acquisition. Compulsory acquisition is very different to a commercial arrangement because it usually ends up in court and that becomes a process that's hard to determine in terms of an outcome.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, let's see what Transgrid does in relation to some other things but, anyway, I will move on. Did Infrastructure NSW speak with the Commonwealth Government or the Department of Defence about their intent to dispose of the former air force transmission site at Londonderry?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I've certainly not been privy to any discussions in relation to that.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you think you could take that on notice and provide an answer if it has?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Certainly.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you. Did you know that the Valuer General has valued the land at $14 million and it's six times the size of the current Penrith Paceway?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Are you referring to the Londonderry site?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

TOM GELLIBRAND: I'm not aware of that and I'm actually not aware of the Londonderry site either.

The Hon. WES FANG: In the business case, how much did you price the construction of the new stadium on the paceway site?

TOM GELLIBRAND: The cost estimates for different stadium options were undertaken by the Office of Sport, so that's probably a question better answered by Ms Jones.

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Mr Gellibrand. As part of the process we went through a business case for Penrith Stadium that canvassed a number of options. Those options obviously were individually costed for consideration by the former Government. The business case is actually Cabinet in confidence, so I can't go into any more detail.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. Given that the Minister publicly stated a project cost, which he says precludes the completion of that commitment by the former Government, instead of the details of the Cabinet in confidence, can you provide what the Minister indicated by that $900 million figure?

KAREN JONES: Absolutely. We can take on notice what the scope was that informed that figure.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you. You obviously said in your previous answers around this that there was a range and a scope in relation to the stadium proposals. Are you able to provide the range and scope of the prices and the difference between the proposals? I guess, drawing one part of the conclusion, for perhaps a roof or seating on one side or seating on two sides—how did you come to the range of values that you have assessed for that project?

KAREN JONES: When you are determining various options for business case consideration, you do actually look at various inputs. That might go to the capacity size of a stadium. It might go to the commercial offering and the amount of commercial space you're providing. It might even go to the orientation of the pitch and whether or not the pitch is going to meet international standards. You mentioned a roof. There could be various iterations in terms of roof design, whether it be fully enclosed—whether it just goes the drip line or 100 per cent coverage of seats. There's a whole range of variables that have been included in those various options.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. Wasn't an addendum to the original business case presented to government before the decision to stop pursuing a new stadium on the Penrith Paceway site?

KAREN JONES: In terms of time line, I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Time line, but also whether there was an addendum to the business case.

KAREN JONES: I think it's publicly known that there was an addendum to the business case and that addendum was commissioned by the former Government.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you know if the Penrith Paceway has a commercial partnership with a developer named Capital Corporation?

KAREN JONES: That's not a question for myself. Tom?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I'm happy to answer that question, if you like. As part of our early engagement with Penrith Paceway, they also asked that Capital Corporation attended meetings and they indicated they were in discussions with Capital Corporation about the redevelopment of their site for multi-unit housing.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay.

TOM GELLIBRAND: I'm aware that they exist. I'm not exactly sure of the relationship between the two organisations, but they are obviously working together.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has Infrastructure NSW met with Capital Corporation?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Yes, absolutely. A couple of times.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you believe that Capital Corporation influenced the paceway engagement with government?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I couldn't comment. I'm not sure of any meetings that Capital Corporation may or may not have had with government. I am aware of the ones we had with them but not anything else.

The Hon. WES FANG: You also said that you were in attendance when Capital Corporation—sorry, that Capital Corporation were in attendance when Infrastructure NSW and the paceway were in conversation?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Correct.

The Hon. WES FANG: Was there indication that they influenced the paceway in relation to the engagement that they had with you or your organisation?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I think the best way to portray the meetings that we had with the paceway when Capital Corporation were in attendance was that Capital Corporation were making it clear to us that the paceway was really concerned about the acquisition. They made it clear to us that there was going to be a potential impact on their operations as a paceway, which we were sensitive to, of course. That was the main—

The Hon. WES FANG: But they were engaging with unit builders that may also impact on their—

TOM GELLIBRAND: I think Paceway and the Capital Corporation obviously had a shared commercial interest in terms of that site. We weren't privy to the arrangements between the two.

The Hon. WES FANG: The Minister confirmed that the cost of the new Penrith Stadium and relocating the Penrith Paceway was over $900 million. Even if we account in full for the $150 million, which may be somewhat inflated if we're to look at the relevant Newcastle evidence that we've heard, that leaves about $750 million to build a stadium. That's $30,000 per seat for a 25,000-seat stadium. Is that what the business case costed the new stadium at?

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: Ms Jones has already taken on notice that she would provide the basis on which that figure was informed and a breakdown, as I understand it. The question has already been asked and taken on notice.

KAREN JONES: I agree with that.

The CHAIR: And you have no further current information?

KAREN JONES: No, I do believe that me taking that question on notice previously, in terms of the scope that would inform that cost, would help satisfy the answer to that question.

The Hon. WES FANG: I think we need to push the point because there's—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will you take the specifics of Mr Fang's question on notice as part of that answer?

KAREN JONES: Yes, absolutely.

The Hon. WES FANG: Earlier in evidence today we spoke about Allianz, which was obviously built in close proximity to the Sydney CBD. The costing for that was $19,000 per seat. In effect, you're saying that there was the potential that it could have cost more than 50 per cent more, or $11,000 more per seat, to build a similar stadium in Penrith. Mr Gellibrand, do you think that's a reasonable costing in relation to the current cost of construction—to have a 50 per cent increase in per-seat cost for a smaller stadium built in Penrith, as opposed to here in proximity to the CBD?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I'd definitely like to be as helpful as I possibly can. I'm not privy to the business case, so I won't talk about the business case. But it was clear that the proposition that was held by the Minister for Sport at the time was that he was keen on consideration of a stadium on the paceway site with a capacity in the order of 30,000 people, with covered seating and with enhanced commercial opportunities and community facilities, so that in operation it would be an attractive venue that would attract content from across Sydney. The basis that we were working to was that it would be based on BankWest and beyond. BankWest was going to be the minimum sort of viable product, for want of a better expression, but an enhancement over and above that with a capacity of 30,000. The consideration that we were asked to give was for a tier 1 stadium, effectively, in Penrith.

The other thing to consider is that the escalation since Allianz has been completed is very considerable, and you need to think about that escalation over the time between when SFS was completed and when we would start the construction of the Penrith Stadium. We always assumed that it would be several years of escalation, which would be considerable. In reality, it would have been a lot more than that. If you'd like me to continue, the relocation of the paceway site could have taken anything up to five years to find the site, to complete the design that would satisfy the paceway and to get it approved.

The Hon. WES FANG: It sounds like the shadow Minister might have done a little bit of your homework for you, so she might have helped you out there. Anyway, I will move on. I appreciate the context that you're providing; I just may take a different view as to the impacts. Ms Mather, will Venues NSW operate the upgraded Penrith Stadium?

KERRIE MATHER: Yes, we will.

The Hon. WES FANG: Will you provide an update on the status of the VenuesLive contract to operate Accor Stadium and CommBank Stadium?

KERRIE MATHER: That contract expires on 31 December this year.

The Hon. WES FANG: What is in train to take up the contract after that time?

KERRIE MATHER: There are a number of elements to the services that they provide. A very big part of the staffing at Accor and CommBank is actually in relation to the catering services—catering and food and beverage. There is a tender underway at the moment for food and beverage services, not just at Accor and CommBank but also at Newcastle and Wollongong stadiums as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: If the contract is not being continued, will that mean South Sydney can play home games at Allianz?

KERRIE MATHER: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. WES FANG: Given that there is no contract past 31 December, does that mean South Sydney will now be able to play home games at Allianz Stadium?

KERRIE MATHER: The Rabbitohs have a contract at Accor until 2030, as do the Bulldogs, so nothing actually changes in relation to those arrangements. Perhaps if I just continue with what will happen to the other aspects of the services that are part of that contract, there is also the management of stadium operation services. What we will be doing post-31 December is creating a large number of additional roles in house and in-housing the stadium operation services within Venues NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I might just return to you, Mr Lamont, and then I'll seek to give you an early mark. I'm sure you'll be willing to take that. Have you been consulted by the Government about the implementation of the Small Business charter?

CHRIS LAMONT: Not the implementation but the content of the charter—what it's intending to do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you've been consulted on the content. Have you been consulted about any design as to whether it'll be legislated or introduced by regulation or a Government statement of intent?

CHRIS LAMONT: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, so no discussions on that front. What feedback have you had in terms of the Small Business charter and what it should include?

CHRIS LAMONT: I'm not conducting the consultation process; that's being conducted by Ms Gibbens and Mr Wells. I was consulted as a stakeholder.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Wells and Ms Gibbens, is there anything you'd like to add regarding the Small Business charter?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: Yes, we've started consultation on the Small Business charter. We've been consulting with peak bodies, industry groups and our government agencies and commissioners. That consultation process is ongoing, and we will go through that consultation process and then finalise the document and put it in to Cabinet for approval.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is it considered that that will be introduced by legislation, regulation or a statement of intent, or is there no firm view on that at this stage?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: There's no firm view on that at this stage.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Lamont, I can probably deal with all of the Small Business questions in this part. We had a little bit of a discussion before about the Business Bureau. Is it your view that the Small Business Commission will remain as a standalone, independent organisation after the introduction of the business bureau?

CHRIS LAMONT: Mr Farlow, ultimately that's a question for the Government to decide. But my understanding is that the Small Business Commission will still continue to be an independent statutory agency providing advice to the Minister/government of the day.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Hogan, in terms of the Department of Customer Service and with a Small Business hat on, how many days each week do DCS employees attend the office on average?

EMMA HOGAN: I'd have to take it on notice as an average. We've got 13,000 people and many of them work in frontline services, including Service NSW and our inspectors, so I would have to take it on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you have any ballpark figures? Is it something you track at all?

EMMA HOGAN: It is difficult to track because of the different types of work that we do. If I was to give any kind of breakdown, I would have to take it on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you will take it on notice?

EMMA HOGAN: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is there any directive in terms of staff to return to the office—sort of leading the way for small businesses—at all?

EMMA HOGAN: Directing people who work—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Who work from home to return to office. Have you got any targets for that, in terms of return to office?

EMMA HOGAN: No, we have a flexible work policy and we work to that. The flexible work policy applies, depending on the area you're in and the kind of work that you do. We haven't specified. It depends on the team, it depends on the work, it depends on the type of division that you are in. I am happy to take it on notice and see if I can find anything—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Does that policy take into consideration at all the support for small businesses from being located in an office and turning up to an office every day and the support for offices around you?

EMMA HOGAN: I am not sure of the premise of the question. But what I can say is that the services that we deliver into small businesses, we deliver through Service NSW. And all of the Service NSW staff, they are frontline staff and they are there to deliver those services to that community.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But of course the Department of Customer Service is much broader than Service NSW.

EMMA HOGAN: That is true, but not all of the Department of Customer Service would serve small businesses.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But small business is under your remit in the Department of Customer Service. Wouldn't you be looking to lead from example in terms of having people in the office and supporting small business—you know, the cups of coffee a day, getting lunch and the like?

EMMA HOGAN: I see. Look, we do have a healthy hybrid flexible working policy. It is the same policy today as it was during the last term of government. We haven't made any changes to it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have there been changes that have been made since the pandemic to that policy at all?

EMMA HOGAN: The policy—yes. We have certainly said that people have to be at work some of the time. They have to be in the office at least some of the time, but the amount of time depends on the type of work that they do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You will take that on notice in terms of what the average is?

EMMA HOGAN: If I can find an average that would be sensible, yes, I will take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: How many staff do support small business in your department?

EMMA HOGAN: If we include the Small Business Commissioner as an overall part of the department, I think there is 42.5 there. We have a small business policy team, which I think is around seven or eight. And then we have a number of staff who form part of the Service NSW workforce who service business as well. I couldn't give you a specific number.

The Hon. WES FANG: If we exclude the commissioner's staff, because they're a statutory officer, how many do you have?

EMMA HOGAN: I would have to take it on notice because a lot of them work in Service NSW, so they might perform multiple functions.

GREG WELLS: Again, Mr Fang, it is hard to specify that as dedicated to small business. Service NSW at the moment provides a lot of support to businesses generally, not just small. The support that we provide for businesses are not just for businesses; they are individuals, in some instances—for example, our digital teams that support vouchers. There's a lot of business—

The Hon. WES FANG: They'd be quite freed up now, wouldn't they, given that the Government has cut a lot of the vouchers?

GREG WELLS: There are a number of new vouchers and refreshing of vouchers on foot. But, yes, also—

The Hon. WES FANG: That is interesting. Do tell, Mr Wells.

GREG WELLS: These have been announced, and we are working on Toll Relief and Active Kids and Creative Kids and those other things. To my point before, some of those teams are supporting a lot more than small business, but they are working in conjunction in Service NSW. As Ms Gibbens said before, we're the delivery arm for that.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, I'm sure you can use a ouija board or something and come up with a sort of a vibe of a figure, and maybe provide that on notice.

GREG WELLS: We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think we are now in a position to excuse the witnesses from the Small Business Commission and from the Department of Customer Service.

The CHAIR: I wish you the best of luck with your ouija board.

The Hon. WES FANG: You might also want to consult it for the supplementary estimates, too.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Before Ms Hogan leaves—sorry, just one last question. How many representations were received from businesses or business groups asking for assistance or reviews from the Department of Customer Service when asked to repay the money from the micro-business grants?

EMMA HOGAN: That would be a question for Mr Wells.

GREG WELLS: We will try to come back on notice.

(Greg Wells, Cassandra Gibbens, Chris Lamont and Emma Hogan withdrew.)

The CHAIR: Do you want me to invite the remaining witnesses up?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Come on down. You're the next contestant on "The Question is Right". That is anyone who has been sworn in, who would like to take their place at the table. Mr La Posta, I might turn to you. We have already discussed the Multicultural NSW staffing profile. In terms of the budget for Multicultural NSW, what is your overall budget in the 2023-24 financial year?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It is—I was just looking at that one a second ago.

The Hon. WES FANG: It should be fresh in your memory, Mr La Posta.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It is $76.9 million. Do you want a breakdown?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, if you could break it down into grants-related, employee-related, other, depreciation and amortisation expenses, I would be very grateful.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, it would be my pleasure. The overall budget is $76.9 million, of which $76.4 million is for operating expenses, so I assume the other $500,000 is capex. Some $45.3 million is for grant-related expenses, $25.9 million is for the hard-working Multicultural NSW team—sorry, that also includes our interpreters and translators as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: In the 105?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's 1,106, Mr Fang. Some $4.6 million is also for other operating expenses—so lease, yadda yadda yadda yadda. And $0.6 million is for the depreciation and amortisation.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And you briefly remarked—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The capital—$0.5 million is for capital expenditure and $0.2 million is for the digitisation of the Multicultural NSW language interpreting service to improve accessibility in remote areas. And $0.3 million is for the purchase of computer software and property and plant equipment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Excellent. Thank you very much, Mr La Posta. You are right across your brief.

The Hon. WES FANG: Shame the Minister's not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to that capital expenditure, could you provide us a breakdown of what that is for—that half a million dollars?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, $0.2 million is for the digitisation of Multicultural NSW—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, that $0.2 million sits under the $0.5 million.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: —and $0.3 million is for the purchase of computers and so on. That will be things like—do you want me to break it down further than that?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, that is fine. Sorry for misunderstanding. That was the breakdown of the $0.5 million. The former Government committed $28 million over two years to Multicultural NSW. Were any unallocated funds from the $14 million in 2022-23 rolled over into this year's budget?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That is an excellent question. I would need to double-check the specifics on that because there were a couple of things that happened in the change. Yes, there was a carry-forward from 2022-23 into 2023-24. I am just not sure of the specifics on that, because that also included a couple of the election commitments of the former Government, Mr Farlow. What we didn't want was the former Liberal-Nationals Government making commitments to community X that we—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's a shame.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: —might have been 80 per cent through their proposal or project. We wanted them to have the opportunity to be able to finish that, so we've given them 12 months to sort of land some of those things.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You will take that on notice in terms of the substance of that?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: In terms of the specifics on the $28 million commitment—the $14 million a year and what was carried forward—I am happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Similarly, was the $14 million meant for this year's budget included in Multicultural NSW's $76.4 million operating expenses?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, it was.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Nothing has been redirected?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The Minister fought for that. There were no cuts to any of our frontline service delivery from last year to this year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That is good to hear. Mr La Posta, moving to your $47.8 million and the multicultural communities support package, which is meant to comprise support for community language schools, the creation of a Multicultural Capital Partnership Fund, the establishment of the Premier's Prevention Panel on Racism and Extremism and a multicultural youth network platform, can you provide the breakdown of this funding by each program in the package?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Okay. The establishment of the Faith Affairs Council will be sourced within—you asked before around the responsibility of existing resources. It is existing resources that need to manage the secretariat functions of the Faith Affairs Council. Funding to improve safety and security of religious institutions is a $15 million package to be administered by existing staffing. The creation of a multicultural youth network is to be fulfilled by existing staffing. The delivery of the Multicultural Capital Partnership Fund—that's in and out. That's $30 million directly to communities to be managed by the existing staffing levels. Funding for multicultural communities to deliver festivals and events is to be funded through the existing multicultural grants team.

The funding for the small capital works to upgrade and improve existing facilities is, again, funded through our existing grants team, with some support from some of the other business units. The rebranding of the three streets in Harris Park is largely completed and will be announced soon. Also, we play a supportive role on three other election commitments that you mentioned, but they don't sit under our purview directly—with the Department of Communities and Justice to establish the multicultural domestic violence centre hub in Western Sydney, and the Department of Customer Service around the inclusion of government communication documents. As you mentioned before, the Premier's panel on racism and extremism, I will be a member of that panel. But that is the responsibility of the Premier's Department, not Multicultural NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you have any insight as to when that will be established?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That would be a question for the Premier's Department. I can't answer that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What about the multicultural youth network? When can we expect to see that established?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: In the coming months. Respectfully, we're in a fluid situation with what's happening globally. We need to prioritise support to our communities around cohesion and community relations. I can assure you that the Minister's office is very enthusiastic for us to fulfil all of our election commitments. I just need to balance that with the ongoing wellbeing of our staff.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you sure you'd use the word "enthusiastic"?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With the Premier's prevention panel on racism and extremism, it appears to be a panel that blends both the COMPACT committee and the Faith Affairs Council. Couldn't these groups just meet together when required? What's the purpose of the entirely new group being created?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's not really a question for me to answer, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the multicultural youth network, how many members will that group be comprised of?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's a good question. We're still building through the specifics on it, but what we do want is representation from young people right across the State. I don't want it to be Sydney-centric. Of course, there's a high—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Fang is already putting his hand up.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Very good. But, Mr Fang, you need to be under the age of 24.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's a shame. You're just slightly out.

The Hon. WES FANG: Slightly out, yes.

The CHAIR: Mental age.

The Hon. WES FANG: Chair, that's a bit harsh.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will members of the panel be appointed for a specific period of time?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The multicultural youth network or the panel—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The multicultural youth network.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We're still building the specifics in terms of the terms of reference. My aspiration, Mr Farlow—and you'd know this—is to get the young leaders from the community, empower them now, build them into our network and get them to be the leaders of the Coptic community tomorrow or the Korean community or the Afghan community. I want them to be as sticky and see as much value in our organisation as possible. I don't want it to be a churn-and-burn exercise where we spend time building capability, capacity and resilience in these young people and then never see them again. My intention will be—

The Hon. WES FANG: How about you get the average kids?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sorry, Mr Fang?

The Hon. WES FANG: How about you get the average kids—not the leaders but the average kids? I think this is part of the problem. Don't we always get the vocal people and get their views, as opposed to the actual views of the mainstream group?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I like it. I think it's a good idea. What we'll try and do—and the Chair asked this question before—through the regional community networks is find spheres of influence. Some of the most influential kids are some of the most problematic kids that we, as a government, navigate. The quicker we can bring them in the tent and give them a sense of empowerment around shaping government decision-making, the better they'll feel. I don't disagree with your sentiment one bit.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I might turn to some of the funding commitments that have been made, and you outlined them before. The $3.75 million commitment for the establishment of the Hindu cultural education centre in Sydney's north-west, is there a site or multiple sites that have been determined as of yet?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Good question. There's two parts to the funding for that project. Right now, the Hindu council is going through a feasibility and phasing exercise. There is a commitment—just let me double-check—of $250,000 from the Government to develop a business case for establishing a Hindu cultural and education centre in Sydney. That's something that we're finalising an agreement with them on. Once that's done—I don't want to pre-empt that outcome—that will then have, hopefully, the site and the associated educational partners, or whoever, that are a part of that process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that a jointly funded project? Is there a co-commitment requirement?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's a good question. It is going to depend on what their vision for that precinct is, because it would be difficult to build something in its entirety for—2.5, was it?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think 3.75.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sorry, 3.75, but 3.5 for the establishment of the—3.5 is for the capital; 250 is for the feasibility.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: For the business case.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: My thinking would be, for $3.5 million, you would either need to secure an existing site, have a university partner or have a co-contribution from community or one of the religious entities to help them bring that to life.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are there any proposals on foot in that regard, from a university or the like? Is this all part of the business case?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's part of the business case for establishing what the precinct could and should look like. To be honest, that's really a matter for the community. We're just an enabler. We just want to make sure that taxpayer funding is acquitted as promptly and as ethically, in line with our best practice guidelines, as possible. Then it's really up to the community in terms of what their vision is for that facility.

The Hon. WES FANG: And if the Minister signs a disclosure or not, I guess.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Just to that point, I'm happy to loop back on that. The Minister advises that, with respect to the—

The Hon. WES FANG: The Minister advises, you're saying?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That he's neither a parishioner or on the parish committee of either of the churches mentioned. He has attended both on a number of occasions for events such as funerals and weddings, as well as major events like Orthodox Easter in his capacity as a member of Parliament and now the Minister. In my opinion, if that is the extent of his involvement with the two projects associated, I would not see that he would have any conflict to declare. Beyond that, it's a question for the Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is that for you to determine though? Is that not for, perhaps, the Premier's Department to make that determination?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Because he's Greek and he goes to Greek churches, but he's not on the board and he has not got any formal position, he has a requirement to declare because he's Greek?

The Hon. WES FANG: No. What I'm asking is that, if he has attended as a parishioner previously—I'm using other examples not so much in this jurisdiction but Federal, for example. A sports Minister who had a membership extended to her lost her ministerial position because of not disclosing a gifted membership to a club. The extent to which the Minister attends or does not attend a church, the fact that he does attend—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order: I think we're going down a very dangerous line of questioning. I have been quite patient in regards to this particular point all day.

The Hon. WES FANG: You've been sleeping for most of the day, Greg.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: No, I haven't, actually. I think the witness has provided a response from a communication.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm teasing out the response from the Minister.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It has been very clear.

The Hon. WES FANG: Nothing is clear from that Minister.

The CHAIR: Let me hear the point of order.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: The answer has been prosecuted. You have got the answer that you were seeking. You might not like it, but you've received it.

The Hon. WES FANG: And now I'm teasing it out.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Now you're going on an investigative exercise.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's kind of what estimates is, isn't it?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I go back to if you have got a question, put it and let it be answered. That's the way we proceed, not to have this discursive discussion and editorialising and then saying, "What's your view?" That's not the way we should conduct these hearings.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm sorry, Mr Donnelly. I should keep my questions concise. I'll follow the lead of your good self.

The CHAIR: In terms of the point of order, it's up to the member to decide how they want to question—whether they want to take the scenic route or the short route. I think there was a question from Mr Fang that wasn't

answered in terms of if it is in your capacity to actually make the determination as to whether the Minister needs to make that disclosure or not, or is that in the hands of Premier and Cabinet to make that decision?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Through you, Chair, if it's limited to a member of Parliament or a Minister—which is the advice that has been provided to me by the Minister—if he's either a member of Parliament and he's a parishioner, he has no official responsibility on either of the groups, nor does he have a membership of the groups, then I would not perceive there to be a requirement to declare anything. To be frank, this question is best directed at the Minister. The Minister's faith and the Minister's cultural ancestry are a matter for the Minister. It's not a matter for his team.

The CHAIR: My point is you don't have a role in making that determination, do you, in your position? You don't have a role in saying to the Minister, "I think you should declare this", or, "I think you should step away from the process"?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No, and if it came to light that he did have responsibilities or whatever, then I think there would be relevance to the line of questioning. But, beyond that, I'm not sure if there is anything else I can add.

The Hon. WES FANG: What I'm trying to tease out, if you don't mind, Chair—

The CHAIR: I'm just trying to help you.

The Hon. WES FANG: And you were very helpful. Thank you, Chair. We're talking about the Minister here, but disclosure doesn't just relate to the Minister, does it? It may relate to friends, family or close business associates. There are any number of issues that could exist in this space. Now, the Minister has been clear that he may not, but we don't know, given that he has attended and he does attend, and he talked about some members—

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order: The Hon. Wes Fang is seeking to ask a question and answer it by making a whole series of imputations. My point of order is related to two things. Firstly, the procedural fairness resolution No. 13—seeking evidence that may damage the reputation of a third party. Secondly, I don't think this is a matter over which this particular witness should be questioned. It doesn't come within his purview.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's perhaps what I was getting to. The witness professed a view about the Minister, but what I was saying is it is not up to the witness to provide—

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: The witness therefore should not be questioned about matters over which he has no responsibility.

The CHAIR: The witness already indicated it is not within his purview, and it is probably best to redirect it to the Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm happy to move on.

The CHAIR: In the supplementary hearings, which we're all looking forward to, I'm sure that will be a feature.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I won't take a point of order on that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So, Mr La Posta, I will move back to—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Are we going to get out early?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We won't keep you to the end, Joe. We'll move back to the Hindu cultural and education centre. In terms of that funding, is that coming from the multicultural capital partnership fund?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It is.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'll move on to the $2.75 million that was allocated for the Glenwood Sikh centre—gurdwara. Is that similarly broken up into a business case cost and a capital delivery cost?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's a little bit clearer because they have their site. As you said, that's at the Glenwood Gurdwara. What they are trying to do is just navigate the phasing around how they want to deliver that project, and I was out there the other day with the amazing volunteers that are a part of the gurdwara, the other day, seeing and being presented their vision on that. They've got their site. They own their site outright and they're just looking at what elements they deliver now and what the sequencing is of the phasing. My hope is, through them, that they can do some internal refurbishments and deliver on the first part of that without requiring council

approval, but that's ultimately a matter for Blacktown City Council, and then the second part will need to go through council approval, so it will be a project that, hopefully, we'll be dealing with towards this 2023-27 period.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that the total cost of the project or is it jointly funded?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It is jointly funded. They are fundraising. They have got a future fund or seeking fund or volunteer funds—all those things—and they're still fundraising for it at the moment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And is that coming out of the multicultural capital partnership fund as well?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Correct.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'll leave you alone for a moment, Mr La Posta. I'm going to move to Ms Jones. Ms Jones, we know about the small community grants program that Labor candidates had during the lead-up to the election, and obviously there have been a lot of questions asked by us in the House. We've got some more questions around that. In relation to some of the projects that were promised by Labor candidates, have you been asked to do any work on the costing?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order: As I understand from the exchanges in the House, the Hon. John Graham is the Minister responsible for that program and, in fact, all aspects associated with it. That being the case, unless I misunderstand, Ms Jones does not report to or have direct remit back to the Hon. John Graham. I don't see it as appropriate to be raising questions about these small grants under a program that's basically supervised by the Hon. John Graham.

The CHAIR: Are there any comments on the point of order?

The Hon. WES FANG: I think I'm trying to find that very issue out by asking the questions as to what work the department has done around some of the grants. I know a lot of the sporting grants will likely have to be administered by Ms Jones' department. I wonder if there has been any work done in relation to the program up to now.

The CHAIR: Are you framing it to ask specifically after the sporting grants?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

The CHAIR: For ones related to sport, I will allow that line of questioning.

KAREN JONES: Around all of that, can I ask you to repeat the question? Small community grants?

The Hon. WES FANG: Sure. In the lead-up to the election, Labor had a bit of what I'll call a slush fund, and I'll probably hear a point of order from over there—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The CHAIR: I know what you are going to say. I ask the member to keep the arguments in his question to a minimum, if any at all.

The Hon. WES FANG: It was a grants program that was administered by ALP head office that nobody else knew about until after the election, which provided $400,000 to each candidate. In relation to the unannounced, uncosted program that—

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: You guys are so soft, honestly. Just let me ask the question.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: The honourable member is clearly flouting the previous ruling. The question is filled with argument and invective and he ought to be called to order and put a proper question if he wants one answered.

The CHAIR: Once again, the question should not contain argument. You've insinuated that it wasn't costed when it went through the Parliamentary Budget Office. That implies that it was costed, so I would ask that you get to the point of the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: The grants programs that the Labor candidates were able to provide to their electorates, of $400,000 per candidate, included some sporting projects. Has your office been asked to do any work around the delivery of those programs?

KAREN JONES: The answer to your question is no. That program is not administered by the Office of Sport.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. My understanding is that commitments that were made to those organisations that were to receive grants under that program from Labor candidates were given advice that those projects would be funded sooner rather than later. Yet I imagine that sports grants would have to be done by your office, or are they being done by the department of Premier through the Special Minister of State?

KAREN JONES: Not necessarily. The Office of Sport—whilst our remit is sport and recreation across the State, we are not the sole administrator of grants that go to sporting organisations. You can have a look at Regional NSW, for instance, that runs its own programs that sometimes target community sporting organisations. You can also look at emergency services, particularly in relation to surf club facilities. So I can't answer your question. I'm sorry; it's not something that's administered by the Office of Sport.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. In relation to an organisation that received a commitment from a Labor candidate in relation to this grants program where the Minister who is responsible, the Special Minister of State, has now said that those programs are all undergoing assessment and business cases and where there was, perhaps, a conflict of interest that was disclosed but not assessed—that's all happening now. Where those organisations may have been in the running for grants through your department previously but had received an indication that they would receive the funding through this other program from the candidate, should Labor win—and Labor have obviously won—and now they are expecting that grant, where they miss out, what will be the process in relation to their grant status if the program that they alternately could have applied for has closed?

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: There is a series of hypotheticals there.

The Hon. WES FANG: It actually is pointed to two—

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: I listened intently to the question and I don't think there was actually a question in there that was comprehensible and could be answered.

The Hon. WES FANG: Chair, I am going to make this point: The questions that I'm asking relate to organisations that were in the running for other grants, which then ceased completing their applications because they were told that they would receive money under the other program. That money hasn't flowed yet, and now the Minister has indicated that there are other assessment processes in place for it, so—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I was lost after the first 10 minutes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Let's just call it a Donnelly question, shall we? Where they were in the running for another program, they believed that they would receive money under this program but have now not received it. What is the department going to do in relation to those sporting organisations? Ms Jones, we already know—

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: To the point of order: If there is a specific organisation then the honourable member should name it and ask a question about it.

The Hon. WES FANG: I haven't got permission to name the organisation. I've got a generalised issue. They don't want to be singled out by the Minister for retribution, because we all know that the Minister—

The CHAIR: That would never happen, would it?

The Hon. WES FANG: No, of course not.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I have another point of order.

The CHAIR: The question is very longwinded. Ms Jones, if you can understand it and provide an answer, I encourage you to.

The Hon. WES FANG: I can get a whiteboard and draw it for you, if you like.

KAREN JONES: I understand.

The CHAIR: I'm having flashbacks to "Who's on first".

KAREN JONES: To assist the Committee, I do understand the question; however, it is very difficult to answer without a specific example or a specific reference point, so I'm more than happy to assist the Committee through questions on notice should Mr Fang want to provide that information.

The Hon. WES FANG: We may do that.

The CHAIR: That might be a better avenue.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, as has been mentioned a few times today, in terms of the Israel-Palestine conflict and the work being undertaken by your department, and the work that you're supporting, has the COMPLAN committee met to discuss concerns about that issue?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many times has the committee met in recent weeks?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Multicultural NSW activated the New South Wales Community Resilience and Response Plan, COMPLAN, under its response phase arrangements on Monday the ninth, which was 24 hours—a pretty good response; well done, team—and the first business day following the events overseas. COMPLAN includes specific measures to counter divisive influences, limit harmful consequences and provide support and relief for affected persons and communities. We issued an urgent COMPLAN advisory notice to member agencies on Monday the ninth to monitor the situation and provide information to aid Multicultural NSW and the Minister in calling for calm and cohesion.

We then held an extraordinary meeting of COMPLAN on Friday morning, 13 October, which was attended by senior government officials, including the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the Premier's Department. We circulated resources to our government colleagues as well as to the community networks to support impacted communities, including mental health services, information on reporting vilification and hate crimes, and other resources. As I mentioned before, we've also placed 100 community calls to community and religious leaders, as well as working with migrant resource centres, settlement service providers and others to understand the community sentiment, and offer support and provide assistance where possible.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, are you aware of any threats to synagogues across Sydney and New South Wales since COMPLAN was set up on this issue?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, what I would say is that the specifics of that question are really a matter for the police, but I don't shy away. The first thing I would like to do is condemn any violence or hateful behaviour. To be frank, any form of violence or hateful behaviour or racist behaviour is abhorrent and has no place in an Australian and New South Wales society. The second thing I am acutely aware of is understanding that there is a sentiment around rising antisemitism and also rising Islamophobia. My agency continues to work closely with Anti-Discrimination NSW and the New South Wales police in the engagement of hate crime units of the New South Wales police, and I pass on my appreciation to colleagues working incredibly tirelessly in that space, assisting commissioners and deputy commissioners of which I share a number of standing and extraordinary committees at the moment, for the work that they're doing to try to keep lines of communication open, continue to maintain trust and also reassure the community wherever possible.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, I know we've spent quite a bit of time in terms of the security for religious institutions and that discussion. Has any emergency funding been made available to synagogues or schools or mosques at this time, or has any been sought?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm aware of emergency funding provided by the Commonwealth. With respect to New South Wales, that would be probably a matter best directed for the police because I know that there is obviously a cost to their work undertaking the Operation Shelter arrangement, and I also obviously know through our work—and you touched on this before around the work on safety and security in places of worship—that there is a number of groups being stood up at the moment. So, in terms of an overarching package for New South Wales to support the community, it's a matter best for the police, but certainly it is front of mind for myself and a number of other colleagues who are trying to support the community in this space.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I might come back to a round of questions for Ms Jones. What was the total allocated under the New South Wales Government's Outdoor Active Recreation Marketing Support Grant Program?

KAREN JONES: That was some time ago now. I'll have to take that on notice unless my team can find out for me. I want to say it was $1.2 million, but I'll correct that figure if it's incorrect.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Were all of those funds expended?

KAREN JONES: I'd have to take that on notice. That program was actually run post-COVID, so a couple of years ago now.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, if you could take on in terms of whether it was all expended and, if not, what was the total amount that was left undeployed. What was the total funding allocated to the Cross Border Sport Fund?

KAREN JONES: Again, that was done a number of years ago under the former Government. Again I'd have to take that on notice. It was also on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I might ask you similarly to take on notice, if there were any funds that weren't fully expended, what the amount of those were. Ms Jones, what was the total funding allocated to the Centre of Excellence Round 1 funding round?

KAREN JONES: Round 1?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes.

KAREN JONES: Again, I'll take that on notice, but I will have that figure to me shortly, I'm sure.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Were those funds fully deployed?

KAREN JONES: No. I know, for instance in that one, that was not the case, but I think in terms of underspends from the other grant programs that you mentioned, if there were underspends in the outdoor recreation marketing fund and also in the cross border fund, they were also carried forward to assist in the Community Sport Recovery Package in response to COVID-19 under the former Government, so any underspends of grant programs around the pandemic were repurposed to go back into community sport to assist them with pandemic recovery.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Centre of Excellence program, as you indicated, there was an amount that was underspent. I believe it might have been around $9.85 million. Were those funds redirected at all?

KAREN JONES: I think you will find it under the Centre of Excellence Fund Round 1 underspend; it was then rolled into Round 2, carried forward into Round 2.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of that, were they reallocated at all?

KAREN JONES: I will have to take that on notice in terms of the actual expenditure in Round 2.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Centre of Excellence program, which sporting organisations interacted with the Office of Sport around the Centre of Excellence program before it was cut by the Government?

KAREN JONES: What do you mean by "interacted"?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Expressed interest in continuing or applying for—

KAREN JONES: I can say well and truly both rounds of the Centre of Excellence program were oversubscribed, so there was interest in the Centre of Excellence program from a variety of sports. Unfortunately, there are limited funds and there are also pretty strict criteria around making sure that the projects that were funded met the Government outcomes of the time.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Could you provide us, on notice, which organisations had applied for those grants or those funds under the Centre of Excellence program that weren't successful?

KAREN JONES: Yes, absolutely. I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much. Mr Fang?

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm going to hold my questions over for that, so if you've got further questions, then I'm happy for you to continue.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I do. There are lots. With respect to the Local Sport—

KAREN JONES: Defib program—it's easier to say.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Defib is much easier to say than defibrillator—which I can do now, but couldn't before. How many lives have been saved by using an automated external defibrillator at a sporting event in New South Wales in the past year?

KAREN JONES: We don't actually keep statistics in relation to how many lives were saved. I can absolutely provide the Committee with how many were successful as part of that program, but then the actual use of those defibrillators in emergency situations or medical situations at community sport events is something that's not reported back to the Office of Sport.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're able to take on notice how much of the $2 million allocated over the four years is still available through the program?

KAREN JONES: Again, I think you'll find that it's all been—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's all gone?

KAREN JONES: All been allocated, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, so all $2 million has been allocated. As at yesterday, the website states that the program opened on 29 November 2022 and closes on 19 November 2023. Is there any view of extending the program at all?

KAREN JONES: There is another round of that program that will be opened this financial year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How much is allocated for that round?

KAREN JONES: I will find that out for you. I'll come back to you. Hang on, it's coming right now—$500,000.

The Hon. WES FANG: You only needed one note. The Minister needed about 20. You've done well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to Active Kids, over 1.3 million vouchers have been created so far in 2023. How many of these vouchers were created before 30 June 2023, when the vouchers were still worth $100?

KAREN JONES: Let me just pull up my note for you, in terms of all the statistics. I am getting there. Ever since the program started, back in January 2018, the total number of vouchers created was 7.16 million and the total number of vouchers redeemed was 5.73 million. So the total value of the vouchers redeemed since the program commenced was $554 million, roughly.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But in terms of the 1.3 million vouchers created so far in 2023, do you have information on how many of these vouchers were created before 30 June 2023, when they were still $100?

KAREN JONES: I would have to get back to you on that one.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, if you could take that on notice, that would be great.

KAREN JONES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And if you could also take on notice how many have been created at the reduced $50 value?

KAREN JONES: Yes, I can provide that figure for you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What has the Office of Sport done to advise families of the decision to introduce means testing ahead of its implementation in 2024?

KAREN JONES: We're working with our colleagues at Service NSW, who will be taking over the administration of the new program once it is means tested in February next year. As part of that transition, there is communication material currently being developed and a communications plan currently being developed about how to disseminate information not just to families around the means testing of the program but also the onboarding of providers for the program as well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you undertaken any analysis on the potential impact of withdrawing Active Kids support for over 750,000 children?

KAREN JONES: The Active Kids program, as it stood previously, or currently, was independently evaluated by SPRINTER Group of Sydney University. That information is publicly available, and that actually outlined the costs and the benefits of the Active Kids program. Evaluation of the take-up under the means testing is yet to be seen, until the program actually runs and then, of course, is evaluated after it's been started.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So there was no analysis that was done?

KAREN JONES: There was analysis done, obviously, for the Government's consideration around the impact of means testing the program—in particular, the number of children that would be eligible and the number of families that would be eligible.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Did it undertake any assessment as to the impact on certain sports or the like, or the impact on sport participation in New South Wales?

KAREN JONES: I think information around that was provided, again, for consideration. But, again, that information is—you could easily draw that information out from our website. On our website we have a dashboard that actually outlines the number of vouchers created by location and also the number of vouchers used in various sports.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But does that information outline how many children you expect to withdraw from sport as a result of not being eligible for Active Kids?

KAREN JONES: Not necessarily, because it all depends on the eligibility of families under family tax benefit A.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you done any analysis as to how many children will withdraw from sport as a result of the changes to the Active Kids voucher system?

KAREN JONES: I don't think we can make that conclusion until such time as the voucher program, in its amended form, has taken shape or has been implemented.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. Mr Fang?

The Hon. WES FANG: I think I'm pretty well done. How about you, Mr Farlow?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I've got more to go.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm happy if you want to continue with your questions.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. Thank you. Ms Jones, I'll continue on with you and I'll save the last for Mr La Posta, just to make sure it is worth it for him to stay until 5.15.

The Hon. WES FANG: I might give you some for him as well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Jones, the 2023 budget allocated $843 million or thereabouts in expenses; however, total expenses excluding losses appear in the budget papers as $546,548,000. What is the reason for this discrepancy?

KAREN JONES: You're talking about the differences between the Office of Sport budget this year and the previous year?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes.

KAREN JONES: If you'd like, I can run you through our figures. For the Office of Sport for this financial year, our recurrent expenditure budget is $594.45 million and there is a capital expenditure budget of $11.8 million. Of that recurrent budget, operating expenses for the Office of Sport is $116.9 million and the balance is then made up of grant expenses, which is $477.6 million. The reason why grant expenses is so large is because, as I mentioned earlier on in my evidence, the Office of Sport is administering hundreds of sport infrastructure projects across the State, and they do take quite some time to construct, and so those grant moneys get carried forward, year on year, until the project is completed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In the 2023-24 budget, employee-related operating expenses account for $61.097 million. What is the reason for the increase of nearly $9.67 million on last year's budget when it comes to employee-related operating expenses?

KAREN JONES: Sorry, can you run those figures past me again?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes. In the 2023-24 budget, employee-related operating expenses account for $61.097 million. What is the reason for the increase of nearly $9.67 million from the last year's budget?

The Hon. WES FANG: A unionised workforce.

KAREN JONES: There definitely hasn't been an increase in our workforce over that time, so I can say that. I think everybody else has given their workforce figures today, so I'll give you mine. At the Office of Sport we have around 400 FTE and 150 casuals, and—

The Hon. WES FANG: Why does your Minister hate multiculturalism?

KAREN JONES: —those numbers have remained steady over the course of the last few years. That discrepancy, I would have to get back to you in terms of what the difference is there.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Jones, the operating statement for the Office of Sport contained in *Budget Paper No. 02* shows $64,502,000 budgeted for "Other operating expenses" but only $58,304,000 expended. What are considered other operating expenses, and was there a reason for an underspend in the last financial year?

KAREN JONES: I can't give a reason for the underspend. Again, I'd have to come back to you on that. But other operating expenses, of course, with the Office of Sport we have not just our office-based staff but we also have our 10 sport and recreation centres and our Olympic venues, and those frontline service offerings that we have also incur operating expenses around those, so I'd imagine that that would be the difference. But again, I'm happy to provide more detail.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you.

KAREN JONES: If it does assist, can I correct the record on a couple of matters, as well, before you then move on?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You can. I want to leave Mr La Posta until the very end, so yes.

KAREN JONES: If I can start with earlier this morning in my evidence we were talking about the number of applications that were received in terms of the Venues NSW board recruitment. In my evidence I said there were around 90, 95-odd. I stand corrected. That figure has come through to me now at 125. That's just a correction, for that one.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's a lot for when the job was already stitched up.

KAREN JONES: There were three jobs—more than three jobs, actually, that were advertised. As I mentioned before, there was the chair, the deputy chair and also board positions, so that was the total figure.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you have the shortlist number, by any chance?

KAREN JONES: The shortlist number? I'd have to get back to you on that one.

The Hon. WES FANG: If you could take that on notice, that'd be great.

KAREN JONES: Sure. In terms also of the issues around Dubbo that you've mentioned, I've got some information on that for you. Again, I do stand corrected because I keep on getting reinforced by my staff back at the Office of Sport, who are very diligent. The scope has not changed. Contrary to what I mentioned previously, the scope has not changed on that project. However, the breakdown of funds—the Regional Sport Infrastructure Fund from the Office of Sport is $9.3 million. The Drought Stimulus Package from Regional NSW was $10 million. There was also an additional $23.3 million that came from Regional NSW in February 2023. PCYC have also committed $4 million to the project and another $2 million from the sale of the existing PCYC site in Dubbo. That brings the total project to $48.6 million. The completion date for that project is currently estimated to be in early 2025. The current status—as I mentioned before, the scope of work has not changed.

The tender documents are planned for a November release. They are for the whole project, which include early works and also the indoor courts. In terms of consultation, the Dubbo sports council has been consulted in an ongoing basis. Their PCG met directly with Dubbo Basketball and Dubbo Netball associations on 31 May this year to present design and to discuss feedback of design and a preliminary discussion around business-as-usual operations upon completion of the project.

The Hon. WES FANG: The expenditure this financial year is budgeted to be?

KAREN JONES: I'd have to look at the actual contract around that to determine what milestones are due.

The Hon. WES FANG: But we're talking 2025 for a delivery?

KAREN JONES: Correct. It says "early 2025" in my notes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta—NSW Settlement Strategy. In the settlement strategy there were, of course, 100 action items that were to be completed, several that were planned to have been completed by 30 June 2023. Were all those that were planned to be completed by 30 June 2023 completed?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Can I take the specifics on that on notice, Mr Farlow? I only say that because one of the challenges with the change in government has been different departments, different remits, different names, all of those things. So we've had to go through a whole sort of refresh exercise around identifying who now these previous targets under the former Government now sit with in the new Government. I think we're just about at the bottom of that now. I note there are a couple of other minor modifications in terms of machinery-of-government changes being rolled out in the months ahead. So, if you're okay, Mr Farlow, I'll take the specifics of that on notice. But I know the team—a shout-out to our incredibly diligent settlement team for the work they've done influencing right across government. I know that they will have either been on track, or they would've flagged it with me, otherwise. But I can take the specifics on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr La Posta. Mr La Posta, there was an updated version of the settlement strategy that was published on the Multicultural NSW website in September. Apart from the omission of the previous Minister's message, were there any other revisions to that strategy?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, there was. I communicated this to—the strategy was updated in August 2023 to capture the revised action items which were added by departments and also some of the changes in government department responsibilities from the original 2023 February version. When we did this, we also had

to update the change in government representative. Certainly nothing personal; no offence intended. It's just a fact of the political change since March.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will there be any readjustments to the time frames in terms of the delivery items because of the changes in the machinery of government and the like?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'll get back to you on the specifics on that, only because we got a lot of work to do, Mr Farlow, on the strategy, and sometimes these strategies—they're super-important, but the priorities of the team, for example, for the last two or three weeks have been very much focused on other parts of the community, particularly new and emerging communities that might've experienced trauma or grief from home countries, that have recently settled here. What's happening overseas is really triggering for them. Let me just reconnect with the team and get an update on that and take the specifics on notice for you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr La Posta. With 13 seconds left, I think we can wrap up.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'll be kind. It's my nature. It's how I roll.

The CHAIR: I throw to Mr Donnelly for Government questions.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Thank you, Chair. Can I thank the witnesses for very comprehensive and thorough evidence this afternoon. I've just got two questions to Ms Jones. I know colleagues to my left might have further questions, but I've just got two. This relates back to evidence earlier today. Were you advised prior to the Government making a decision about the Moore Park Golf Course lease?

KAREN JONES: Yes, I was advised, in my capacity as the chief executive of the Office of Sport, with Golf NSW being a key stakeholder. I was advised that there was an announcement pending.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did they tell you what that announcement was?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Secondly, regarding individual leases for sport facilities more generally, would you expect to be consulted regarding decisions around each individual lease?

KAREN JONES: No, I would not.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: As a follow-up to that, Ms Jones, would you have been expected to be consulted around individual leases under the arrangements with the former Government? Has anything changed there?

KAREN JONES: No, I would not. It's consistent across both.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Thank you. Mr La Posta, earlier on, I jotted a note down here. We were talking about Multicultural NSW staff living outside of Sydney, Wollongong, Newcastle. Do you live outside of those three areas?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Primrose, I do live in regional New South Wales and outside of those three areas that are aforementioned and always try and bring a regional perspective to the table when working with my team.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I think we gathered that from your answers. Thank you very much.

The CHAIR: Leading by example. Thank you to all our witnesses. You have taken some questions on notice, so the Committee's secretariat will be in touch. You'll have 21 days to get back to you. I also extend my thanks to the witnesses that have stayed for the full length. You now have bragging rights against all other public servants that left early. Once again, thank you very much for your time.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.