

Budget Estimates 2024-25 – Initial Hearings

Portfolio Committee No 3 – Education

Education and Early Learning, Western Sydney (Car)

Hearing: Tuesday 27 August 2024 - Supplementary Questions

Transgender students in schools – Legal Issues Bulletin 55, LIB55

QUESTION

1. Is it currently under review?
 - (a) If so, when is the review expected to be completed?
 - (b) If so, when is the updated policy document expected to be publicly released?

ANSWER

Due to the age of some Legal Issues Bulletins (LIB), several, including Bulletin 55, are being reviewed. Updated bulletins are expected to be available in 2025.

QUESTION

2. What was the source document/reference/publication/dictionary used to establish the meaning of the terms throughout the policy document?
 - (a) What is the meaning of “gender” used throughout the policy document?
 - (b) What is the meaning of “biological sex” used throughout the policy document?
 - (c) What is the meaning of “gender identity” used throughout the policy document?
 - (d) What is the meaning of “transgender” used throughout the policy document?
 - (e) What is the difference in the meaning between “transgender” and “identify as transgender” used throughout the policy document?

ANSWER

The LIB states that “most people express the gender that corresponds with their biological sex. There are some people whose gender identity or expression is different from that traditionally associated with assigned sex at birth. This is known as being transgender.

In the absence of a definition, terms like “gender,” “biological sex,” and “gender identity” and “identify as transgender” should be given their ordinary meaning.

QUESTION

3. With respect to the language used under the heading “Privacy legislation and transgender students”. In the final sentence of the second paragraph it states, “This issue should also be discussed with the student’s parent(s) or carer unless the principal believes on reasonable grounds that it is not in the student’s best interests to do this (for example a court order has removed a parent’s parental responsibility

for that student).” Why is the word should used instead of must when a “reasonable grounds” exemption for the principal forms part of the provision?

ANSWER

The Department of Education applies the ordinary meaning to the word “should” and notes the Macquarie Dictionary defines “should” as indicating an obligation.

QUESTION

4. With respect to the language used under the heading “Name and gender records”. NSW birth certificates are not issued with any reference to “gender”. Why does the first sentence in the first paragraph make reference to “gender” on their birth certificate when no reference is made to “gender” on NSW birth certificates?
(a) Should not the reference to “gender” in the first sentence of the first paragraph actually be a reference to “sex” that is specified on NSW birth certificates?

ANSWER

The term “gender” was used interchangeably with “sex” in this section of the LIB.

QUESTION

5. With respect to the language used under the heading “Name and gender records”. In the first paragraph regarding the exception, “where a student is transgender and seeks to change the way their first name is used and recorded at the school”, are both parents informed of any proposed change, and each required to submit a signed consent indicating approval to assume the new “first name” before, it is used and recorded at the school?
(a) In the case of transgender students, are both parents informed of any proposed change, and each required to submit a signed consent indicating approval to assume the new “gender” before, it is used and recorded at the school?

ANSWER

The circumstances in which parents or carers will not be asked to consent is set out in the LIB. Consistent with its approach in other family law matters, there is no requirement on school staff to independently establish that a decision about a gender diverse student has been jointly made by both parents.

QUESTION

6. With respect to the language used under the heading “Name and gender records”. In the second paragraph, with respect to “pronouns” used by students, are both parents informed of any proposed change, and each required to submit a signed consent indicating approval to assume the new “pronouns” before, they are used and recorded at the school?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 5.

QUESTION

7. With respect to the language used under the heading “Supporting a student who has identified as transgender”. Regarding the second paragraph, “Where reasonably practicable, the student should be treated on the same basis as other students of the same identified gender.”

- (a) Does this mean that a transgender girl (biological male) is able to use girls (biological female) toilets in schools?
- (b) Does this mean that a transgender boy (biological female) is able to use boys (biological male) toilets in schools?
- (c) Does this mean that a transgender girl (biological male) is able to use girls (biological female) change rooms in schools?
- (d) Does this mean that a transgender boy (biological female) is able to use boys (biological male) change rooms in schools?
- (e) Does this mean that a transgender girl (biological male) is able to use girls (biological female) showers in schools?
- (f) Does this mean that a transgender boy (biological female) is able to use boys (biological male) showers in schools?
- (g) Does this mean that in regard to overnight excursions, a transgender girl (biological male) is able to be accommodated in girls (biological female) dormitories/rooms/sleeping quarters/tents etc.?
- (h) Does this mean that in regard to overnight excursions, a transgender boy (biological female) is able to be accommodated in boys (biological male) dormitories/rooms/sleeping quarters/tents etc.?

ANSWER

The duty of care and obligations under work, health and safety law require an assessment of foreseeable risks to students. If an identified risk to a student using a particular facility cannot be satisfactorily eliminated or minimised, then other arrangements should be made.

An assessment of risk is normal procedure for all excursions. Ordinarily, a student who identifies as transgender should use the facilities of their identified gender or unisex facilities where available. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to arrange private sleeping quarters.

QUESTION

8. With respect to the language used under the heading “Use of toilets and change room facilities”. In the first paragraph it states “An assessment of the risk posed to the student by using the toilets of their identified gender must be undertaken.” Is an assessment made of any risk posed by transgender students to other students in the school?

(a) Regarding the last sentence in the first paragraph it states “The need for the student to be safe is a paramount concern in these circumstances.” Does this requirement apply, in addition to transgender students, all other students in the school?

(b) Regarding the final paragraph it states “If other students indicate discomfort with sharing single-sex facilities (toilets or change rooms for example) with a student who identifies as transgender, this should be addressed through the school learning and support team.” What does “this should be addressed through the school learning and support team” mean?

ANSWER

The department owes a duty of care and has obligations under work health and safety law to all students. It meets these obligations through the actions of its staff, including through the actions of the school learning and support team.

QUESTION

9. With respect to the language used under the heading “Excursion including overnight”. In the final sentence of the paragraph it states “In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to arrange private sleeping quarters.” What does “In some circumstances” mean?

ANSWER

The strategies used to discharge the department’s legal obligations under the duty of care and work health and safety and discrimination laws vary according to the student’s individual circumstances and the relevant context.

QUESTION

10. With respect to the language used under the heading “School Sport”. In the first paragraph it states “A student who identifies as transgender should be permitted to participate in most school-based sports as their identified gender.” What school-based sports are students who identify as transgender not permitted to participate in, involving other students in the school?

ANSWER

The particular school sport would depend on where a risk assessment identifies a foreseeable risk of injury to any student involved to any student, for example collision/tackling sports.

Screen Use and Addiction Research Fund

QUESTION

11. In relation to the Screen Use and Addiction Research Fund, why was a decision made to not fund any of the applicants received in the initial round?

(a) Will there be a new round commencing?

i. If yes, when will this commence?

ii. Will all those who applied for the initial round be invited to apply for the new round?

ANSWER

The Screen Use and Addiction Research Fund's statements of opportunity and research questions were refined to better target the Fund's intent.

(a) Yes

i. The new funding round opened for on 31 July and closed 31 August.

ii. Yes

QUESTION

12. The NSW Labor Government made a pre-election commitment to establish this fund to the amount of \$2.5 million. Has any funding has been allocated to this fund to date?

ANSWER

Yes, funding has been allocated to the Screen Use and Addiction Research Fund.

QUESTION

13. The Department of Education's website currently indicates that projects are to commence by February 2025. What are the Department's plans for the fund?

(a) Please provide an updated timeline for the fund, including when applications will open and close, when successful applicants will be notified, and when projects will commence.

ANSWER

Information on the Fund including the timeline can be found at

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-people-and-structure/higher-education-and-tertiary-policy/screen-use-and-addiction-research-fund>.

October 10 Social Media Summit

QUESTION

14. How much money is the NSW Government spending on the October 10 social media summit at the ICC Sydney?

ANSWER

I am advised:

As the summit is due to take place in October, complete costs have not been finalised. All costs are to be met within existing government resources.

QUESTION

15. What involvement has the Department of Education had in organising the summit?

ANSWER

The Summit is being organised by the Premier's Department and The Cabinet Office, in consultation with agencies. The department has provided input to this process to ensure the wide range of matters related to education settings are addressed in the Summit program.

QUESTION

16. How will the government appraise the ideas and information shared to value evidence and to create meaningful practical change?

ANSWER

The Summit will provide an opportunity for the NSW Government to hear from a wide range of experts and importantly, from young people to understand the mental health impacts of social media. The NSW Government will collectively use these findings to inform any regulatory and legislative changes.

The Summit is one of many measures the NSW Government is putting in place to minimise the negative impacts of social media and devices on young people. We will collaborate with the next generation to ensure the views of young people are included in these important reforms.

The facilitation of conversations will create more solutions for parents, schools, and communities about how to manage the issue of social media.

ECEC subsidies and grants

QUESTION

17. How much in subsidies or grants has the NSW Government given to early childhood providers:

- (a) In the financial year 2021-2022
- (b) In the financial year 2022-2023

- (c) In the financial year 2023-2024
- (d) In the financial year 2024-2025 to date

ANSWER

The total grants and subsidies provided to the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector is provided in the department's Annual Reports. Information about the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25 will be published in those respective Annual Reports when they are finalised.

QUESTION

18. For each of these financial years, how much was given to non-profit early childhood providers?

ANSWER

The NSW Government provided \$477 million to not-for-profit ECEC providers in the financial year 2021-2022 and \$578 million in the financial year 2022-23. These figures are based on details published in the Annual Reports. Some grants and subsidies to ECEC providers were withheld from Annual Reports due to confidentiality reasons. As per the Annual Report 2022, program(s) were excluded from this report where payments have been made to recipients on behalf of registered service providers and national partnership programs.

Details for the financial year 2023-24 and the Annual Report 2024 are currently being finalised and will be published in due course. Details on grants and subsidies for the financial year 2024-25 will be available in the Annual Report 2025.

QUESTION

19. How much was given to for-profit early childhood providers?

ANSWER

The NSW Government provided \$1 million to for-profit ECEC providers in the financial year 2021-2022 and \$144 million in the financial year 2022-2023. These figures are based on details published in the Annual Reports. Some grants and subsidies to ECEC providers were withheld from Annual Reports due to confidentiality reasons. As per the Annual Report 2022, program(s) were excluded from this report where payments have been made to recipients on behalf of registered service providers and national partnership programs.

Details for the financial year 2023-24 and the Annual Report 2024 are currently being finalised and will be published in due course. Details on grants and subsidies for the financial year 2024-25 will be available in the Annual Report 2025.

QUESTION

20. How much of that money was provided under the Early Childhood Education and Care Flexible Initiatives Trial? Please provide details

ANSWER

Round 1 of the Flexible Initiatives Trial awarded more than \$2.8 million in funding to 16 services to trial innovative approaches to meeting family and community needs. Funding agreements were executed in the first quarter of 2024-25. Initial milestone payments totalling \$550,370 have been made in the 2024-25 financial year (as at 9 September 2024).

Students with disability

QUESTION

21. How many students with disability left the school they were enrolled at, for each year over the last five school years?

ANSWER

Schools manage enrolment movements at a local level, with oversight by Directors, Educational Leadership. Movements between schools occur for a large range of reasons.

QUESTION

22. How much does the NSW government spend on Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs)?

(a) How much is allocated towards integration to mainstream schools?

ANSWER

Total budget for all Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) was \$414 million in 2023.

In 2023, \$410 million was allocated in Integration Funding Support for more than 17,800 students with moderate to high support needs in mainstream classes.

QUESTION

23. How much does the NSW government spend on legal fees defending claims by students with disabilities and their families?

ANSWER

This information is held by the government insurer, iCare.

QUESTION

24. How many primary mainstream schools in NSW have a separate 'support unit' for children with a disability?

ANSWER

As at September 2024, there are 566 mainstream primary schools with support classes. This also includes Central, Community and Infant schools.

QUESTION

25. How many secondary mainstream schools in NSW have a separate 'support unit' for children with a disability?

ANSWER

As at September 2024, there are 318 mainstream secondary schools with support classes.

QUESTION

26. How many SSPs have a full curriculum for children with a disability?

ANSWER

Specialist settings teach the NSW curriculum across Key Learning Areas. The NSW curriculum can be adjusted for access and relevance to students with higher support needs, and assessment processes can be tailored to focus on specific skills development.

QUESTION

27. How many children with a disability initially applied for enrolment in their local mainstream school in 2023/2024?

ANSWER

Schools manage enrolments at a local level, with oversight by Directors, Educational Leadership.

QUESTION

28. How many children with a disability, who initially applied for enrolment in a mainstream school in 2023/2024 actually enrolled in a mainstream school as part of a mainstream class?

ANSWER

Schools manage enrolments at a local level, with oversight by Directors, Educational Leadership.

QUESTION

29. How many children with a disability, who initially applied for enrolment in a mainstream school in 2023/2024 actually enrolled in a mainstream school as part of a support class?

ANSWER

Schools manage enrolments at a local level, with oversight by Directors, Educational Leadership.

QUESTION

30. How many children with a disability, who initially applied for enrolment in a mainstream school in 2023/2024 were actually enrolled in a SSP?

ANSWER

Schools manage enrolments at a local level, with oversight by Directors, Educational Leadership.

QUESTION

31. How many children with a disability, who have been in a SSP, have transferred to mainstream class in a mainstream school in 2023/2024?

ANSWER

Schools manage enrolments at a local level, with oversight by Directors, Educational Leadership.

QUESTION

32. How many new SSPs for children with a disability have been created in the past 4 years?

ANSWER

Two

QUESTION

33. How many SSPs for children with a disability are currently in development?

ANSWER

The department is considering the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability including as part of its long-term asset management strategy. The strategy will consider existing SSPs and possible future requirements.

QUESTION

34. How many Distance Education spaces are available to support children?

ANSWER

Full-time enrolment in distance education is available to students who are geographically isolated or whose special circumstances prevent them from attending a school or other appropriate provision. There is no defined number of student placements.

QUESTION

35. How many Distance Education spaces are specifically to support children with a disability?

ANSWER

Students with disability may be able to access Distance Education under a range of enrolment categories ensuring equitable access for eligible students.

In addition to this, Sir Eric Woodward Memorial School Distance Education Support Unit provides specialised support that cannot be provided by other distance education schools for students with a confirmed moderate to severe intellectual disability. Distance Education Support Unit has 34 students currently enrolled with additional capacity available.

Suspensions and expulsions

QUESTION

36. In disaggregated data for each school year from K-12, for 2023:

(a) How often has the same student been suspended?

(b) Can you provide a regional or district breakdown of students with disability being suspended?

i. Can you provide statistics on the total number of children corresponding to these regions?

- (c) How many First Nations students have been suspended from school?
- (d) How many students from Out of Home Care have been suspended?
- (e) How many students with disability from mainstream schools have been suspended?
- (f) How many students with disability from support units have been suspended?
- (g) How many students with disability from SSPs have been suspended?
- (h) How many kids with disability are homeschooled as a result of suspension, exclusion or expulsion?

ANSWER

(a)-(g) Data on suspensions and expulsions in NSW government schools is published at <https://data.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/nsw-education-suspensions-and-expulsions-in-nsw-government-schools>.

Data relating to students in statutory out-of-home care in NSW public schools is monitored at the student level. The department works collaboratively with the Department of Communities and Justice to monitor attendance data for students in statutory care. Schools monitor attendance and suspensions at the local level and apply appropriate interventions, support, and strategies for all students, including students in out-of-home care.

h) NESA registers children for home schooling. Suspension and expulsion data is not collected as part of the application process to register for home schooling.

NSW Government response to the Disability Royal Commission in relation to complaints management

QUESTION

37. According to the NSW Government in response to the Disability Royal Commission, the NSW Education department implemented revised Community Complaint procedures and Staff Complaint procedures in May 2024, following extensive stakeholder consultation. Who was part of this consultation?

- (a) How long did stakeholder consultation take?
- (b) What changes were made through this revision, in relation to complaints from students with disability and their families?

ANSWER

The department consulted with both internal and external stakeholders. This included meetings, workshops, focus groups, and invitations for feedback on draft procedures.

Consultation with key external stakeholders included:

- Primary Principals Association
- Secondary Principals Association
- Special Education Principals and Leaders Association
- Public Service Association
- NSW Teachers Federation

- Parents and Citizens Federation
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
- Association of Children's Welfare Agencies
- Family Advocacy
- Ethnic Communities' Council
- Gifted NSW
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association
- Multicultural NSW
- Office of the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People
- The Smith Family
- Learning Ecosystems
- Inclusive Education
- Parent and Carer Research (ORIMA)
- The Disability Advocacy Futures Program.

Stakeholder consultation took approximately 14 months.

The revised procedures clarify and streamline the processes for addressing concerns raised by employees in relation to workplace issues (staff complaints) and concerns raised by parents, carers, students, other learners and community members in relation to the services provided by the department (community complaints).

QUESTION

38. According to the NSW Government in response to the Disability Royal Commission, a Community Engagement Policy is in the early stages of development, which will provide greater guidance to schools and education support areas. When will this be completed?

(a) Will this have a specific focus on supporting students with disability and their families?

ANSWER

The department is committed to purposeful community engagement to enrich school culture and support the education and wellbeing of students. The department has commenced consultation to understand stakeholder perspectives on a proposed Community Engagement Policy. This will include consultation with disability advocacy groups.

QUESTION

39. Does the PES ever connect families with advocacy support and specialist disability expertise?

(a) If no, why not?

ANSWER

Information for parents, carers, students and other learners on the department's website (<https://education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback>) includes guidance on the role of support persons and advocates in the complaint process as well as information about how to access advocacy services. An information sheet is available in English and 16 other languages, which explains how support persons and advocates can assist in communicating or raising a concern with a school, or with making a complaint.

The Professional and Ethical Standards Directorate (PES) is not responsible for managing complaints from parents, carers, students or other learners in relation to schools or education support services. In the context of providing advice to principals and line managers in relation to the management of a complaint, PES includes information about the role of support persons and advocates where relevant and provides the information sheet which can be provided to parents, carers, support persons and advocates.

Inclusive education unit

QUESTION

40. What First Nations expertise does the Department's existing inclusive education unit have to allow them to take actions required to improve access to inclusive and culturally appropriate education for First Nations students with disability?

ANSWER

The inclusive education teams within the department draw on a range of expertise both internal and external to the department to ensure the needs of students who have disability and who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are considered in its work.

QUESTION

41. How many First Nations people work within this unit?

ANSWER

For privacy reasons we are not able to disclose this level of information. Staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are also not required to disclose this information to the department.

The inclusive education teams draw on a range of expertise both internal and external to the department and this includes staff who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

QUESTION

42. How many people with disability work within this unit?

ANSWER

For privacy reasons we are not able to disclose this level of information. Staff who have a disability are also not required to disclose this information to the department.

The inclusive education teams draw on a range of expertise both internal and external to the department and this includes staff who have extensive experience working in disability and/or a lived experience of disability.

QUESTION

43. The NSW Government accepted “Recommendation 7.7 Inclusive education units and First Nations expertise” from the Disability Royal Commission, which recommended that educational authorities ensure that inclusive education units contain First Nations expertise to allow them to take actions required to improve access to inclusive and culturally appropriate education for First Nations students with disability. If there is currently no direct First Nations expertise within the department, what steps is the Department taking to ensure that this is met?

ANSWER

In addition to Aboriginal identified roles and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the inclusive education teams, and other staff with expertise across the department, the department has a forty five year long standing partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated as the peak community advisory body to the department and government on Aboriginal education and training.

QUESTION

44. What date was the Department’s inclusive education unit formally established?

ANSWER

Many areas across the department play an important role in supporting students who have a disability and their families so that they can engage in education. The current inclusive education teams were established in 2021. While not always called inclusive education, the department has historically included functions specifically related to disability.

QUESTION

45. How much funding did the Department’s inclusive education unit receive, for each financial year since it’s commencement?

ANSWER

In 2023, \$348 million was allocated for specialist learning including more than 1,970 learning and support teachers and a flexible funding allocation to every mainstream school through the Low Level Adjustment for Disability equity loading.

In 2023, \$410 million was allocated in Integration Funding Support for more than 17,800 students with moderate to high support needs in mainstream classes.

In 2023, \$37 million in supplementary funding was provided to Schools for Specific Purposes to alleviate critical resource constraints while longstanding structural issues are being addressed.

Funding is only one component of the support the department provides for schools to support students with disability.

QUESTION

46. Is there an intention to publish any details of the inclusive education unit on the Department's website?

ANSWER

The department's website includes a range of information about how it supports students with disability and their families in NSW public schools. Schools work with families to ensure they can access the appropriate support, both within and external to the department, to support children's engagement in education.

QUESTION

47. Who is currently employed under the inclusive education unit? Please detail each person's role and whether they are full-time or otherwise.

ANSWER

Allocation of learning and support teachers are informed by student need and use the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on school students with disability as a measure of student need. The department currently funds more than 1,975 learning and support teacher positions across mainstream public schools through the Low Level Adjustment for Disability. Schools can also use their broader funding to employ additional learning and support teachers.

Learning and Support Teachers (LaST)

QUESTION

48. How many LaSTs (Learning and Support Teachers) are employed by the State?

ANSWER

As at September 2024, there are more than 1,000 Learning and Support Teachers (LaSTs) employed in NSW public schools.

QUESTION

49. How many LaSTs are FTE?

ANSWER

As at September 2024, there are approximately 970 FTE Learning and Support Teachers employed in NSW public schools.

QUESTION

50. How many schools have LaSTs?

ANSWER

As at September 2024, there are more than 900 NSW public schools that have Learning and Support Teachers.

QUESTION

51. Are the number of LaSTs at a sufficient level to meet a needs basis system?

ANSWER

Allocation of learning and support teachers are informed by student need and use the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data as a measure of student need.

QUESTION

52. What training is required to enable a staff member to be a LaST?

ANSWER

Qualified teachers seeking to be appointed as a Learning and Support Teacher in NSW public schools are required to complete a recognised qualification in special/inclusive education. Universities within NSW and interstate offer Graduate Diploma and Masters level qualifications which are available via part time and distance education options.

The department also provides an opportunity for experienced teachers to be employed as Learning and Support Teachers in NSW public schools. Teachers who

have a minimum of 12 months teaching experience in learning support may be granted specific status in learning and support.

QUESTION

53. What measurement of impact of LaSTs is undertaken?

ANSWER

The school Learning and Support Team plays a key role in ensuring that the specific needs of students with disability are met. The composition of teams may vary as they are made up of members according to the needs of the school and community in which they work. The Learning and Support Teacher provides direct and timely specialist assistance to students in mainstream classes with disability and their teachers. Learning and Support Teachers use a collaborative and consultative approach so that students themselves and their parents and carers are actively involved in decision-making in their education.

QUESTION

54. What are the specific duties and responsibilities of a LaST or is this dependent upon the school?

ANSWER

The Learning and Support Teacher functions include:

- Working with the classroom teacher to support assessment for learning of their students with additional educational needs and identify specific learning goals and support needs.
- To plan, implement, model, monitor and evaluate teaching programs for students with additional learning and support needs in conjunction with regular classroom teachers.
- Provide direct support for students with additional learning and support needs.
- Provide professional specialist advice and assistance about students with additional learning needs to the school's Learning and Support Team.
- Assist with professional learning for class teachers and School Learning Support Officers within their school and local network of schools where appropriate.

QUESTION

55. When was the role of LaSTs last reviewed (if ever)?

ANSWER

The Learning and Support Teacher role description was developed in 2007 following the release of the Disability Standards for Education 2005. A copy is available at

QUESTION

56. What Professional Development programming is available for LaSTs?

ANSWER

The department offers a suite of specialist disability professional learning courses for teachers, including Learning and Support Teachers, to build capability to understand and assess the needs of students with disability and plan personalised learning and support to improve student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

QUESTION

57. On average what percentage of time do LaSTs spend:
(a) in classroom teaching/support
(b) on administrative tasks/functions?

ANSWER

The amount of support given in each classroom varies as it depends on the individual needs of the students and the degree of support required for the teacher with whom the LaST is working. Administrative tasks would be directly related to the learning needs of the student and include tasks like formulating learning or behaviour plans, arranging facilitation meetings, attending meetings to discuss student needs, and liaising with parents and teachers around how best to meet the needs of the students.

Teacher Vacancies

QUESTION

58. In the media release issued on 27 August 2024, you shared the teacher vacancy rate at the start of the term. What was the teacher vacancy rate at the start of the following terms and years:

- (a) Term 3, 2024? (b) Term 2, 2024? (c) Term 1, 2024?
- (d) Term 4, 2023? (e) Term 3, 2023? (f) Term 2, 2023? (g) Term 1, 2023?
- (h) Term 4, 2022? (i) Term 3, 2022? (j) Term 2, 2022? (k) Term 1, 2022?
- (l) Term 4, 2021? (m) Term 3, 2021? (n) Term 2, 2021? (o) Term 1, 2021?
- (p) Term 4, 2020? (q) Term 3, 2020? (r) Term 2, 2020? (s) Term 1, 2020?
- (t) Term 4, 2019? (u) Term 3, 2019? (v) Term 2, 2019? (w) Term 1, 2019?

ANSWER

Teacher vacancies have changed from 2,421 as at Term 3 2022 under the former NSW Liberal Nationals Government to 1,698 as at Term 3 2024.

Teacher Recruitment

QUESTION

59. What plans does the Department of Education have to make it more accessible for individuals to become teachers?

ANSWER

The Minns Labor Government has undertaken significant work to attract and retain teachers.

The Government abolished the former Liberal National Government's unfair wages cap and delivered the most significant uplift in teachers' salaries in a generation. This has taken NSW teachers from being the worst paid in the country to among the highest. I note this has been opposed by the Liberal and National Parties, with the Hon. Chris Rath calling the fair and overdue pay rise "excessive".

I note also the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council called the suppression of teachers' wages "a very good decision".

As a result of the Minns Labor Government's decision, teacher vacancies are at a three-year low, there are fewer resignations and more experienced teachers are staying in the profession.

The Government has also provided more job security to education staff, with almost 17,000 temporary teachers and support staff made permanent.

The Government is also providing more pathways for teachers through its expansion of Grow Your Own as well as more targeted recruitment for hard-to-staff schools through its expansion of the Priority Recruitment Support Program. The Department of Education continues to provide scholarships to support future teachers.

Following strong advocacy from the NSW Government, the Australia Government will introduce a new means-tested Commonwealth Prac Payment for students completing teaching placements.

The NSW Government is also working with other jurisdictions and ITE providers on other measures such as co-ordination of university placements to ensure it does not become a barrier for prospective teachers.

The Government is also working on the recognition of previous study, work experience, and skills that may be transferable to teaching and prioritising conditional or provisional registration to increase the supply of teachers.

Resource Allocation Model (RAM)

QUESTION

60. How many schools have seen a reduction in RAM between 2023 and 2024?

ANSWER

The NSW Labor Government has delivered record public school budgets, which are more than \$700 million higher than at any level under the previous Liberal and Nationals government. Information about school budget funding under the Resource Allocation Model is available publicly.

QUESTION

61. How is RAM funding calculated for each individual school?

ANSWER

Information about the Resource Allocation model (RAM) and its calculation is available on the department's website.

Wages

QUESTION

62. What percent of the NSW Education Department budget is spent on wages in:

- (a) 2023-24?
- (b) 2022-23?
- (c) 2021-22?
- (d) 2020-21?

ANSWER

Between 2020-21 and 2022-23, the Liberal National Government suppressed the wages of teachers, as well as all education staff. It should be noted the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council said recently this was a "very good decision".

The Liberal and National parties continue to oppose the Minns Labor Government's decision to abolish the cap of wages and delivered fair and well-deserved pay rises for all staff, including teachers.

This information can be found in the financial statements in the Annual Reports of the Department of Education. Data for 2023/24 financial year is not yet available as the Annual Report has not been published.

Bullying

QUESTION

63. When a bullying complaint is made by a student, what process is taken by:

- (a) School?
- (b) Department of Education?

ANSWER

Bullying of any kind is not tolerated in NSW public schools. Our schools have a responsibility to take action to help prevent any kind of bullying and to respond appropriately when it does occur.

Concerns about student bullying at school are generally managed at the local school level as schools are best placed to respond to the needs of their students, in line with the Student Behaviour Policy.

Suspensions and expulsions

QUESTION

64. How many students have been suspended between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024?

(a) What were the three main reasons?

ANSWER

Semester 1 2024 suspensions and expulsions data collection is currently underway. Validated suspensions and expulsions information for Semester 1 2024 will be available towards the end of the year.

The 2023 suspensions and expulsions fact sheet can be found here:

<https://data.nsw.gov.au/data/dataset/2b71f581-e36f-42c9-813a-436dbf77548d/resource/6854f9d7-12fd-4bf4-b16d-262161f2ea25/download/full-year-2023-suspensions-and-expulsions.pdf>.

QUESTION

65. How many students were suspended between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 in metropolitan schools?

(a) What were the three main reasons?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 64.

QUESTION

66. How many students were suspended between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 in regional schools?

(a) What were the three main reasons?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 64.

QUESTION

67. How many students have been expelled between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024?
(a) What were the three main reasons?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 64.

QUESTION

68. How many students were expelled between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 in metropolitan schools?
(a) What were the three main reasons?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 64.

QUESTION

69. How many students were expelled between 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 in regional schools?
(a) What were the three main reasons?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 64.

Department of Education's cyber security

QUESTION

70. In the Sydney Morning Herald on Thursday 24 August, they stated, “around 100 parents managing to crack the code to access the website days before the official offers were made” in relation to selective school admissions.
(a) What actions are being taken by the Department of Education?
(b) Has any individual data been released from cyber breaches?

ANSWER

Immediate steps were taken by the department in response to the incident. For future release of results the website will be updated with a unique identifier generated for each application, preventing users from being able to guess or infer URLs.

This incident was not a malicious cyber breach. The information accessed was limited to individual students' unconfirmed results from this year's Selective High School test. Parents were only able to access their own child's outcome.

Vandalism in Schools

QUESTION

71. What was the total reported number of acts of vandalism in schools in:

- (a) 2023-24?
- (b) 2022-23?
- (c) 2021-22?
- (d) 2020-21?

ANSWER

Across 2,200 schools the numbers are as below:

2023-24 - 1130
2022-23 - 941
2021-22 - 876
2020-21 - 1377

QUESTION

72. What is the total cost of vandalism in schools in:

- (a) 2023-24?
- (b) 2022-23?
- (c) 2021-22?
- (d) 2020-21?

ANSWER

I am advised that the cost of vandalism across the 2,200 public schools in NSW over the period 2020 to 2024 is approximately \$5 million.

Transport Oriented Development (TOD)

QUESTION

73. What plans are underway by the Department of Education is undertaking in relation to TOD sites?

ANSWER

After 12 years of neglect, the NSW Government is committed to delivering school infrastructure where it is needed.

The department is working closely with other government agencies across NSW to ensure planning decisions are coordinated and the mistakes of the former NSW Liberal Government are not repeated.

QUESTION

74. Are there plans to build new schools within TOD sites?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 73.

Camellia Rosehill Development

QUESTION

75. What plans are underway by the Department of Education is undertaking in relation to Camellia-Rosehill development?

ANSWER

Following 12 years of neglect, the Department of Education is working closely with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure regarding the provision of additional school capacity where it is needed.

QUESTION

76. Are there plans to build new schools within Camellia- Rosehill development?

ANSWER

Plans to build new schools in NSW will continue to be informed by advice from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and the NSW Government's enrolment growth audit.

Early Childhood Education

QUESTION

77. What is the government doing to retain early childhood educators?

ANSWER

The NSW Government has made significant investment in initiatives to address key ECEC workforce challenges, including staff attraction and retention, burnout, and access to quality professional development and learning.

This includes:

- More than \$17 million to deliver scholarships and professional learning, which builds on the previous record investment of more than \$12 million last financial year, with more than 2,000 scholarships awarded.
- A \$10 million partnership with TAFE NSW to support early childhood educators and teachers to access professional learning, launching in Spring 2024.
- A \$3 million ECEC research program that delivers on a commitment to build an evidence base to inform development of initiatives relating to staff retention.
- A Business Capability Development Program which will help small providers to develop business leadership and management capabilities. These skills will support quality working environments and contribute to staff wellbeing and retention.
- Development of a partnership with the University of Wollongong to design an accelerated pathway so diploma-qualified educators currently working in the sector can upskill to an early years teaching degree while continuing to work.

QUESTION

78. How is the government working with councils to support infrastructure upgrades to community preschools?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is delivering a \$20 million investment in capital works to support not-for-profit providers (which includes council-run services) in the early childhood education and care sector. Details on the scope for the new program will be published on the department's website as soon as they become available.

Council-run early childhood centres have also been eligible under NSW Government grant programs, including the Start Strong Capital Works Grants Program.

QUESTION

79. What is the government doing to work with early childhood operators to better prepare children for their first year of school?

ANSWER

To increase the number of NSW children starting school developmentally on track, the NSW Government is rolling out health and development checks for 4-year-olds in early childhood education and care services.

To facilitate early childhood educators communicating important information about a child's learning and development with their new school the department has developed the Transition to School Statement. A digital platform is available to make the statements easier to create and share with schools.

Public preschools also provide children with an opportunity to become oriented to the school environment in the year before school. Other early childhood services have

relationships with local schools and engage in year-round activities to support a successful transition to school for all children.

In addition, the department provides a range of resources on its website to help early childhood educators support children and families in their transition to school. These include guides on how to prepare children for school, professional development for educators, and advice on supporting children with additional needs.

QUESTION

80. Is the government looking at ways consent education can be integrated into early learning?

ANSWER

The Department of Education upholds the vision, principles, practice, and outcomes outlined in the nationally approved and mandated Learning Frameworks – Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework and My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care. These support educators to provide settings that promote safety and respect.

QUESTION

81. Does the government and department work with private early learning providers to ensure early childhood outcomes are met across the state?

- (a) If yes, how so?
- (b) If no, why not?

ANSWER

The NSW ECEC Regulatory Authority works to ensure the delivery of safe and high-quality early education and care for children in all ECEC service types, from birth up to and including school age care (including before and after school care and vacation care services).

This includes ensuring all service providers are aware of their obligations under the National Quality Framework (NQF). The department does this by:

- making risk-based decisions when approving new ECEC providers and services
- monitoring service compliance with the National Law and Regulations
- assessing and rating services against the National Quality Standard to determine a service quality rating
- working with other agencies to share information to support regulatory activities, collaborate on policy and reforms
- supporting and educating the sector through provision of resources and best practice guidance.

QUESTION

82. How does the government assure that early learning outcomes are being met across the state?

ANSWER

The Government is committed to ensuring children across the state receive the best start in learning. We are actively monitoring the proportion of children enrolled in preschool and the proportion of children who are developmentally on track to deliver this.

The Australian Early Development Census is a national assessment conducted every three years to examine how children have developed by the time they start school. It looks at five different areas of early childhood development: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication skills and general knowledge. The 2024 AEDC cycle is currently underway.

The NSW Government is also working closely with other jurisdictions and the Australian Government to develop the Preschool Outcomes Measure. The purpose of the Outcomes Measure is to support high-quality practice by equipping teachers and educators with access to a validated assessment tool to inform children's learning.

The government is also rolling out health and development checks for four-year-olds in ECEC services. This check supports children to get the support they need.

Licences

QUESTION

83. What is the canteen licence income for FY23/24 to date?

ANSWER

The department's audited FY2023-24 statutory financial statements are expected to be published in the department's Annual Report 2024.

QUESTION

84. What are the locations of the 240 uniform licenses?
(a) How much revenue does this generate?

ANSWER

The Department of Education has advised that uniform licences consist of a combination of logo or premises hire and they are not disaggregated for data on uniforms only.

QUESTION

85. Where is the revenue collected from licences allocated towards?

ANSWER

The Department of Education has advised that licence revenues are generally received by schools.

QUESTION

86. How long does it take for canteens to receive a licence?

ANSWER

For both canteen and uniform licences, the Department of Education has advised that it can take up to 12 weeks from the start of a tender process to the execution of a licence. Once the tender has been completed, a licence is usually sent to the provider within four weeks, including time for departmental approval processes and for the operator to review and return the signed licence agreement.

QUESTION

87. How long does it take to receive a uniform licence?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 86.

Enrolments

QUESTION

88. What is the wait time for enrolment applications to be processed by the department?

ANSWER

Schools process enrolment applications in a timely manner and in line with the General Enrolment Procedures, ensuring every student is offered a place at their local public school.

QUESTION

89. On what grounds can a student's enrolment be denied?

(a) How many enrolment applications have been declined between 2023 and 2024?

ANSWER

Compulsory school-aged students are entitled to be enrolled at the government school that is designated for the intake area within which the child's home is situated and that the child is eligible to attend. If a student applies to a government school outside their local area, their application is subject to the school having the capacity to accommodate them. Exceptional circumstances are also considered.

Applications to a government school can be made through an "Application to enrol in NSW Government schools" form or through the department's online enrolment system.

QUESTION

90. How many times between 2023 and 2024 has school boundaries changed?
(a) What are the top three reasons for boundary changes?

ANSWER

The Department of Education regularly reviews and adjusts intake areas to reflect changes within a school community. This may be driven by population changes, or changes in permanent school facilities – such as the opening of a school, or provision of additional permanent classrooms.

QUESTION

91. What is the government and department doing to?

ANSWER

This question has been interpreted as asking 'what is the government doing to repair the mess that was left to us by the previous Liberal National Government in Education?'

After 12 years of neglect of our public education system, the Minns Labor Government is rebuilding public education in NSW by delivering a record education budget, an historic wage rise for teachers, addressing teacher shortages and building schools where they are needed. This vital investment in our state's students and teachers will ensure every student in NSW has access to high-quality public education in every community.

Milperra High School

QUESTION

92. In a 2020 Facebook post Ms Car said: “Any new development on the Western Sydney University campus at Milperra must include a new high school. Time to get it right for once.” What is the status of the announced school?

ANSWER

I share the concerns held across our State about the former NSW Liberal-Nationals government’s failure to plan and deliver public infrastructure.

Before the former government approved the sale, the Labor opposition urged the Liberals to consider all options, including future educational uses. It has now been more than three years since the sale and development was approved by the former NSW Liberal Nationals Government, and the development is now in the final stages of approval.

As part of the Minns Government’s record \$3.5 billion investment in new and upgraded schools in Western Sydney, the Minns Government has progressed planning for upgrades at both Sir Joseph Banks High School and Condell Park High School and completed upgrades at Picnic Point High School. After 12 years of inadequate planning, these upgrades will help to deliver more local school capacity and ensure Milperra’s education needs can continue to be met by the three public high schools servicing the area into the future.

QUESTION

93. Has any funded been allocated to start the planning of the school?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 92.

QUESTION

94. What role does the department have in the selection of new schools and their locations?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 92.

QUESTION

95. What schools are within close proximity to WSU Milperra site and the number of enrolled students at the respective schools?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 92.

QUESTION

96. How many enrolments is the government expecting to accept at the proposed Milperra High School if completed?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 92.

QUESTION

97. What community consultation has taken place since Labor came into office in March 2023?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 92.

QUESTION

98. Is there a time frame of when construction will commence?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 92.

School Funding**QUESTION**

99. Does the Minister think that SLSO's in classrooms affect teacher workload?

ANSWER

NSW public schools provide specialised services to help students who need extra support. Public schools have a learning and support team and other staff to provide personalised learning and meet students' specific needs. These positions include School Learning Support Officers.

QUESTION

100. Do you think that SLSO's impact student outcomes in those classrooms?

ANSWER

School Learning Support Officers provide support for students with identified diverse learning needs including disability under the direction and supervision of a teacher to support the achievement of educational outcomes.

A detailed statement of duties for the role of School Learning Support Officers is available on the department's website at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/industrial-relations/a-z-of-industrial-relations-topics/SASS-statements-of-duties/statement-of-duties-school-learning-support-officer>.

QUESTION

101. How many learning support staff have been cut from schools in the last 12 months?

ANSWER

In 2024, \$357 million has been allocated to schools under the Low-Level Adjustment for Disability, funding more than 1,975 learning and support teachers. This compares to \$349 million in 2023.

School Infrastructure

QUESTION

102. What cuts have been made to the staff within school infrastructure?

ANSWER

The department is working to ensure record funding is targeted and prioritises teaching and learning. Building schools where they are needed is critical to these efforts. As a matter of course, School Infrastructure manages its workforce composition in accordance with its pipeline of works.

QUESTION

103. How many staff are working within that unit of the department currently?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 102.

QUESTION

104. How many staff were there 12 months ago?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 102.

QUESTION

105. How many contracts have been axed? How will this impact school delivery?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 102.

Bungendore High School

QUESTION

106. In June this year, The Department announced they will undertake a due diligence review on alternative locations to validate that the Majara / Gibraltar Streets Precinct remains the fastest and most viable location. What are the other locations?

ANSWER

Information about the site selection for the new Bungendore High School is available on the Department of Education's website. Costs associated with projects are made available through the annual Budget process.

QUESTION

107. What is the motivation for an alternative site, is it because the current site is not suitable or is it the ongoing legal challenges of local activist groups?

(a) How much more would the project cost if this were to happen?

(b) If these alternative sites were deemed unsuitable previously, why are they being considered again?

(c) Should an alternative site need to be purchased from an independent land owner, how will you ensure transparency and ethical behaviour for that site purchased?

(d) Will the cost of the land be taken from the current budget, impacting the available money for the facilities?

(e) Will the project design be able to be migrated to the new location or will it be a 'start again' causing more delays?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 106.

Early Childhood Education

QUESTION

108. Minister when can we expect to see the first of the 100 promised preschools being finished?

ANSWER

The Minns Government's first public preschool at Gulyangarri Public School in Liverpool will open in early Term 4 2024.

QUESTION

109. Are you aware that some of those preschools are threatening other services in that area? And that the demand wasn't there in some communities, yet others are in childcare desert?

ANSWER

All primary and central schools in NSW were considered as part of the 100 public preschools site selection process. This was a rigorous process with independent oversight. Schools were prioritised by considering levels of disadvantage and lack of availability of preschool places in the area. This was based on analysis of:

- child development data from the Australian Early Development Census
- socio-economic data
- projected demand for preschool places compared to current supply.

QUESTION

110. You've said \$105 million in capital funding has been allocated on top of the \$769 million fund for these preschools, how much has been spent?

ANSWER

Consistent with commitments made in 2023, the 2024-25 NSW Budget maintains its pledge to invest in the development of new public preschools across the state with the following funds earmarked for the initiative:

- \$769 million for 100 new public preschools on public school sites, inclusive of the capital funding mentioned.
- \$60 million towards new and upgraded non-government preschools.

Sexual Assaults in Schools

QUESTION

111. Has the Minister read the international evidence review on managing sexual assaults commissioned by the Department of Education from the University of New South Wales?

ANSWER

Yes.

QUESTION

112. Is the Minister satisfied that NSW is doing everything it can to protect students?

ANSWER

NSW public schools are among the safest places in our community for children and young people. It is critically important that students feel safe in our schools.

NSW Public Schools have strong expectations for student behaviour. The NSW Government has introduced a number of measures to improve student wellbeing and address behaviour in our schools, including a revised Student Behaviour policy from Term 1 2024, and a mobile phone ban in Term 4 2023.

The department has policies, procedures and professional learning in place as well as advice available to assist staff and schools to manage and respond to incidents and risks. This includes the recent department Legal Issues Bulletin developed to assist schools to respond to legal issues when problematic and/or harmful sexualised behaviour becomes the subject of a criminal investigation, prosecution, or conviction.

Teacher PD

QUESTION

113. Minister can you guarantee that every teacher will be undertaking ongoing professional development to better support students with their mental health?

ANSWER

The Department of Education will ensure that its professional development aligns with the Australian Professional Standards alongside the Plan for Public Education, with a focus on student wellbeing

NSW teachers are able to choose professional development (PD) that meets their needs, school/service context and broader development priorities, including student/child mental health.

QUESTION

114. Why have you scrapped requirements for teachers to do PD in these areas, along with curriculum and aboriginal education?
(a) Why aren't these areas important to your govt?

ANSWER

Professional development regarding student wellbeing, curriculum and aboriginal education remains available to all teachers.

The government regards NSW teachers as professionals capable of choosing training best aligned to their professional needs.

Transport Oriented Development (TOD)

QUESTION

115. What discussion have been held with the NSW Department of Planning to ascertain future schooling needs following announced housing targets and housing density changes resulting in an expected influx of new residents?

ANSWER

The department continues working with the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure and Infrastructure NSW in relation to the transport orientated development locations.

QUESTION

116. Any current budget commitments to meet increased schooling needs for an expected influx of new residents in the tier 1 TOD precincts?

ANSWER

The department continues to closely monitor the needs of high-growth areas, including the transport orientated development locations.

A number of funded projects are already underway in the vicinity of transport orientated developments. Information about these projects including new schools and upgrades to improve enrolment capacity across North-West Sydney, is available on the School Infrastructure website.

QUESTION

117. Any future budget commitments to meet increased schooling needs for an expected influx of new residents in the tier 1 TOD precincts?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 116.

QUESTION

118. Is it the case that within each of the 8 accelerated TOD precincts (Kellyville, Bella Vista, Hornsby, Macquarie Park, Homebush, Bankstown, Crows Nest, Bays West) there are both primary and secondary schools that are over their enrolment cap?

ANSWER

The former Liberal and Nationals government failed to deliver new and upgraded schools where they were needed. The Minns Labor Government is now fixing the former government's mistakes by planning and delivering additional school capacity where it is required.

QUESTION

119. Are you aware that all primary schools in the Kellyville catchment were over their enrolment cap in 2023 including Kellyville Ridge, which is more than double their enrolment cap?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 118.

QUESTION

120. Are you aware that all primary schools in the Bella Vista catchment were over their enrolment cap in 2023 including Caddies Creek Public School, which is nearly 400 students over their enrolment cap?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 118.

QUESTION

121. If the average cost of a high school is approximately \$80 million, can you tell us how you plan on building the schools needed to support the housing development in these areas?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 116.

QUESTION

122. How much money is in the budget for school infrastructure in the 8 priority areas:

(a) Bankstown (b) Bays West (c) Bella Vista (d) Crows Nest (e) Homebush (f) Hornsby (g) Kellyville (h) Macquarie Park

ANSWER

Budget information relating to announced school infrastructure projects was published in the 2024-25 NSW Budget. More information about planning for school projects is shared with local communities as it becomes available.

Googong High School

QUESTION

123. How will Bungendore High School once opened, affect that catchment?

ANSWER

Bungendore High School serves its own catchment area.

QUESTION

124. Will enrolments in Jerrabomberra be affected by the Googong HS catchment.

ANSWER

Jerrabomberra High School serves its own catchment area.

QUESTION

125. When will the new catchment boundaries be determined?

ANSWER

Catchment boundaries are determined in the year prior to new schools opening.

QUESTION

126. Why was this school project funded by the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund when it typically comes out of NSW DoE Infrastructure?

ANSWER

The funding arrangements for school-building projects are made available publicly.

Bungendore High School

QUESTION

127. \$16.9 million was expected to be spent on the project till the end of the last financial year. Are legal fees included in that cost?

ANSWER

The Minns Labor Government will build the permanent Bungendore High School on a new, larger site that will accommodate a growing population following years of delay caused by the Liberals' and Nationals' poor planning.

To ensure the long-awaited new high school can be delivered as quickly as possible, the Department of Education conducted due diligence work in recent months, which considered alternative site options for the school after The Land and Environment Court overturned the previous planning approval following a challenge by a local community group.

The Court's ruling in December last year was the culmination in a series of disappointments felt by local families and followed the selection of the Majara Street site by the former government. This led to ongoing challenges to the school's approval, leaving local families without the permanent school they need and deserve.

The temporary high school will also expand to include classrooms within the former Council offices at the Majara Street site while the permanent school is built. Work on the design and planning for this is underway.

Once the new school is complete, the Department will engage with the local community about future uses of the Majara Street Site.

Funding arrangements for school-building projects are disclosed through the Budget process, while ongoing engagement with the market remains commercial in confidence.

QUESTION

128. What is the total already spent on the temporary school?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

129. How much is Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council charging NSW DoE for use of Mick Sherd Oval per year?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

130. The vacated council buildings acquired for the site, is it true council have left equipment in there and it has been vandalised?

ANSWER

The Department of Education has advised that it is working to remove equipment and rubbish from the site.

QUESTION

131. In regards to student numbers, how many have unenrolled so far this calendar year?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

132. Are the year 7 enrolments for next year under those for this year?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

133. The establishment fund is one-off payment to fund new equipment and has already been given to the school. Will a second establishment fund needed to be given to the permanent high school as most equipment could be up to 6 years old?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

134. Should an alternative site need to be purchased from an independent land owner, how will you ensure transparency and ethical behaviour for that site purchased?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

135. Will the cost of the land be taken from the current budget, impacting the available money for the facilities?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

136. Will the project design be able to be migrated to the new location or will it be a 'start again' causing more delays?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

137. If a new site is chosen, how will the DoE recover moneys already spent to compulsorily acquire council buildings?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127.

QUESTION

138. How will this impact school bus runs as it will be to a completely new location? (This will impact drop off times and cost to Transport for NSW)

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127. The new site is approximately a four-minute drive from the existing temporary high school. As a matter of course, consultation with Transport for NSW will occur during the planning stages of the project.

QUESTION

139. Has the department considered infrastructure needed for linkages to the village such as footpaths and public transport?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 127. While the department has advised the site will be well serviced by footpaths, as a matter of course, a review of available transport infrastructure will be undertaken as part of the planning process for the new school.

Rye Park School - Cootamundra

QUESTION

140. Minister, will you commit to the extension of the recess of Rye Park School?

ANSWER

The Department of Education has advised that Rye Park Public School was placed into recess under the previous government after the end of Term 4, 2022. Under the department's policy, a school may remain in recess until the Director, Educational Leadership conducts consultation with key stakeholders.

QUESTION

141. Minister what number of students do you require to make Rye Park Public viable for you to return it to operational status?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 140.

QUESTION

142. Will you consult with the Rye Park Community on any plans to permanently close the Rye Park Public School.

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 140.

QUESTION

143. Will you commit to ensuring Rye Park Public School remains in community hands if it is closed permanently?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 140.

QUESTION

144. Minister will you re-let the teacher housing in Rye Park back to the community given there is a housing crisis and this home has been sitting empty for over a year?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer for supplementary question 140.

QUESTION

145. Will you reconsider the school catchment policy that enforces that local students are required to attend local schools.

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer for supplementary question 140.

QUESTION

146. Minister can you confirm how many Rye Park Catchment students were granted exemptions to attend school outside this are in order for Rye Park Public School to be placed in recess.

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 140. The Department of Education has advised that no exemptions were granted to students from this school.

Rankins Springs Public School

QUESTION

147. Minister, are you aware that staff resignations still continue, and that one ex staff member not only resigned from the school but also resigned from the public service?

ANSWER

When permanent staff members resign, they do so from the department, not from individual schools.

Teacher Sick Leave Rates

QUESTION

148. Will the Minister advise in all public schools, how many teachers have taken sick leave in 2021-22 and 2022-23, and 2023-24 so far?

ANSWER

All full-time permanent teachers are entitled to 15 days paid sick leave per annum over the course of a year.

Permanent part time teachers and temporary teachers are entitled to sick leave on a pro rata basis proportionate to the entitlement of a permanent full-time teacher.

Teachers with at least 10 years' experience are also eligible to Special Sick Leave which is 22 additional working days for each completed 10 years of service.

QUESTION

149. Minister, have you met the target to reduce teacher admin by five hours per week? How much time have you saved teachers so far?

ANSWER

For 12 years, the former Liberal National Government imposed excessive workload burdens and onerous administration on teachers, including through the failed Local Schools, Local Decisions policy.

Our government is committed to addressing the significant challenges we inherited, delivering our election commitment, and reducing the admin burden on teachers in meaningful day.

We have already taken significant steps including:

- Listening to teachers, principals, and non-government schools by providing more time for the successful and effective implementation of new curriculum, in line with the recommendations of Masters Review. I note the Hon. Sarah Mitchell recently mocked the concerns of teachers regarding the successful implementation of the new curriculum.

- Expanding the trial of the safe and secure, Department of Education-developed AI application NSW EduChat to every NSW teacher to help with tasks such as lesson planning.
- Streamlining the teacher accreditation maintenance process.
- Removing restrictive professional development requirements and ensuring teachers can undertake the PD that will add value to their students.
- Reducing policy-related workload through cutting and consolidating the policy documents that schools need to comply with.
- Outlining expectations for digital communications outside of school hours.

QUESTION

150. What metric are you using to measure that saving?

ANSWER

The Minns Government is committed to delivering tangible, sustainable and meaningful savings that are felt on the ground by the teaching workforce.

Domestic Violence and education

QUESTION

151. How will the Department of Education implement the domestic and family violence Common Risk Assessment and Management Framework (CRAMF) to ensure school staff have the capability to identify domestic and family violence and assess or manage risk?

ANSWER

All staff are trained and have a duty to recognise and respond to safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns for children and young people that arise from or during the course of their work. All department staff are mandatory reporters and are required to complete child protection training.

The department's approach to Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is aimed at building staff capability to recognise, respond and support children and young people who may be experiencing or exhibiting DFV and contribute towards the primary prevention and early intervention phase of the NSW Government's holistic approach to DFV. This approach involves building staff capability for early recognition and response, awareness and education, and fostering collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, and includes continuously improving resources and learning to meet the needs of school staff to assess and manage risk.

The department works closely with NSW Health, Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Police to ensure a consistent and coordinated response to children and families experiencing child protection concerns. The Department of Education

has participated in consultation to inform the development of the final Common Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

QUESTION

152. Early childhood settings, primary, and secondary schools have an essential role in preventing violence. What is the NSW Government doing to fund and support primary prevention initiatives in early childhood settings, primary, and secondary schools to address the drivers of sexual, domestic and family violence?

ANSWER

The NSW Domestic Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Primary Prevention Strategy provides the department with strategic direction to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence.

An Action Plan has been developed between the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and the Department of Education, outlining the implementation of the implementation of the Strategy.

The department's actions to further Respectful Relationships Education focus on three key aspects:

- RRE resource hub - to provide material for teachers, parents and carers.
- Professional learning for teachers on RRE – to equip teachers and leaders with appropriate skills and capabilities to deliver RRE programs in schools.
- Develop and implement holistic RRE curriculum - develop and embed a holistic, evidence-based approach to RRE.

QUESTION

153. Is the funding for violence prevention in education settings adequate? Why or why not?

ANSWER

The NSW Department of Education is funded to better support schools in relation to respectful relationships education (RRE).

This investment of funds will enable the department to provide teachers, leaders and school staff with access to resources, professional learning and support to deliver age appropriate, expert developed, evidence-based consent and respectful relationships education (RRE) across government primary and secondary schools.

QUESTION

154. How much funding is provided per school for respectful relationships education?

ANSWER

The Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) measure is providing \$77.6 million over five years from 2024 to states, territories and the non-government school sector.

This funding is an Australian Government contribution to support jurisdictions and sectors in their delivery of expert developed, evidence-based, age-appropriate consent and respectful relationships education.

The Pathways to Prevention: NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027 is NSW's first dedicated DFSV Primary Prevention Strategy. The NSW Department of Education will receive funding under this strategy over the years 2024-2028 to better support schools in relation to respectful relationships education.

QUESTION

155. What is being done to increase the capacity of schools and teaching staff to effectively deliver this part of the curriculum?

ANSWER

Teachers are provided with teaching advice to support the implementation of the new content for respectful relationships in the new Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) K–6 and 7–10 syllabuses. Other support materials, such as sample scope and sequences and PDHPE online professional learning, will also be provided.

The NSW Department of Education will be funded under the Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) measure and the NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027. The strategy is NSW's first dedicated DFSV Primary Prevention Strategy to deliver on a series of actions.

The actions aim to deliver:

- Greater support for teachers and school staff to develop and implement policies and programs to address the drivers of gender-based violence and create respectful school communities.
- Effective practice guidelines to improve respectful relationships education (RRE) curriculum delivery and evaluation across KLAs.
- Professional learning and resources for educators and school leaders focused on curriculum delivery.
- Guidance on, and examples of, the practical implementation of RRE curriculum delivery in classrooms and schools using pedagogies that are proven effective, in ways that reflect the lived experiences of students.
- A repository of RRE resources, evaluations and research reports to support curriculum delivery.
- A quality assessment tool to assist educators and schools to select and deliver effective RRE.

- Local networks that are self-sustaining and supported by leaders who can build the capability of teachers to deliver effective RRE.
- Increased community understanding of the value and rationale of RRE in schools resulting in greater support and reduced backlash.
- Increased awareness, confidence and skills of school leaders to audit, implement and evaluate whole-school approaches that embed respectful relationships and gender equality.
- Increased student knowledge, attitudes and skills related to equality, respect and responsibility which enables them to recognise and respond to unsafe situations, seek assistance effectively and establish and maintain respectful, equal and satisfying relationships.

QUESTION

156. What evaluation is being conducted to measure the capability of teaching staff and the impact of respectful relationships education?

ANSWER

The department will monitor the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) K–6 and 7–10 syllabuses as they are implemented in schools, as well as the outcomes from the Commonwealth Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) measure and NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence with respect to education.

QUESTION

157. How will the NSW Government ensure a consistent, coordinated, and quality approach to respectful relationships education across NSW schools, rather than an ad hoc approach?

ANSWER

The new mandatory Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) K–6 and 7–10 syllabuses are to be taught to all NSW students from Kindergarten to Year 10. The syllabuses outline the essential content about respectful relationships to ensure learning equity for all students from Kindergarten to Year 10.

A range of professional learning tailored for school staff and leaders will support them to deliver respectful relationship education as part of the curriculum. A range of resources will also be available for schools.

Funding for the purchase of land within the Castle Hill Electorate for a new school.

QUESTION

158. With respect to the Ministers answer to Question on Notice Number 3228, Purchase of Land in Castle Hill Electorate for a School, can the Minister advise:
- (a) What is the amount of the funding which has been set aside for the purchase of land within the Castle Hill Electorate?
 - (b) Has any amount of the funding you have stated “has been set aside for this work” been expended?
 - i. If any amount has been expended how much has been expended?
 - (c) Has any work been carried out by the Department directed to the purchase of land for the construction of a new school within the Castle Hill Electorate?
 - i. If so what work has been carried out?

ANSWER

Additional school capacity is currently being planned for North West Sydney in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Funding has been set aside in the NSW 2024/25 Budget to support this work. Expenditures will continue to be reported including through the NSW Budget.

Gender Pronouns

QUESTION

159. Is there a requirement for teachers to ask students for their preferred pronouns?

ANSWER

There is no requirement for teachers to ask students about preferred pronouns. Teachers are expected to follow Legal Issues Bulletin 55 as well as the Code of Conduct.

QUESTION

160. Is there a requirement for teachers to acknowledge a student’s pronouns?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 159.

QUESTION

161. Will a teacher be reprimanded if they misgender a student?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 159.

QUESTION

162. Is there a requirement for teachers to ask students about their sexual identity?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 159.

QUESTION

163. Is there compulsory training for teachers relating to pronouns? (a) What are the consequences if a teacher refuses any compulsory training?

ANSWER

No.

QUESTION

164. Is there compulsory training for teachers relating to gender? (a) What are the consequences if a teacher refuses any compulsory training?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 163.

QUESTION

165. Is there compulsory training for teachers relating to sexual identity?
(a) What are the consequences if a teacher refuses any compulsory training?

ANSWER

See answer to question 163.

QUESTION

166. If a child identifies as Transgender what arrangements are made for bathrooms, school excursions and overnight camps?

ANSWER

Arrangements are set out in Legal Issues Bulletin 55.

Infrastructure

QUESTION

167. What processes does the department have in place to ensure that educational infrastructure is planned alongside major residential developments like those in the Hills Shire?

ANSWER

The NSW Government's enrolment growth audit exposed the former government's failure to build new and upgraded schools where they were needed, particularly in North-West Sydney. Additional school capacity is now being planned and delivered for this community by the new Minns Labor Government, and further updates will be shared as work progresses.

QUESTION

168. How does the department assess the educational needs of a community before approving large-scale residential projects?

ANSWER

The department monitors population and residential development trends so that it can plan to meet enrolment needs in schools across NSW. To do so the department regularly consults with relevant departments and agencies such as the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and local councils who are responsible for approving the development of large-scale residential projects.

QUESTION

169. What are the current timelines for the construction of new schools in areas like the Hills Showground, and how are these timelines being managed?

(a) Given the projected population growth in the Hills Shire, what contingency plans does the department have if the construction of new schools falls behind schedule?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

The department publishes information about project timelines on its website. Major projects undergo detailed planning, mitigations are identified for potential risks, and the department works closely with main works construction contractors and other stakeholders to address issues as they arise.

The Minns Government is working to fix the planning mistakes made by the former NSW Liberal Government in North-West Sydney by planning and delivering more school capacity in the area.

QUESTION

170. How does the department coordinate with local councils to ensure that the infrastructure needs of new residents, including schools, are adequately planned for?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

QUESTION

171. What data does the department use to forecast the number of school-aged children that will result from new residential developments?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167. The department has advised that it processes a large range of datasets, including the NSW Common Planning Assumptions, Sydney Housing Supply Forecasts, historical student enrolments details, Geocoded National Address File and additional data from the Commonwealth Department of Education.

QUESTION

172. Can you provide an update on the status of school construction in St Leonards/Crows Nest, given the proposed 7,000 new dwellings?

ANSWER

The department regularly provides updates about projects on its website.

QUESTION

173. What challenges does the department face in securing land for new schools in rapidly growing urban areas?

(a) How are these being addressed?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

QUESTION

174. How does the department prioritise which areas receive new school infrastructure first?

(a) How much say does the current Minister have over this direction?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

QUESTION

175. In areas where schools are already overcrowded, what immediate actions is the department taking to alleviate the pressure on these schools?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

QUESTION

176. What lessons has the department learned from past infrastructure planning failures, such as in the Kellyville/Rouse Hill area?

(a) How are these being applied to current projects?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

QUESTION

177. How does the department ensure that funding for new schools keeps pace with the need generated by new residential developments?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167. As part of the NSW Government's plan to rebuild public education, the 2024-25 Budget is delivering record education funding, including \$8.9 billion for new and upgraded schools. This targeted investment will ensure growing communities get access to a world class public education.

QUESTION

178. What is the department's plan for managing the transition of students into new schools once they are built, particularly in areas with high mobility rates?

ANSWER

All major school projects are supported by an operational readiness plan, which involves the collaboration of all relevant departmental teams to ensure new facilities are prepared and ready for use by students and staff. These teams work closely with the school leadership to manage the transition, tailoring the approach to the specific needs of the school and its local community.

QUESTION

179. How does the department communicate with local communities about the progress of new school construction projects?

ANSWER

The department regularly updates its School Infrastructure website and shares information to local school communities about all major works projects.

Additionally, the department establishes a project reference group (PRG) for each of its major works projects. A PRG typically consists of architects, planners, design professionals, department representatives, a representative of the school's Parents & Citizens Association, and the school Principal.

QUESTION

180. How does the department work with developers to ensure that infrastructure contributions include provisions for educational facilities?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

QUESTION

181. What role does public consultation play in the department's planning process for new schools, and how are community concerns addressed?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

QUESTION

182. Can the department provide a breakdown of current and planned school infrastructure projects across NSW, particularly in high-growth areas?

ANSWER

The Department of Education regularly updates its School Infrastructure website with information on major capital works.

QUESTION

183. What is the department's strategy for dealing with potential delays in school construction due to unforeseen circumstances?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 169.

QUESTION

184. How does the department ensure that educational infrastructure is not just reactive but anticipatory, meeting the needs of communities as they grow?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 167.

Code of Conduct

QUESTION

185. How does the Department ensure that the Code of Conduct is communicated and enforced among all teachers?

ANSWER

Workplace managers ensure employees are aware of their responsibilities under the Code and use established reporting systems when a breach of the Code may have occurred.

The Professional and Ethical Standards Directorate (PES) provides significant resources to assist principals in relation to these responsibilities, including face-to-face professional learning, online resources, and the provision of relevant case studies on emerging issues for use in staff development.

The PES Reporter Guide provides clear advice to all staff on making reports about staff conduct. PES assesses all allegations received and supports Principals or workplace managers to respond directly and proportionately. In matters which may amount to misconduct, PES will investigate and take appropriate action, including possible remedial or disciplinary action.

New staff are also required to complete mandatory training through the induction process.

In September 2024, the NSW Public Service Commissioner released a new Code of Ethics and Conduct module for NSW Government Sector Employees. At the Department of Education, all ongoing, temporary, and casual staff must complete the new 20-minute Code of Ethics and Conduct e-learning module by November 2024. This includes both school-based staff and department staff.

QUESTION

186. How often are teachers required to undergo refresher training on the Code of Conduct?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 185.

QUESTION

187. What mechanisms are in place for students or parents to report violations of the Code of Conduct?
(a) How does the Department ensure transparency and accountability in investigating such complaints?

ANSWER

Students and parents can report any concerns, including allegations of employee misconduct to the school principal, or the Director, Educational Leadership if the matter involves the principal. It is the role of the principal or workplace manager to promptly address poor conduct and utilise the department's reporting systems when a breach of the Code may have occurred.

Allegations of employee misconduct are reported to the Professional and Ethical Standards Directorate (PES).

PES assesses the allegations and supports Principals or workplace managers to respond directly and proportionately. In matters which may amount to misconduct, PES will investigate and take appropriate action in line with the legislative requirements, including possible remedial or disciplinary action.

Procedural fairness is a fundamental part of this process and includes that the investigator and decision maker have no direct interest in the matter and are unbiased in their actions and decision-making.

Some allegations involving conduct towards or in the presence of children are reportable to the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*. The OCG ensures the department is responding appropriately to

allegations against employees and that the process protects children and is fair and accountable.

The department is also required to regularly report matters of suspected corrupt conduct to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) under the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988* (the Act). PES works diligently to meet this obligation and works closely with the ICAC in relation to these matters.

QUESTION

188. Are there any measures in place to monitor teachers' compliance with the Code of Conduct on social media platforms?

ANSWER

The Code of Conduct and the Department's Social Media policy clearly outline the department's expectations regarding the use of social media.

Allegations of misuse that may amount to misconduct are referred to the department's Professional and Ethical Standards Directorate (PES).

QUESTION

189. How does the Department handle situations where teachers' personal beliefs interfere with their professional responsibilities?

ANSWER

The Department of Education's Code of Conduct sets out the department's expectations in relation to employees engaging in personal, political and community activities.

QUESTION

190. Has there been any recent review or update of the Code of Conduct to address contemporary issues?

ANSWER

The current Code of Conduct was released after extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, included updates to address contemporary issues. A review of the Code is underway to ensure alignment with the new Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW Government employees, which all government sector staff must comply with by November 2024.

QUESTION

191. Can you explain the role of school principals in enforcing the Code of Conduct?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 185.

QUESTION

192. What steps are taken if a school principal fails to enforce the Code of Conduct within their school?

(a) How does the Department plan to prevent similar incidents in the future and ensure adherence to the Code of Conduct?

ANSWER

Should the failure of the principal to enforce the Code of Conduct amount to allegations of misconduct, they are referred to the department's Professional and Ethical Standards Directorate (PES).

PES will assess the allegation and support the Director Educational Leadership to respond directly and proportionately. In matters which may amount to misconduct, PES will investigate and take appropriate action in line with the legislative requirements, including possible remedial or disciplinary action.

Civics Education

QUESTION

193. How does the Department ensure that Civics education is consistently taught across all schools, given that it is currently integrated within other subjects only?

ANSWER

Civics education is embedded in the NSW school curriculum through both existing and new syllabuses developed by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). Existing syllabuses incorporate content from the Australian Curriculum as 'general capabilities' and 'cross-curriculum priorities', while the new syllabuses, introduced as part of the NSW Curriculum Reform, define these as 'capabilities and priorities'.

Civics and citizenship is one of six priorities integrated into subject-specific content to support student learning outcomes. Content for these syllabuses, including civics and citizenship, has been rigorously developed in consultation with education experts and teachers as part of NESA's syllabus development process. The new syllabuses ensure that capabilities and priorities emerge naturally from the content, providing consistent exposure to civics concepts across all subjects.

All NSW schools follow these syllabuses, ensuring a uniform approach to civics education. Principals oversee the implementation of civics content in their schools, while the NSW Department of Education provides resources and support to help teachers in teaching the content.

QUESTION

194. What measures are in place to monitor and enforce the teaching of Civics content, particularly in schools where teachers may choose to overlook it?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 193.

QUESTION

196. What specific training or professional development is provided to teachers to ensure they are equipped to deliver high-quality Civics education?

ANSWER

The new Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) K–6 syllabus includes explicit civics and citizenship content that provides opportunities for every student to understand the democratic roles and responsibilities people have in Australia. Students also develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be informed and active citizens in the future.

The Geography and History 7–10 syllabuses include civics and citizenship content related to the rights, responsibilities and values that underpin Australian society. A new mandatory topic in the History syllabus extends students' understanding of the development of democracy in Australia including content on the Australian constitution, civic duties, elections, plebiscites and referendums related to the First World War.

NESA's Subject Content Knowledge Policy describes the discipline, curriculum and pedagogical knowledge requirements suitable as studies in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs. The policy guidelines are aligned to NSW syllabuses for each teaching area in primary and secondary education and assist ITE providers to prepare pedagogy units for ITE programs in NSW. As NSW syllabuses are released ITE providers are required to revise their course content accordingly to ensure ITE students have the required knowledge.

The Department of Education provides regular professional learning and ongoing support for teachers through statewide staffroom professional learning. This includes regular sessions delivered by the NSW Parliamentary Education and Engagement Office. The department is developing learning programs that integrate civics education across all key learning areas to support teachers, with ongoing initiatives to deepen civics and citizenship education within the classroom.

QUESTION

197. Can the Department provide data on how many schools in NSW actively engage in teaching Civics as part of their curriculum? Can we get that data?

ANSWER

Civics education is embedded in the NSW school curriculum through both existing and new syllabuses developed by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). All schools in NSW are required to teach the syllabuses developed by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

QUESTION

198. What strategies does the Department have in place to encourage schools to prioritise Civics education, especially in light of its importance for democratic engagement?

ANSWER

The department actively develops teaching and learning programs integrating civics education across all key learning areas. It also has ongoing initiatives to deepen civics and citizenship education within the classroom. Support for schools includes a range of resources and programs designed to aid the delivery of effective civics education.

Additionally, the department provides regular professional learning and ongoing support to teachers through statewide staffroom professional learning. This includes regular sessions delivered by the NSW Parliamentary Education and Engagement Office.

QUESTION

199. How does the Department support teachers who feel unprepared or insufficiently trained to teach Civics effectively?

ANSWER

The department provides regular professional learning and ongoing support through statewide staffroom sessions and other professional development courses. These include sessions developed and delivered in consultation with the NSW Parliamentary Education and Engagement Office to enhance teachers' proficiency in Civics and Citizenship education.

Additionally, the department develops teaching and learning programs that integrate Civics education across all key learning areas. This is complemented by subject-specific resources and teaching advice aimed at deepening Civics and Citizenship

education within the classroom and aiding the delivery of effective Civics education where appropriate.

QUESTION

200. What resources are provided to schools to enhance the delivery of Civics education, and how is the effectiveness of these resources evaluated?

ANSWER

The Department of Education provides various resources to schools to enhance Civics education, integrating cross-curricular priorities and as standalone offerings specific to Civics education. This dual approach ensures that Civics concepts are taught as part of multiple subjects while allowing for focused, in-depth exploration of Civics and Citizenship in specific contexts.

The department has also provided schools with teaching and learning resources and detailed teaching advice guides tailored to these purposes, which are available on our website and in statewide staffrooms.

The department regularly reviews and updates its resources, including seeking teacher feedback.

QUESTION

201. Is the Department considering any initiatives to enhance student engagement in Civics beyond the classroom, such as partnerships with community organisations or government bodies?

ANSWER

The department promotes student engagement in Civics beyond the traditional classroom setting through various programs and activities. These initiatives are implemented at a school level through:

- in school commemorations (Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day, Remembrance Day, Anzac Day)
- fieldwork
- incursions
- excursions
- site studies
- case studies.

Independent Schools

QUESTION

202. What factors do the department attribute to the 3.6% increase in enrolments in the independent school sector in 2023?

ANSWER

In NSW, public schools remain the sector of choice for a majority of parents, with approximately 800,000 students enrolled in public schools from preschool to Year 12.

There are many factors that can affect school enrolment trends. This includes changing demographics, school and housing supply, and local schooling options.

QUESTION

203. Has the department conducted any surveys or studies to understand why more parents are choosing independent schools over government schools?
(a) If so, what are the key findings?

ANSWER

The department and schools seek feedback from parents to understand their schooling preferences. The Minns Government is working hard to make the NSW public education system to best in the nation, providing the opportunity for every child to receive a world class public education.

QUESTION

204. Do you think parents are losing faith in the government school system and that this might be driving parents to seek alternatives in independent schools?

ANSWER

The department's Our Plan for NSW Public Education seeks to make NSW public schools the first choice for young people and their families.

The NSW Government is working to ensure public schools continue to be the first choice for the majority of families, including addressing teacher shortages, implementing evidence-based explicit teaching and building schools where they are needed.

QUESTION

205. How does the department assess the quality of education in government schools in comparison to independent schools, especially in terms of student outcomes, facilities, and teacher satisfaction?

ANSWER

School excellence is at the core of all work across NSW public schools, focusing on continuous school improvement. The School Excellence Framework supports all NSW public schools in their pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of quality practice across the key domains of education – learning, teaching and leading – to inform and guide decision-making by principals.

QUESTION

206. What measures are the department taking to address declining enrolments in government schools?

(a) How is the department working to regain the confidence of parents?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 204.

QUESTION

207. What role does school safety, discipline, and classroom behaviour play in influencing parental decisions to move their children to independent schools?

(a) Are there specific initiatives in place to address these concerns in government schools?

ANSWER

In Term 1 2024 the department introduced a new Student Behaviour Policy, which ensures that schools and principals have the tools they need to manage student behaviour and maintain safe classrooms.

NSW public schools also have access to more than 2,000 specialists, including behaviour specialists, school counselling staff, student support officers and wellbeing nurses, who provide a range of supports in managing complex student behaviour.

The NSW Government has also committed to hire an additional 250 school counsellors.

Consent

QUESTION

208. What resources are being given to schools to help teach the new curriculum content on consent?

ANSWER

All NSW schools are being provided with a range of teaching advice and other materials to support implementation of the new curriculum. These include glossary definitions and sample scope and sequences which highlight when consent education could be taught.

The Department of Education provides teaching and learning resources to support age-appropriate consent education through the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education key learning areas for Kindergarten to Year 10.

To build on the existing support, the Department of Education will be funded under the Commonwealth Consent and Respectful Relationships Education (CRRE) measure to support delivery of expert developed, evidence-based, age-appropriate consent and respectful relationships education.

The Pathways to Prevention: NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027 is NSW's first dedicated DFSV Primary Prevention Strategy. The NSW Department of Education's work under this strategy will better support schools in relation to respectful relationships education, which includes the concept of consent.

Funding will be used for a range of school-based actions to establish on the ground support for teachers and leaders, develop resources and provide professional learning.

Life Education

QUESTION

209. Why was Funding Cut to Life Education? (a) Who made that decision?

ANSWER

No funding was cut. NSW public schools continue to engage Life Education, as they have done for many years.

QUESTION

210. What replacement or substitute is in place for life education?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 209.

Broadwater Public School Rebuild

QUESTION

211. Can the Minister provide an updated timeline for the rebuild of Broadwater Public School, which was severely impacted by the 2022 floods?

ANSWER

Construction has commenced. Information has been made available through community information sessions, and updates continue to be provided including on the department's website.

QUESTION

212. Specifically, can the Minister advise what the anticipated completion date is for the new school and confirm if the students will be back in their new school Day One, Term One next year?

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 211.

Western Sydney, South West Sydney

QUESTION

213. How does your department justify the reduction of 1.25% in discretionary budgets for public schools in light of the increasing needs of students in underfunded areas like Western Sydney?

ANSWER

This year the NSW Labor Government has delivered record education funding, including a \$700 million increase to public school budgets. In keeping with our election commitment, the government is increasing NSW's funding of public schools to 75% of the Schooling Resource Standard, and is continuing to negotiate for the Commonwealth Government to increase its share to 25%.

Record funding is part of our commitment to rebuild public education, and it is equally important to ensure that it is targeted to benefit students. This record funding is therefore backed by reforms to tackle the crises which developed over 12 years of Liberal and Nationals government.

QUESTION

214. Why are parents at schools like Beecroft Public School being forced to fundraise for basic infrastructure needs, such as out-of-school-hours care, when this should be a government responsibility?

ANSWER

This year the NSW Labor Government has delivered record education funding, including a \$700 million increase to public school budgets. In keeping with our election commitment, the government is increasing NSW's funding of public schools to 75% of the Schooling Resource Standard, and is continuing to negotiate for the Commonwealth Government to increase its share to 25%. Outside School Hours care (OOSH) is delivered on school sites by a range of approved providers, with different management structures. The department has advised that in some schools, like Beecroft Public School, the Parent & Citizens Committee has chosen to operate an OOSH care service.

QUESTION

215. Minister, with public schools still "scrounging for pens and textbooks," how does the department intend to meet the 100% school resourcing standard as per the Gonski recommendations?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is lifting its contribution to schools' funding by 2.35 per cent to take NSW from 72.65 per cent to 75 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). The Commonwealth has only offered to increase its funding share from 20 per cent to 22.5 per cent. NSW will continue to advocate to the Federal Government funding for an additional 2.5 per cent to ensure it completes the task it set itself a decade ago in achieving full and fair funding for schools through the Gonski funding model.

The Federal Government has deeper pockets and has significantly reduced NSW's share of GST revenue. It is time for the Federal Government to step up and up their offer.

QUESTION

216. How can your government claim to prioritise teaching and learning when critical support roles are being cut, directly impacting student outcomes?

ANSWER

Record funding provided by the Minns Labor Government is being targeted to prioritise teaching and learning, as we work to rebuild public education following 12 years of neglect under the Liberals and Nationals.

Qantas Chairman's Club

QUESTION

217. Are you a Member of the Qantas Chairman's Club?

- (a) If no, have you ever previously been a member?
- (b) If yes, when did you cease to be a member?
- (c) If yes, when did you initially become a member?
- (d) If yes, when did you make a declaration to The Cabinet Office?
- (e) If yes, how many times since 28 March 2023 have you used the Qantas Chairman's Club?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

The Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics Report on Review of the Code of Conduct, Aspects of Disclosure of Interests, and Related Issues (December 2010) notes that:

"Advice has been received from the Crown Solicitor that use of the Chairman's Lounge by invitation is not a "gift" for the purposes of clause 10 of the Regulation, as it does not involve disposition of property. However, when the membership leads to an upgrade valued at more than \$250, it becomes disclosable as a contribution to travel, and should be reported under clause 11 of the Regulation."

Clause 16 of the Regulation allows a Member to, at their discretion, disclose any direct or indirect benefit, advantage or liability, whether pecuniary or not.

Relevant disclosures have been made to the Cabinet Office and to the Parliament.

Union membership

QUESTION

218. Are you a member of a union?

- (a) If yes, what union?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

Union membership fees

QUESTION

219. What was the expenditure for you to join a union in:
(a) 2022-23?
(b) 2023-24?
(c) 2024-25?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

CFMEU

QUESTION

220. Have you ever been a member of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU)?
(f) If yes, when?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

CFMEU meetings

QUESTION

221. Given ministerial diary disclosures do not include all meetings and provide exceptions to disclosures, since 28 March 2023, have you met with the CFMEU?

ANSWER

I am advised;

In accordance with the Premier's Memorandum 2015-05, all Ministers publish extracts from their diaries summarising details of scheduled meetings held with stakeholders, external organisations, third-party lobbyists and individuals. Ministers are not required to disclose details of the following meetings:

- meetings involving Ministers, ministerial staff, parliamentarians or government officials (whether from NSW or other jurisdictions)
- meetings that are strictly personal, electorate or party political
- social or public functions or events
- meetings held overseas (which must be disclosed in accordance with regulation 6(1)(b) of the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 and Attachment B to the Memorandum), and
- matters for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Ministers' diary disclosures are published quarterly on The Cabinet Office's website (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures>).

ETU membership

QUESTION

222. Have you ever been a member of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU)?

(a) If yes, when?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

ETA meetings

QUESTION

223. Given ministerial diary disclosures do not include all meetings and provide exceptions to disclosures, since 28 March 2023, have you met with the ETU?

ANSWER

I am advised;

In accordance with Premier's Memorandum M2015-05 Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information, all Ministers publish extracts from their diaries summarising details of scheduled meetings held with stakeholders, external organisations, third- party lobbyists and individuals. Ministers are not required to disclose details of the following meetings:

- meetings involving Ministers, ministerial staff, parliamentarians or government officials (whether from NSW or other jurisdictions)
- meetings that are strictly personal, electorate or party political
- social or public functions or events
- meetings held overseas (which must be disclosed in accordance with regulation 6(1)(b) of the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 and Attachment B to the Memorandum), and
- matters for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Ministers' diary disclosures are published quarterly on The Cabinet Office's website (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures>).

Paper shredder

QUESTION

224. Does your ministerial office have a paper shredder?

ANSWER

I am advised;

When the NSW Government was elected in 2023, shredders used by the former Liberal and National Government were left in Ministerial and Parliament offices.

Office equipment is purchased in line with NSW Government procurement rules.

Ministerial disclosures to The Cabinet Office

QUESTION

225. On what date did you last update/make a ministerial disclosure to The Cabinet Office?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Ministerial Code of Conduct (Ministerial Code) requires Ministers to make certain disclosures to the Premier and the Secretary of The Cabinet Office.

I comply with my obligations under the Ministerial Code.

Department/Agency portfolio

QUESTION

226. What department(s)/agency(s) are included in your portfolio?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Cabinet Office publishes a Governance Arrangements Chart containing information about Ministers, NSW Government agencies established under Schedule 1 to the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* and State Owned Corporations established under Schedule 5 to the *State Owned Corporations Act 1989*. The Governance Arrangements Chart outlines the agencies in the Premier and Cabinet portfolio.

The Governance Arrangements Chart may be accessed via The Cabinet Office's website at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2024-08/20240807-Governance-Arrangements-Chart.pdf>.

The *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*, and Administrative Arrangements Orders made under Part 7 of the *Constitution Act 1902*, are available on the NSW Legislation website (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au).

Department/Agency employees

QUESTION

227. How many senior executive service employees were employed by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities on:

- (a) 28 March 2023?
- (b) 1 July 2023?
- (c) 1 January 2024?
- (d) 1 July 2024?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The number of senior executives is publicly reported within Annual Reports.

QUESTION

228. How many public servants within your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) were paid more than the Premier in 2023-24?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The remuneration of public service senior executives is published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports.

QUESTION

229. How many redundancies were processed by each Department(s)/agency(s) within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?

- (a) Of these redundancies, how many were:
 - i. Voluntary?
 - ii. Forced?

(b) What was the total cost of all redundancies in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Redundancies are published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports under employee related expenses.

Former Ministerial Employees

QUESTION

230. Are there any former employee from your ministerial office now employed by any department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?

(a) If yes, how many?

ANSWER

I am advised;

The employment of former Ministerial office staff is not tracked.

Under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, the Secretary of a Department exercises the employer functions of the Government in relation to departmental employees. The Secretary is not subject to the direction or control of a Minister in the exercise of those functions. Similarly, the head of a Public Service agency exercises the employer functions of the Government in relation to non-Public Service senior executives of the agency. A head of a Public Service agency is not subject to the direction or control of a Minister in the exercise of those functions.

All NSW government sector employees must comply with the Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW government sector employees. Employees must also have regard to their relevant agency's code of conduct.

Ministerial office staff must comply with their ethical obligations under the NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, including after the cessation of the employment.

Department/Agency Annual Reports

QUESTION

231. In what month will the 2023-24 annual reports for each department / agency in your portfolio be published?

ANSWER

I am advised;

The annual report of a reporting GSF agency is to be prepared, submitted and tabled in accordance with requirements under the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 and Treasurer's Direction 23-11.

QUESTION

232. Will the 2023-24 annual reports for the department / agency in your portfolio include a printed copy?

(a) If yes, how much is budgeted for printing in 2024-25?

ANSWER

I am advised;

As per the NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines – Annual Reporting Requirements TPG23-10, agencies in the portfolio will be providing two printed copies of the annual report (via in house printing) to the Premier for tabling in both houses of Parliament.

State Records Act

QUESTION

233. Have you and your ministerial office had training and/or a briefing about the State Records Act from State Records NSW and/or The Cabinet Office and/or Premier's Department?

(a) If yes, when?

ANSWER

I am advised;

The Ministers' Office Handbook provides guidance in relation to these obligations to assist each Minister's office.

The Premier's Department and The Cabinet Office also provide guidance, advice, training and support on these obligations for all Ministers' offices.

Consultants

QUESTION

234. Since 28 March 2023, how many consultancy contracts have been signed in your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?

(a) What was the individual amount of each contract?

(b) What is the purpose of each contract?

(c) Who was the contract with? 26

(d) Did the contract go through a competitive tender?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Consultancy expenditure, including details of consulting engagements over \$50,000, are included in the annual reports of agencies and departments in accordance with the NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines TPG23-10 - Annual Reporting Requirements.

Legal Costs

QUESTION

235. How much did the Department/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities spend in legal costs since 28 March 2023?

(a) For what specific purposes or matters was legal advice sought?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Legal costs are included in the Other Operating Expenses of an agency's financial statement and further categorised in the note to Other Operating Expenses in accordance with the guidance in TPG24-05 Policy and Guidelines: Financial Reporting Code for NSW General Government Sector Agencies.

Advertising

QUESTION

236. How much has each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities spent on advertising or sponsored posts since 28 March 2023 on the following social media platforms:

- (a) Facebook
- (b) Instagram
- (c) LinkedIn
- (d) TikTok
- (e) YouTube
- (f) X (formerly known as Twitter)

ANSWER

I am advised:

Department and agency expenditure is published in Annual Reports and on OpenGov NSW and data.nsw.gov.au

Catering

QUESTION

237. How much of your ministerial budget was spent on catering in 2023-24?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Catering provided for official purposes may be funded from the Ministerial office budget.

Catering costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Premier's Department Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

As Members of Parliament, Ministers have credit facilities extended to them for dining and hospitality at Parliament House. The facilities may be used for business or private purposes.

QUESTION

238. Was catering used for external stakeholders?
(a) If yes, who were these external stakeholders?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Catering provided for official purposes may be funded from the Ministerial office budget. As Members of Parliament, Ministers have credit facilities extended to them for dining and hospitality at Parliament House. The facilities may be used for business or private purposes.

QUESTION

239. Did any catering costs in 2023-24 include expenditure on alcohol?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, which is Attachment B to the Ministers' Office Handbook, provides that all office holder staff must use State resources for the effective conduct of public business in a proper manner. Office holder staff must be economical and efficient in the use and management of public resources. The Handbook can be found here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/ministers-office-handbook>.

Gin

QUESTION

240. Since 28 March 2023, have you or your ministerial office purchased 'gin' using your ministerial budget?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, which is Attachment B to the Ministers' Office Handbook, provides that all office holder staff must use State resources for the effective conduct of public business in a proper manner. Office holder staff must be economical and efficient in the use and management of public resources.

The Handbook can be found here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/ministers-office-handbook>.

Stationery

QUESTION

241. How much of your ministerial budget was spent on stationery in 2023-24?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Spending on office stationery is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements. The costs of stationery are contained within the Premier's Department Annual Report.

QUESTION

242. Did your stationery expenditure include gifts for external stakeholders?

- (a) If yes, what was the gift(s)?
- (b) If yes, who received the gift(s)?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Ministers' Office Handbook outlines that the decision to present a gift is at the discretion of the Minister, having regard to both appropriateness and economy. Gifts

may be appropriate, for example, where given as a memento of an official visit or as a small token of appreciation.

However, gifts should not be given with the purpose, or in circumstances where they could be perceived as having the purpose, of inducing favourable treatment.

Gifts may be purchased as needed on an occasional basis or purchased and stored for future use. Gifts need to be purchased in accordance with NSW Government procurement policy.

Ministerial Vehicles and Driving Offences

QUESTION

243. Since 28 March 2023, have you personally driven your ministerial vehicle?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, other nominated public office holders, and certain former office holders are provided with official cars and drivers.

Office holders may drive themselves whenever they choose. Cars should be driven only by the office holder, officially employed drivers, the office holder's spouse or approved relative and any other person authorised by the office holder in those circumstances considered to be appropriate.

QUESTION

244. As a driver since 28 March 2023:

- (a) Have you been pulled over by the NSW Police Force?
 - (b) Have you been fined for speeding?
 - (c) Have you been fined for school zone related offence?
 - (d) Have you been fined for red light related offence?
 - (e) Have you been involved in an accident that included the NSW Police attending the scene?
- i. If yes to a) to e), did this include whilst driving your ministerial vehicle?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers, like all members of the community are subject to the laws of New South Wales, including Road Rules 2014.

Where a fine is incurred, the payment of the fine is the responsibility of the driver of the vehicle.

Speeches

QUESTION

245. Does your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) draft and write speeches for you?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Department and agency staff may contribute to factual information for speaking notes as part of their duties in line with longstanding practices in place under successive governments.

QUESTION

246. How many public servants have undertaken writing speeches in your portfolio department(s) / agency(s)?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Department and agency staff may contribute to factual information for speaking notes as part of their duties in line with longstanding practices in place under successive governments

Ministerial Staff, Local Government Councillors

QUESTION

247. As at 30 June 2024, how many of your ministerial staff were local government councillors?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministerial staff are employed by Ministers, on behalf of the State, in their capacity as "political office holders" under Part 2 of the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013 (Act).

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with the NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, including obligations to seek approval for secondary employment, and to take reasonable steps to avoid, and in all cases disclose, any actual or potential conflicts of interest (real or apparent).

QUESTION

248. What local government(s) did they serve?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministerial staff are employed by Ministers, on behalf of the State, in their capacity as "political office holders" under Part 2 of the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013 (Act).

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with the NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, including obligations to seek approval for secondary employment, and to take reasonable steps to avoid, and in all cases disclose, any actual or potential conflicts of interest (real or apparent).

Ministerial Advisors

QUESTION

249. How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office in 2023-24 FY?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministerial Staffing numbers are proactively published on the NSW website - <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers>.

QUESTION

250. What is the average salary for staff members in your ministerial office in 2023-24 FY?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministerial Staffing information is proactively published on the NSW website - <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers>.

Police Commissioner Gin

QUESTION

251. Have you received gin from the Police Commissioner?

ANSWER

I am advised:

No

Cabinet Sub Committees

QUESTION

252. What cabinet sub committees are you a member of?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Details of individual Cabinet committee members and the work of Cabinet committees are not generally made public. This reflects the longstanding Cabinet conventions of confidentiality and collective Ministerial responsibility, which are central to the Westminster system of government.

The NSW Cabinet Practice Manual is publicly available on the NSW Government website (www.nsw.gov.au) and provides information on operation of Cabinet and committees in NSW.

E-Toll

QUESTION

253. Does your ministerial vehicle have an E-Toll?
(a) If yes, is expenditure paid by your by your ministerial budget?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, other nominated public office holders, and certain former office holders are provided with official cars and drivers. All costs associated with these vehicles need to be paid from the relevant approved budget.

Costs for e-tolls form part of the Premier's Department Annual Report.

Department(s)/Agency(s) Gifts and Hospitality Register

QUESTION

254 Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) have a gifts and/or hospitality register?

(a) If yes, is it available online?

i. If yes, what is the URL?

ANSWER

Individual schools and department business units maintain local workplace registers for all staff declarations. For declarations made by PSSE and Nominated Employees, the Chief Risk Office collects and collates declarations into central register. This register is available on the department's website at

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/rights-and-accountability/corruption-prevention>.

Workplace complaints

QUESTION

255. Have you been the subject of any workplace complaints, including bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment since 28 March 2023?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Any complaint or disclosure made under the Respectful Workplace Policy is confidential. The Respectful Workplace Policy applies to all Ministerial Offices and staff. As noted in the Goward review, a key aspect of effective workplace complaint policies is confidentiality in the complaint and investigation process. Confidentiality ensures that staff feel safe about raising concerns and confident that action will be taken in response.

QUESTION

256. Has any member of your ministerial staff been the subject of any workplace complaints, including bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment since 28 March 2023?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Any complaint or disclosure made under the Respectful Workplace Policy is confidential. The Respectful Workplace Policy applies to all Ministerial Offices and staff. As noted in the Goward review, a key aspect of effective workplace complaint policies is confidentiality in the complaint and investigation process. Confidentiality

ensures that staff feel safe about raising concerns and confident that action will be taken in response.

Ministerial staff disclosure of gifts and/or hospitality

QUESTION

257. Does your ministerial office keep a register of gifts and/or hospitality for staff to make disclosures?

ANSWER

I am advised:

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with the Gifts, Hospitality and Benefits Policy for Office Holder Staff attached to the Ministers' Office Handbook and available on the NSW Government website.

QUESTION

258. Have any staff members in your office been the recipient of any free hospitality?
(a) What was the total value of the hospitality received?
(b) Are these gifts of hospitality declared?

ANSWER

I am advised:

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with their disclosure obligations under the Gifts, Hospitality and Benefits Policy for Office Holder Staff and I expect them to do so.

A breach of the Policy may be a breach of the Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct. The Policy includes disclosure obligations for Ministerial staff in respect of gifts, hospitality and benefits over \$150.

If a Ministerial staff member is required by their role to accompany their Office Holder at an event that the Office Holder is attending as the State's representative, or where the Office Holder has asked the staff member to attend, then attendance at that event would not constitute a gift or benefit for the purposes of the Policy.

Ministerial Code of Conduct

QUESTION

259. Since 28 March 2023, have you breached the Ministerial Code of Conduct?
(a) If yes, what was the breach?

ANSWER

I am advised:

All Ministers are expected to comply with their obligations under the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct (Ministerial Code) at all times.

The Ministerial Code sets the ethical standards of behaviour required of Ministers and establishes practices and procedures to assist with compliance.

Among other matters, the Ministerial Code requires Ministers to:

- disclose their pecuniary interests and those of their immediate family members to the Premier
- seek rulings from the Premier if they wish to hold shares, directorships, other business interests or engage in secondary employment (known as 'prohibited interests')
- identify, avoid, disclose and manage conflicts of interest
- disclose gifts and hospitality with a market value over \$500.
- A substantial breach of the Ministerial Code (including a knowing breach of any provision of the Schedule) may constitute corrupt conduct for the purposes of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988.

Credit Cards

QUESTION

260. Have you ever been issued with a credit card by a NSW Government department(s) and/or agency(s) since 28 March 2023?

(a) If yes, under what circumstance?

(b) If yes, what items and expenditure was undertaken?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers and Ministerial Staff are not eligible to receive Departmental credit cards except in the case of overseas travel. In cases of overseas travel short-term cards will be issued and returned at the completion of official travel together with a travel diary for fringe benefit tax purposes.

Where an NSW Government-issued credit card is provided the credit card must only be used for official overseas business trips and official business purposes, this includes for transport to/from the airport when departing/returning from the trip. NSW Government-issued credit cards for official business trips overseas will be held with government contract bankers and used within credit limits imposed. Credit cards are a useful means of expenditure control, but their use should never be for personal purposes.

Costs associated with overseas travel are published on the NSW Government website in line with M2015-05.

QUESTION

261. For each department, agency and/or other body in the Minister's portfolio please report:

(a) How many credit cards are currently on issue for staff? (Please provide a breakdown of this information by grade)

(b) What was the value of the largest reported purchase on a credit card for the last year?

(c) What was each largest reported purchase for?

(d) What was the largest amount outstanding on a single card at the end of a payment period?

(e) And what was the card holder's employment grade?

(f) How many credit cards have been reported lost or stolen?

(g) What was the cost to replace them?

(h) How many credit card purchases were deemed to be illegitimate or contrary to agency policy?

i. How many purchases were asked to be repaid on the basis that they were illegitimate or contrary to agency policy and what was the total value thereof?

ii Were all those amounts repaid?

(i) Are any credit cards currently on issue connected to rewards schemes?

i. Do staff receive any personal benefit as a result of those reward schemes?

ii. Can a copy of the staff credit card policy please be provided?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The use and management of purchasing (credit) cards for official purposes is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements of the NSW Government. Further, each Department / Agency within the portfolio have a specified policy, these are attached.

Department agency desk or office

QUESTION

262. Do you have a desk or office in your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) building(s)

ANSWER

I am advised:

I make use of an office in 52 Martin Place, NSW Parliament and my Electorate office.

When travelling, Ministers may make ad hoc arrangements to work for periods in departmental offices.

Senior Executive Drivers

QUESTION

263. How many senior executives in your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) have a driver?

ANSWER

I am advised;

No senior executive employed by the Department of Education have a driver.

Mobile Phones

QUESTION

264. How many mobile phones has your ministerial office been allocated as at 1 July 2024?

ANSWER

I am advised;

Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Communication Devices Policy provides guidance on the use, loss, theft, and return of communication devices provided for business purposes.

Minister's staff may use mobile telephones for business and (reasonable use) private purposes.

Under the current mobile plans all local and Australia-wide calls to land lines/mobiles and texts are included in the plan. Premium service calls, international calls and global roaming services are outside of the plan and may be still chargeable based on the principles below.

Ministers' staff mobile phone charges are paid from the Ministers' office budget except for the items listed below, which need to be paid as a private expense:

- Personal international calls from within Australia
- Personal travel related global roaming charges
- Personal premium number service calls

Any personal calls which are outside the plan need to be declared and paid for monthly. Declarations are not required otherwise.

The purchasing of technology items is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements. The costs form part of the Premier's Department Annual report.

QUESTION

265. How many mobile phones in your ministerial office have been lost or stolen since 28 March 2023?

ANSWER

I am advised;

Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Communication Devices Policy provides guidance on the use, loss, theft, and return of communication devices provided for business purposes.

Minister's staff may use mobile telephones for business and (reasonable use) private purposes.

Under the current mobile plans all local and Australia-wide calls to land lines/mobiles and texts are included in the plan. Premium service calls, international calls and global roaming services are outside of the plan and may be still chargeable based on the principles below.

Ministers' staff mobile phone charges are paid from the Ministers' office budget except for the items listed below, which need to be paid as a private expense:

- Personal international calls from within Australia
- Personal travel related global roaming charges
- Personal premium number service calls

Any personal calls which are outside the plan need to be declared and paid for monthly. Declarations are not required otherwise.

The purchasing of technology items is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements. The costs for form part of the Premier's Department Annual report.

Efficiency dividends

QUESTION

266. Was an efficiency dividend applied to your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) within your portfolio responsibilities in:

(a) 2023-24?

(b) 2024-25?

- i. If so, what was the efficiency dividend applied to each department/agency?
- ii. What measures are being considered to achieve this efficiency dividend?

ANSWER

I am advised;

The budget papers include detailed information on budgeted expenses, revenue and capital expenditure. This includes detailed financial statements for individual agencies as well as for government as a whole. The budget papers also outline the financial impact of measures in the budget on individual portfolios as well as for government as a whole.

GIPA Applications, SO52 - Ministerial Office

QUESTION

267. Does your ministerial office have staff member(s) to undertake Government Information (Public Access) Act application(s) and/or Standing Order 52 requests?
(a) If yes, has that ministerial staffer(s) received formal training about their legal obligations?

ANSWER

I am advised;

The Cabinet Office provides training for Ministerial staff on their obligations under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) and the requirements for responding to orders for papers under Standing Order 52 of the Legislative Council.

QUESTION

268. How many GIPA Applications have been received by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Information concerning the obligations of a Minister's office as an agency under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (the Act) is required to be submitted to the Attorney General in accordance with section 125(2) of the Act.

The information is included in the annual report of the Department of Communities and Justice in accordance with sections 125(3) and (5) of the Act.

Land audit - department/agency

QUESTION

269. Has your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) undertaken a land audit of surplus government property in any of the following postcodes:

(a) 2077? (b) 2079? (c) 2080? (d) 2081? (e) 2082? (f) 2083? (g) 2117? (h) 2118? (i) 2119? (j) 2120? 31 (k) 2121? (l) 2125? (m) 2126? (n) 2151? (o) 2154? (p) 2156? (q) 2157? (r) 2158? (s) 2159? (t) 2756? (u) 2775?

i. If yes to (a) to (u), how many properties have been identified

ANSWER

I am advised:

- The NSW Government has been conducting an audit of government land to identify surplus sites that are suitable for social, affordable or market housing.
- The locations of an initial set of 44 sites identified by the audit will be made public over the coming weeks and months as they are transferred to housing delivery agencies or brought to market.

GIPA Allocations - Department/agency

QUESTION

270. Since 28 March 2023, have you and/or your ministerial office given instructions to your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) in relation to Government Information (Public Access) Act application(s)?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 provides that agencies are not subject to the direction or control of any Minister in the exercise of the agency's functions in dealing with a particular access application under the Act (subsection 9(2)). The Act also contains offences prohibiting agency officers from acting unlawfully, and prohibiting persons from directing agencies to make an unlawful decision in relation to an access application (sections 116 and 117 of the Act). It is, however, generally appropriate for agencies to inform the responsible Minister where documents are to be released under the Act, for the Minister's information.

Department/Agency travel

QUESTION

271. As Minister, do you approve overseas travel for public servants in your portfolio department(s) / Agency(s)?

(a) If yes, how many overseas trips have you approved since 28 March 2023?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The NSW Government Travel and Transport Policy provides a framework for NSW Government travelling employees and covers official air and land travel by public officials using public money.

Section 2.1 of that Policy sets out approvals required in relation to overseas travel. Further information in relation to the Policy can be found here:

<https://www.info.buy.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/travel-and-transport-policy>.

NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines – Annual Reporting Requirements (TPG-10) requires agencies to include information on overseas visits by officers and employees in agency annual reports. Information for the period prior to 30 June 2023 is available in agencies' 2022-23 annual reports. Information for the period between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024 will be available in agencies' 2023-24 annual reports.

QUESTION

272. Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on charter air flights by your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Charter air flights are contained within the travel costs category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Department / Agency's Annual Report. This is in accordance with the Treasury Direction TD23-11 Annual reporting requirements.

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

QUESTION

273. Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on domestic flights by your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?

(a) Of these, how many flights were taken in business class?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Domestic travel is contained within the travel costs category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Department / Agency's Annual Report. This is in accordance with the Treasury Direction TD23-11 Annual reporting requirements.

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

Official travel is taken in accordance with the NSW government travel policy.

QUESTION

274. Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on international flights by your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?

(a) Of these, how many flights were taken in business class?

(b) Of these, how many flights were taken in first class?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The NSW Government Travel and Transport Policy provides a framework for all NSW Government travelling employees and covers all official air and land travel by public officials using public money. Further information in relation to the Policy can be found here: <https://www.info.buy.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/travel-and-transport-policy>

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

QUESTION

275. What was the total expenditure since 28 March 2023 by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities on:

(a) Taxi hire?

(b) Ridesharing services?

(c) Limousine/private car hire?

(d) Hire car rental?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The items are contained within the travel costs category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Department / Agency's Annual Report.

This is in accordance with the Treasury Direction TD23-11 Annual reporting requirements.

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

TikTok

QUESTION

276. Are you on TikTok?

(a) If yes, do you access TikTok from a NSW Government device?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Circular DCS-2023-01 Cyber Security NSW Directive - Protecting NSW Government information on government-issued devices sets out how NSW Government agencies are to manage the risk of using TikTok.

More information is available at: <https://arp.nsw.gov.au/dcs-2023-01-cyber-security-nsw-directive-protecting-nsw-government-information-on-government-issued-devices/>.

Signal

QUESTION

277. Are you on Signal?

(a) If yes, do you access Signal from a NSW Government device?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Like the former Coalition Government, a range of communications are used by the NSW Government.

I comply with the State Records Act 1998 and I expect all staff members to comply with their obligations under the State Records Act 1998.

Training

QUESTION

278. Since 28 March 2023, have you had training from an external stakeholder that included an invoice and payment paid for using your ministerial budget?

- (a) If yes, what is the description of training?
- (b) If yes, how much?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers have undertaken a program of Ministerial induction training. Ministers have undertaken Respectful Workplace Policy Training.

Members of Parliament are provided with a Skills Development Allowance that may be used in a manner consistent with the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal Annual Determination.

Cabinet Documents

QUESTION

279. Since 28 March 2023, have you shared Cabinet documents with your Parliamentary Secretary?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The conventions and practice for access to Cabinet documents are outlined in Premier's Memorandum M2006-08 - Maintaining Confidentiality of Cabinet Documents and Other Cabinet Conventions (M2006-8).

M2006-08 provides that the unauthorised and/or premature disclosure of Cabinet documents undermines collective ministerial responsibility and the convention of Cabinet confidentiality. It is essential that the confidentiality of Cabinet documents is maintained to enable full and frank discussions to be had prior to Cabinet making decisions.

Parliamentary Secretary

QUESTION

280. Does your Parliamentary Secretary have pass access to your ministerial office?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Security passes for the parliamentary precinct and 52 Martin Place are required to be issued in accordance with the Parliament House Security Pass Policy and 52 Martin Place security procedures and the associated Privacy and Surveillance Statement.

QUESTION

281. Does your Parliamentary Secretary have a desk in your ministerial office?

ANSWER

I am advised: No.

Website usage

QUESTION

282. What were the top 20 most utilised (by data sent and received) unique domain names accessed by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?

ANSWER

I am advised:

All acceptable use of IT services must be lawful, appropriate, and ethical.

The Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Network Services Policy is available in the Ministers' Office Handbook.

QUESTION

283. What were the top 20 most accessed (by number of times accessed) unique domain names accessed by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?

ANSWER

I am advised:

All acceptable use of IT services must be lawful, appropriate, and ethical.

The Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Network Services Policy is available in the Ministers' Office Handbook.

Ministerial Visits

QUESTION

284. Since 28 March 2023, have you visited any of these postcodes:
(a) 2077? (b) 2079? (c) 2080? (d) 2081? (e) 2082? (f) 2083? (g) 2117? (h) 2118? (i) 2119? (j) 2120? (k) 2121? (l) 2125? (m) 2126? (n) 2151? (o) 2154? (p) 2156? (q) 2157? (r) 2158? (s) 2159? (t) 2756? 34 (u) 2775?
i. If yes to (a) to (u): 1. What was the purpose of the visit(s)? 2. Did you make a funding announcement(s)

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers' diary disclosures are publicly available.

Premier's and Ministers' domestic travel information is published on the Premier's Department's website at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-domestic-travel>.

Hard hats/or vests

QUESTION

285. Do you have a hard hat and/or vest for visiting infrastructure sites?
(a) If yes, was it paid from your ministerial budget?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers are to comply with the appropriate use of personal protective equipment as per Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

The NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, which is Attachment B to the Ministers' Office Handbook, provides that all office holder staff must use State resources for the effective conduct of public business in a proper manner. Office holder staff must be economical and efficient in the use and management of public resources. State resources are not to be subject to wasteful or extravagant use.

Camera, video recorder or microphones

QUESTION

286. Does your ministerial office have the following paid by your ministerial budget:
(a) Handheld camera?
(b) Handheld video recorder?

(c) Microphone?

i. If yes to (a) to (c), how much is each worth when purchased?

ANSWER

I am advised:

Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Communication Devices Policy provides guidance on the use, loss, theft, and return of communication devices provided for business purposes.

The purchasing of technology items is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements. The costs form part of the Premier's Department Annual Report.

Media releases and statements

QUESTION

287. Are all the ministerial media releases and statements issued by you publicly available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases>?

(a) If no, why?

ANSWER

I am advised:

The Department of Customer Service (DCS) is responsible for managing www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases and the publication of media releases.

Early childhood education and care

QUESTION

288. What funding allocation for capital works has been allocated to early childhood education and care delivered in NSW by:

- (a) Council operated
- (b) DET operated
- (c) ACCO operated
- (d) Privately operated

ANSWER

In February 2024 the NSW Government announced \$17 million for early childhood education and care services in the final rounds of the 2022-23 Start Strong Capital Works Grants Program. These outcomes included funding for two Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and six not-for-profit privately managed services. While no Council-run services were part of the final round outcomes, grants have been awarded to these services under previous rounds. Department preschools

were not eligible for the Start Strong Capital Works Grants Program. Further information can be found on the department's website.

The NSW Government announced a further \$20 million in funding to support new not-for-profit services for communities with the greatest needs. Details for the program will be published on the department's website as soon as they become available.

The NSW Government is also building 100 new public preschools co-located with primary schools, which is the biggest expansion in public preschools in NSW history. In addition, the NSW Government is investing \$60 million for new and upgraded preschools on non-government school sites.

QUESTION

289. How many new centres are expected to be built as a result of capital works funding allocated to early childhood education and care delivered by:

- (a) Councils
- (b) DET
- (c) ACCO
- (d) Privately

Related document: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/record-early-childhood-investment>

ANSWER

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 288.



Early
childhood
education
▼

Schooling
▼

Skills
NSW ▼

Teach
NSW ▼

Teaching
and
learning ▼

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 Staff only

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Last updated
20/06/2024

Policy statement

[Financial management](#) →

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What needs to be
done ▼

Record-keeping
requirements

Supporting tools, resources
and related information

Policy contact

Implementation date
20/06/2024

Reference number
PD-2020-0472-11-V01.0.0

Publicly available
No

Policy cluster
Finance

Purchasing cards (Pcard)

 Print  Give feedback

Direction and guidance on the use of purchasing cards (PCards) – the preferred payment method for goods and services in the department – to ensure the efficient, economical, and ethical use of public resources, and to maintain standards of transparency, probity, ethics and integrity, in line with NSW Government policy.

Audience

School and education support staff (excluding contractors and consultants), authorised delegates under the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018* and finance managers in schools and business units.

Changes since previous update

Version	Date	Description of changes	Approved by
V01.0.0	20/06/2024	Under the 2023 Policy and procedure review program, new policy document with consolidated instructions previously provided in Purchasing card policy and Purchasing card guidelines. Updated instructions to make compliance requirements easier to understand and apply.	Executive Director, Shared Services

About the policy

Policy requirements

These procedures relate to section 1.5 of the [Financial management policy](#):

- ‘Department purchasing cards must be used in line with the department’s Purchasing cards procedures and delegations.’

For specific information on financial delegations under the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*, refer to [Financial delegations under the GSF Act](#).

NESA Purchasing Card Policy and Procedures

July 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of Australia, and the oldest continuing culture in human history.

We pay respect to Elders past and present and commit to respecting the lands we walk on, and the communities we walk with.

We celebrate the deep and enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country and acknowledge their continuing custodianship of the land, seas and sky.

We acknowledge the ongoing stewardship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the important contribution they make to our communities and economies.

We reflect on the continuing impact of government policies and practices and recognise our responsibility to work together with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities, towards improved economic, social and cultural outcomes.



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The above artwork represents NESA's reconciliation journey, with the circles representing the different schools and communities that NESA engage with on a day-to-day basis. You will notice the circles aren't perfectly round; they are a more organic shape. This represents the journey to reconciliation and the genuineness of the people involved.

Within each circle there are details that demonstrate the complexities in each relationship, and the varying colours show us that they are each individual and diverse. Finally, the two white dots at the centre focuses our attention on NESA's reconciliation goals:

- continual growth in attainment levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge's, histories, and cultures for all students.

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedures document is to set out the principles, standards, systems and processes relating to the effective management, control and usage of NSW Government purchasing cards (“P-cards”) within the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Background

NSW Treasury issued Treasury Circular [\(TC\) 21-01](#) outlining the NSW Government’s commitment to supporting the use of P-cards for low value procurement of goods and services. The NSW Government has subsequently mandated the use of P-card payments.

Scope

This policy applies to the management and use of all NESA P-cards issued to eligible NESA employees (s2.1), including individuals who have specific roles and responsibilities as a:

- Cardholder.
- Card Authoriser.
- Card Approver; and/or
- Card Administrator.

Policy

1. Overview

A P-card is a purchasing card (currently supplied by Citibank) with features designed to facilitate expenditure control. It is a cost-effective way of purchasing items of low value, while maintaining appropriate management controls.

Use of corporate purchasing cards shall be for official business purposes only, and may be used for:

- Official travel in Australia or overseas (see NESA Work Related Travel Policy).
- Business-related expenditure in relation to authorised travel; and
- Other allowable business-related expenditure.

All purchases must be procured in accordance with the current financial and procurement delegation instruments made by the Chief Executive Officer.

2. Card administration

2.1. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply and be approved for a P-card, an applicant must be an employee (ongoing) of NESAs, or a person seconded to work for NESAs, and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be required to purchase goods and services in the course of their duties.
- Travel frequently in the course of their duties.
- Other circumstances as determined by the Chief Executive Officer or a member of the NESAs Senior Executive team.

All cards must be returned to NESAs at the end of employment. If a card is issued as part of a secondment, it must be returned to NESAs at the end of the secondment.

2.2. Applications and approval

All members of the NESAs Executive Leadership Team and NESAs Senior Executive Team (i.e., PSSE staff) are issued with a P-Card upon appointment.

Applications for P-Cards for other staff (e.g., Liaison Officers) must be supported by the person that will be the 'Card Approver' for the card expenditure. This will usually be the Cardholder's Director.

All applications are subject to the final approval of the Card Authoriser, who is the Chief Financial Officer.

P-cards attach to roles, not to employees.

Eligibility for a P-card and the limit attached is dependent on role requirements and will be reassessed when an employee changes roles.

2.3. Card expenditure limits

Expenditure limits are designated in line with the role and anticipated procurement requirements based on the type and volume of purchases to be undertaken by the Cardholder. The Chief Financial Officer may recommend a proposed expenditure limit be amended or refused due to its impact on organisational total credit limit for P-cards.

There are two types of expenditure limits:

- Transaction Limit: is the amount that can be charged to the card per purchase.
- Monthly Limit: is the amount allowed to be charged per month.

Each single transaction's value must not exceed the Cardholder's total monthly limit.

Total monthly expenditure must not exceed the Cardholder's authorised monthly limit.

The Chief Financial Officer may approve increases to a Cardholder's expenditure limit upon request by the relevant Card Approver. The Cardholder must apply in writing (an email will suffice) through their Card Approver stating the reason for the increase and the period for which the increase is required. If approved, the Chief Financial Officer will arrange the increase and ensure the Cardholder and the Card Approver are notified.

3. General conditions of use

3.1. Overview

Mandatory compliance is required for all policies and procedures related to the usage of P-cards.

All purchasing activities must be conducted in an ethical and transparent manner.

Comprehensive guidance on applicable P-card spend categories is provided in the [NSW Government Corporate Purchasing Card Guidelines \(TPP 21-02\)](#) and the Purchasing Card (P-card) Applicable Spend Categories. These documents are regularly updated, and current versions are available at the NSW Treasury documents library located [here](#).

Use of a P-card must comply with the conditions set out in this document.

3.2. Cardholder's duty of care

It is the responsibility of each Cardholder to support the management of risks and efficacy of preventative controls associated with P-cards by:

- Notifying the Card Provider and the Card Administrator if the P-card is lost or stolen, immediately regardless of whether it is a working day or weekend.
- the P-card has been suspended or cancelled.
- Maintaining accountability for all expenditure charged to their P-card by advising the Card Administrator if the card is declined or the Cardholder becomes aware of, or suspects, an unauthorised transaction(s) has occurred.
- Keeping card details up to date by notifying changes in their name or work circumstances to the Card Administrator.
- a change to the operational or financial delegation limits that are associated with the Cardholder's role.
- Maintaining accurate records of expenditure and storing all transaction receipts safely (preferably electronically) until they are acquitted at month-end. All transactions under \$82.49 (inclusive of GST) require official tax receipts, and transactions over \$82.50 (inclusive of GST) require invoices.
- Informing the Card Administrator of a prolonged leave of absence from performing their role. This includes any absence from NESAs or role/position for longer than eight weeks.

Immediate and appropriate action will be taken against staff abusing the trust vested in them. A Cardholder who is found guilty of misuse or fraudulent use of a P-card will face disciplinary action and/or legal prosecution.

3.3. Acceptable payment methods

A card can be used:

- To purchase goods and/or services over the counter, over the telephone, by fax, email, by post or over the internet.
- To purchase goods and/or services from overseas if there is no other available supplier in

Australia or it is in relation to official travel purposes.

3.4. Acceptable purchase criteria

Cards can **only** be used to purchase goods and/or services that:

- Are for official business purposes (including official travel purposes); and
- Are of a total value that does not exceed the Cardholder's expenditure limit.
 - Examples of business-related expenditure include taxi fares, online registration of training and development, books, and emergency minor stationery purchases.

3.5. Online transactions

Cardholders should practice diligence when making online purchases, by only using secure websites which are indicated by a "https" prefix. Due to the rampant occurrence of fraud caused by hackers and pop-ups, Cardholders should be extra diligent on websites at first use.

Usually, the Cardholder will have to register with the website prior to purchasing an item. As a matter of protocol, Cardholders should register their professional details and create a separate online profile for business use and link the profile to their work email. All invoices and correspondence should be performed through the work email. Failure to do this may result in a non-reimbursement of incurred expenses.

Cardholders should also ensure that a valid tax invoice is received to enable Card Approvers to approve all online transactions.

Online transactions are to be made in line with Treasury Policy & Guidelines [TPP 21-02 Use and Management of NSW Government Purchasing Card](#).

3.6. Value for money and purchasing requirements.

The Cardholder must be satisfied that the purchase is necessary and the best value for money has been obtained. Whole of Government contracted suppliers must be used whenever possible to ensure value for money and increased security of NSW Government Purchasing Card details.

Cardholders are encouraged to use prompt payment as a negotiating tool for improved prices or services.

A card should not be used to purchase goods from retailers with whom NESAs already has an account. If regular transactions with local creditors are envisaged, it is preferable to open an account with the creditor rather than use the card.

3.7. Circumstances where P-cards cannot be used.

Cards must not be used to purchase any of the following:

- Items from a supplier that has no ABN (except for overseas purchases).
- Cash advances.
- Fleet vehicle expenses – including fuel, oil, repairs, spare parts (other than in emergency situations).
- Infringements and fines.
- Expenditure in excess of the Cardholder's financial delegation or card expenditure limits.
- Expenditure in excess of cost centre or budget.
- Personal rewards or benefits – implicit at point of purchase including frequent flyer.
- Programs, bonus point schemes or gifts designed as benefit for utilising the card.

- Gratuities and/or tips – of any nature, both domestic and international.
- Workers' compensation payments.
- Any personal or non-work-related expenses.
- Splitting purchases in order to negate allowable spend limits.
- Goods or services for which NESAs already has a procurement arrangement in place or where there is a mandated purchasing channel in place.
- Technical, legal, or complex services that require the formal input of technical staff; and
- Setting up direct debits or automatic top-ups (e.g., Opal cards).

Note: Any personal expenditure charged to the card must be repaid immediately. Cardholders are not to attempt to deposit funds to the card account but should contact the Chief Financial Officer for assistance.

Procedures

4. Cardholder reconciliation and managing risk.

4.1. Cardholder reconciliation and acquittal process

P-cards must be reconciled and acquitted at least monthly.

P-Card Statements (which are issued by Citibank and can be downloaded from the Citibank portal) are distributed to cardholders at the end of each month. Upon receipt of a statement the cardholder must reconcile all charges on the statement against receipts and acquit their card usage on an acquittal memo to their Card Approver.

A valid tax invoice from the vendor must be obtained for all transactions (as per s.3.2) by the Cardholder with details of:

- ABN number of the purchaser.
- Invoice amount.
- GST amount; and
- Purchase item/service made.

A detailed description of the expenditure must be provided on the acquittal memo to ensure proper documentation and acquittal of expenditure.

The Cardholder's manager is responsible for forming a view on whether the expenditure undertaken is for business purposes and is consistent with the Cardholder's responsibilities and activities.

The Cardholder's manager must confirm that a valid tax invoice has been attached to the Cardholder's statement for each transaction.

For rejected transactions, the Cardholder's manager must indicate the reason for rejection.

The Cardholder must resolve the reason for rejection and resubmit for acquittal as soon as practicable, unless the reason for rejection is due to the expenditure being ineligible, unauthorised or for personal use.

The Cardholder must immediately repay NESAs for any ineligible, unauthorised or personal expenditure incurred on the P-card.

The Cardholder must submit all expenses for approval within 5 business days of receipt of statement (period ending 4th day of each month).

Completed acquittals must be forwarded to the Card Administrator.

4.2. Exchanges, refunds, damaged goods and credits

Cardholders must be aware of the following in relation to purchases made using the P-card:

- Exchanges can only be made for the same product.
- A Cardholder is not allowed to accept cash from the supplier for a refund or damaged goods.
- Where the Cardholder considers that goods purchased should be returned (i.e., wrong goods, not of merchantable quality etc), the Cardholder is to contact the supplier and request a credit transaction to be prepared. A credit note is not to be accepted.
- If the supplier will not provide a credit transaction the Cardholder must raise this as a dispute with the P-card Administrator. Once the supplier has been notified arrangements should be made to have the good(s) returned to the supplier. Local processes vary for each supplier on how this will be managed. All returns should be notified to the P-card Administrator for monitoring of credit transactions. A credit transaction should appear on the statement once the supplier has processed the request.

4.3. Disputed transactions

Cardholders must routinely check their P-card statements to ensure there has been no unauthorised usage of their P-card.

Unauthorised or disputed transactions must be reported immediately to the P-card Administrator.

5. Finance administration

5.1. Treasurer's approval required for the issue of credit cards.

Under the NSW *Government Sector Finance Act 2018* (the GSF Act) an agency is required to obtain the Treasurer's approval for establishing the total facility borrowing limit (or total credit limit) available to the agency (NESA). The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for requesting amendments to NESA's credit limits as required by business needs.

5.2. Monitoring

The P-card Administrator will monitor cards for evidence of personal use, under-utilisation, fraudulent use or failure to comply with this policy.

5.3. Finance reconciliation processes

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for ensuring that:

- The Citibank monthly statement total is reconciled to each monthly cardholder:
- Unapproved or outstanding acquittals are followed-up and reconciliation completed. Monthly total should equal approved transactions for the month plus unapproved transactions for the month; and
- The month's total P-card expenditure is acquitted.

5.4. Outstanding acquittals

The Card Administrator will follow-up Cardholders with outstanding acquittals by:

- If acquittals are outstanding for one month: sending an email to the Cardholder reminding that the signed acquittal(s) with supporting documentation must be submitted to the Card

Administrator before the end of the month.

- If acquittals remain outstanding after a month: the Card Administrator is to liaise with the Cardholder and the Card Approver about the outstanding acquittals. A written reminder will be sent to the Cardholder requesting that the transactions be completed and approved by the 8th of that month (the second month that the acquittal remains outstanding). A copy of the letter will be forwarded to the Card Approver.
- If the acquittals remain outstanding by the 9th of the second month: the Cardholder and the Card Approver will be notified in writing of the possible cancellation of the card.

5.5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy or the conditions of use could result in the card being withdrawn from the Cardholder.

Liability for expenditure that is fraudulent, does not comply with this policy or results from loss/ theft through negligence of the Cardholder, may be passed onto the Cardholder and may also render the Cardholder liable to action for misconduct in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for providing the Chief Executive Officer with regular reports on card usage and highlighting any inappropriate use of cards.

The Chief Executive Officer must certify that NESA's purchasing card use has been in accordance with the Premier's Memoranda and Treasurer's Directions. The certification should also be included in the agency's Annual Report.

The Chief Financial Officer will ensure that P-card compliance surveys are completed and returned to NSW Treasury as required.

5.6. Induction

This policy will be provided to Cardholders by the Card Administrator before issuing of the P-cards to provide Cardholders with the knowledge and skills to effectively deliver on their responsibilities and understand their accountability for P-card use.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Chief Executive Officer (CEO):
 - Approves the policy.
 - Manages and monitors compliance with this policy.
 - Is the accountable authority; responsible for certifying that NESA purchasing card use has been in accordance with the Premier's Memoranda and Treasurer's Directions; and
- Deputy Chief Executive Officer:
 - is the Card Approver to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Executive Directors:
 - Approve the issuance of P-cards to staff within their division.
- Chief Financial Officer:
 - Approves transactional limits for Cardholders.
 - Approves the issuance and revoking of NESA P-cards; and
 - Manages NESA's P-card program within their total facility borrowing limits.

- Manages payment and acquittal disputes.
- Manages the monthly acquittal process and escalates fraudulent activities as required.
- Provides reports to the CEO highlighting credit card usage; and
- Ensures P-card compliance surveys are conducted and reported appropriately.
- Card Administrator:
 - Responsible for administration of NESA's P-card program.
 - Manages application process to Card Provider on behalf of new and existing Cardholders.
 - Maintains records of Cardholder Application & User Agreement forms.
 - Issues and uploads monthly acquittal advice to Cardholders and Card Approvers.
 - Checks accuracy of monthly statements and transaction invoices; and
 - Follows-up outstanding acquittals and provides assistance regarding transaction disputes.
- Card Approver:
 - Monitors staff P-card activity and queries large and/or unusual transactions; and
 - Communicates and reinforces expectation to Cardholders.
- Cardholder:
 - Have read and understood obligations of this policy and related policies and delegations.
 - Only use P-cards for official business purposes; and
 - Reconcile all transactions within 5 business days of statement receipt.
- Card Provider:
 - Processing approved P-card applications and sending the card to the Card Holder's home.
 - Blocking and/or replacing stolen cards.

Delegations

- Financial Delegations
- Procurement and Purchasing Delegations

Legislation

- *Government Sector Finance Act 2018 (GSF Act)*

Related Policies

- Treasury Policy Paper (TPP) 21-02 Use and Management of NSW Government Purchasing Cards
- NESA Code of Conduct
- Purchasing Card Application & User Agreement Form

Other related documents

- Exiting Worker Checklists
- Work Related Travel Procedure

Definitions

- P-cards are NSW Government purchasing cards issued by NESAs to workers.
- Card Administrator: The Finance Team Member responsible for dealing with administrative matters between the Card Provider and Cardholder.
- Card Approver: A position that has the authority to approve P-card expenses (the applicant's Executive Director or related Senior Executive).
- Card Authoriser: A position that has the authority to authorise the allocation of a P-card (currently the Chief Financial Officer)
- Card Provider: The government nominated bank or financial institution contracted for the administration and provision of P-cards (currently Citibank).
- Cardholder: An employee assigned the authority to use a P-card.
- Contingent worker: means a person employed by an external employment agency who performs work for NESAs for a limited time and for a specific purpose.
- Contractor: means a person hired by NESAs under an individual contract to perform work for a specified purpose and who, unlike an employee, retains control in the performance of the work, subject only to the terms of the contract.
- NESA worker: means all NESAs staff, and other persons engaged by NESAs such as interns, trainees, volunteers and contingent workers (collectively known as 'workers'). It does not apply to independent contractors, other than contingent workers.
- Staff: means all persons employed by NESAs under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013 (NSW)*.
- Value for Money: A comparison of the apparent benefits in the proposed contract, with the whole- of-life costs of the proposed contract. Value for money is determined by considering all the factors that are relevant to the proposed contract and may include: experience, quality, reliability, timeliness, service, risk profiles and initial and ongoing costs. Value for money does not automatically mean the 'lowest price'.

Acceptance of conditions

Failure to comply with any of the above conditions could result in the card being withdrawn from the officer. In the event of loss/theft through negligence, or non-compliance with these requirements any liability charged by the provider against the Office may be passed onto the officer.

I acknowledge and accept the above conditions in the operation of my Corporate Card.

Signed.....**Date**.....

Name**Position**.....

Superseded Documents

This policy replaces:

- NESAs Purchasing Card (P-card) Policy - PP22/74

Approval Requirements Summary

Action	Approver
Approval of Chief Executive Officer	Chief Audit Executive (currently Director, Strategy and Capability)
Approval of card application	Chief Financial Officer
Approval of transaction limits	Chief Financial Officer
Approval of increase to card limits	Chief Financial Officer

Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	06/07/2018	Annual review	Chief Financial Officer
2	31/12/2018	New NESAs Policy based on previous NSW Treasury policy	Heads of Finance and Governance
3	23/07/2019	Minor updates to comply with NSW Treasury policy	Chief Financial Officer
4	01/07/2020	Annual review	Chief Financial Officer
5	01/07/2021	Annual review	Chief Financial Officer
6	01/07/2022	Annual review	Chief Financial Officer
7	18/07/2023	Minor amendments made to the definitions to align with broader policy suite.	Chief Financial Officer

Review date

This policy will be reviewed every year. The next review date is 01 July 2024.

Contact

Contact details:

