



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 8 – CUSTOMER SERVICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Supplementary questions

Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service

**Customer Service and Digital Government, Emergency Services, Youth
Justice (Dib)**

Hearing: Friday 11 April 2025

Answers due by: 5.00 pm Thursday 8 May 2025

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**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**

Questions from Sue Higginson MLC

Reconstruction Authority

- (1) What is the total amount of funding allocated for flood recovery in the Northern Rivers under the Resilient Homes Program and other relevant programs?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (2) Of the total funding allocated:
- (a) How much has been spent to date, broken down by year?
 - (b) How many properties or households have received assistance through each program stream:
 - i. Buybacks?
 - ii. Retrofits?
 - iii. Relocations?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (3) What are the reasons for the continued delay in spending the remaining allocated funds?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (4) Has the Reconstruction Authority undertaken cost-benefit analyses or other comparative evaluations of the following housing management options:
- (a) demolition of flood-affected homes?
 - i. What was the date, title and authorship of any undertaken analysis?
 - (b) relocation of flood-affected homes?
 - i. What was the date, title and authorship of any undertaken analysis?
 - (c) retrofitting or raising of existing homes
 - i. What was the date, title and authorship of any undertaken analysis?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (5) Please provide the average or indicative cost per property, as currently estimated or incurred, for the following activities:
- (a) demolishing a flood-affected home?
 - (b) relocating a home to a new site?
 - (c) retrofitting or raising an existing home?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (6) What evidence has been relied upon by the Reconstruction Authority to support the claim that homes demolished through the Resilient Homes Program are being recycled?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (7) Has the Reconstruction Authority defined what constitutes “recycling” in the context of demolitions?
- (a) If so, what is the definition and what is the title of any relevant policy, operational directive, or guideline?
 - (b) Does this definition include the use of crushers or shredders that reduce material volume for mulch or landfill disposal?
 - (c) Are any materials considered “recycled” if they are later used as mulch, landscaping supplies, landfill cover, incinerated, or used for civil works fill?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (8) Of the homes demolished under the program to date:
- (a) What proportion have had structural timber, steel, brick, or other building elements actually salvaged and re-used for construction purposes?
 - (b) What proportion of total demolition waste volume (by weight or cubic metres) has been sent to licensed recycling facilities, and what are the material categories?
 - (c) What proportion has been disposed of in landfill or other waste disposal facilities, either directly or following onsite shredding or crushing?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (9) What are the final destinations for demolition waste from flood-affected properties, including:
- (a) Which facilities have received demolition materials?
 - (b) How much material (by volume or weight) has each facility received?
 - (c) What specific recycling or disposal methods have been used at each site?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (10) What internal assessments, audits, reports, or contractor documentation does the Reconstruction Authority hold that substantiate claims that a significant portion of materials from demolished homes are being recycled or diverted from landfill?
- (a) Will the Minister table or release these documents?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (11) What monitoring or verification processes are in place to confirm that contractors and receiving facilities are in fact recycling materials as claimed?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (12) Have any independent audits or inspections been conducted of the facilities handling demolished materials?
- (a) If so, please provide the dates, scope, findings, and any follow-up actions.
 - (b) If not, why has no independent verification been pursued?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (13) Has the Reconstruction Authority received any complaints, whistleblower reports, or community allegations concerning the disposal of demolished homes or materials?
- (a) If so, how many and what were the outcomes?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (14) What procedures are in place to assess flood-affected homes for contaminants prior to demolition, including but not limited to:

- (a) asbestos?
- (b) lead-containing paint?
- (c) synthetic mineral fibres or other hazardous residues?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (15) What protocols or requirements are imposed on contractors or facilities to ensure hazardous materials are identified, separated, and lawfully processed?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (16) Has the Reconstruction Authority detected any instances of non-compliance, breach, or improper disposal practices in relation to contaminated demolition materials?

- (a) How does the Reconstruction Authority assess compliance?
- (b) How many instances of non-compliance have been detected?
- (c) What enforcement actions were taken in each case?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (17) How is the demolition schedule for flood-affected homes communicated to the public?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

- (18) Is there a forward schedule of planned demolitions available to the public?

- (a) If so:
 - i. Where is it published?
 - ii. Does it include street-level detail?
- (b) If not:
 - i. Why not?
 - ii. Will the Reconstruction Authority make this available?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

(19) For each home approved for demolition, is an explanation or rationale produced?

(a) Can this information be made available publicly?

i. If not, why not?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

(20) Are there any homes that were listed for the expression of interest process for relocation in Pine Street North Lismore that have since been identified for, or listed for, demolition?

(a) If yes, what was the process that caused the change in listing?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

Questions from Hon Emma Hurst MLC

(21) In regards to the Stockyard Flat, Doyles River and Dingoes Creek Fires which occurred near Yarrowitch in the Walcha LGA between 28 October and 7 November 2019:

(a) Can you please provide a breakdown of the number and types of personnel, vehicles and aircraft assigned to these fires on each date between 28 October and 7 November 2019?

(b) Were any backburn protocols (S.O.P. #17) contravened between 28 October and 7 November 2019 during firefighting operations in response to these fires? If so, please provide details as to which protocols and why the breach occurred?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Doyles River Fire was detected by an aerial linescan run on 27 October and Dingo Creek was detected following a linescan on 29 October. The Doyles River, Dingo Creek and Mt Werrikimbee fires merged with the Stockyard Flat fire on 31 October at 8.52am.

A significant number of resources were deployed under the S44, including aircraft, heavy plant, field liaison personnel and ground crews and fleet from a number of agencies, including the RFS, FRNSW, SA Country Fire Service and ACT RFS. Field liaison personnel doorknocked properties to alert residents on 28 October.

Given the fire's location in dense and inaccessible bushland, the initial response involved heavy plant cutting dozer lines and supporting ground crews. Up to four heavy plant a day were on the ground between 31 October and 7 November. Situation reports indicate tactical backburning was employed from 1 November and continued up to 6 November.

Various aircraft, including a Large Air Tanker and helitankers, were used across the S44 fires,

including Stockyard Flat, providing aerial assessments, firebombing and extinguishing spot fires. In total, more than 300 fire personnel and 76 appliances from a range of agencies were deployed to the fire between 27 October and 7 November.

Regarding backburn protocols please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 27.

22. Can you please provide details of the backburn escapes that are mentioned in each S44 Incident Controller report from the 2019/2020 fire season? Please include the date, location, associated fire name and relevant S44.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Date	S44	Location	Name
5/9/2019 to 15/1/2020	S44-19/20005	Armidale Regional, Glen Innes, Inverell, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha LGAs, and part of Clarence Valley LGA.	New England & Northern Tablelands S44 Bees Nest, Long Gully Drake, Kingsgate Red Range, Gulf Road Tenterfield, Kangawalla, Carrai Creek, Stockyard Flat, Mount Mackenzie Road Tenterfield.
8/10/2019 to 31/10/2019	S44-19/20009	Richmond Valley LGA	Busbys Flat, Border Trail, Benauds Road
30/10/2019 to 7/1/2020	S44-19/20013	Part Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Bellingent, part Tenterfield and part Glen Innes Severn LGAs	Kaloe Mountain Trail, Black Mountain Road Glenreagh, Colletts Crossing Woolli, Oil Rig Road Tullymorgan, Old Glen Innes Road Newton Boyd, Washpool State Forest Coombadja
8/11/2019 to 7/1/2020	S44-19/20015	Ballina, Byron, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Tweed, Kyogle and part Tenterfield LGAs	Myall Creek Road, Benauds Road, Mt Nardi, Wardell Road, Busbys Flat Road, Border Trail, Bangala, Blue Gum
11/11/2019 to 24/1/2020	S44-19/20031	Hawkesbury, part of Lithgow and Blue Mountains LGAs	Gospers Mountain
02/01/2020 to 27/02/2020	S44-19/20043	Snowy Monaro regional Council LGA	Good good Fire, Adaminaby Complex, Nine Mile Complex, Border Fire and Rockton Fire

23. Has the NSW government paid any compensation to property owners, businesses or any other entity that were affected by the 2019/2020 bushfires? If so, please provide details.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The RFS has, through the Treasury Managed Fund (TMF), paid compensation to third parties affected by the 2019-20 bush fires. The RFS has identified 13 claims of this nature.

24. Has the NSW Government paid any compensation to property owners, businesses or any other entity that were affected by escaped backburning during 2019/2020? If so, please provide details.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The RFS has, through the Treasury Managed Fund (TMF), paid compensation to third parties who were affected by the 2019-20 bush fires where those claims involved a back burn in some way. The RFS has identified five claims of this nature, and notes that for some of these claims it was not possible to determine with certainty whether the damage was caused by a back burn operation or other damage by fire.

Questions from Hon Chris Rath MLC (on behalf of Opposition)
Customer Service & Digital Government

25. Does the Service NSW 'digital services team' still employ over 500 designers, engineers and product managers?

a. If not, why does that figure still exist on the Service NSW website?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Service NSW website has been updated with current figures. .

26. Since last Budget Estimates, what improvements has the government made in the adoption of AI?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Since the September 2024 Budget estimates, the NSW Government has made a number of improvements to support the safe and responsible adoption of AI including:

- The integration of the AI Ethics Policy and AI Assurance Framework (AIAF) into the NSW Government Procurement Policy Framework.
- Digital NSW publishing two new AI guides to complement the AIAF.
- The issuing of a mandatory Circular that prevents the use and installation of all DeepSeek products, applications and web services on government-issued devices.

27. Last year you had a very firm view that the adoption of AI would not impact public service workforce numbers. Is that still your view?

a. Have you engaged any other Ministers to consider how any efficiencies could be gained through adoption of AI by the government?

ANSWER:

I refer to comments I made on 28 February 2024 on page 19 of the uncorrected transcript for

Budget Estimates 2023-24:

“[AI is] not actually about cost cutting at all. This is about government doing services better, being able to assist the community better, the people better. That’s what we want.”

This continues to reflect my view.

- a. The NSW Digital Strategy represents cross-portfolio opportunities to realise efficiencies gained through adoption of AI by the government. It is available at <https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/strategy>

28. Governments around the world are investing massive amounts of money into AI. They clearly see the productivity opportunity. How much funding or investment will you be putting into AI in NSW?

ANSWER:

Future funding and investment decisions by the NSW Government are subject to normal Budget processes.

29. Do you know how many different apps currently exist for NSW Government services?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Questions related to apps supported by agencies should be directed to the relevant Minister. Lists are maintained by individual agencies and Departments.

30. Do you think this represents efficient digital government service delivery?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The NSW Government is committed to maximising the reuse of the State's digital platforms, services and data, including apps. This includes the introduction of the State Digital Asset Reuse Policy to ensure agencies leverage common assets wherever possible and design any new assets which need to be built for reuse.

31. What plans are in place to consolidate these apps to streamline service delivery?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 29.

32. How do different departments report their app data to you?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 29.

33. What money has been budgeted on updating the Service NSW app over the forward estimates?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

\$28 million is budgeted to maintain and upgrade the app over the forward estimates.

34. Given that accessibility is one of your passions, why is NSW Digital Strategy not available in a PDF format?

a. Will the digital inclusion strategy be available in pdf?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Maintaining the NSW Digital Strategy as HTML allows for greater content management and accessibility, especially for users of assistive technology.

a. The Digital Inclusion Strategy is available in multiple formats and languages
nsw.gov.au/digital-inclusion-strategy.

35. Why isn't the 2024 NSW Cyber Strategic Plan not available on the
<https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/delivery/cyber-security/strategies> webpage?

a. Will there be a FY2024-25 Cyber Security NSW Strategic Plan?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Cyber Security NSW Strategic Plan is available at:

<https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/delivery/cyber-security/strategies/cyber-security-nsw-strategies>

a. An updated Cyber Security NSW Strategic Plan is under development.

36. How many staff are employed at Cyber Security NSW?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Employment statistics for the Department of Customer Service are published in its annual report which is available on its website.

37. Is Cyber Security NSW still working to the Customer Service State Outcomes 2022-2023?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Divisions within the Department of Customer Service (DCS) work to the DCS Strategy reflecting current strategic priorities.

38. Minister, as the Minister responsible for 'digital' do you use any dashboards or data insights

to help inform your role?

b. Are you aware of any dashboards within your department?

ANSWER:

As Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government I draw on inputs and updates from a wide range of sources including dashboards and data insights made available by my department. As an example, please refer to documents obtained via Private Members' Business Item no. 1522 on 13 November 2024.

Appropriate Cuts (995 million)

39. Please provide a list of all programs, projects or services that were cut, delayed, reduced, or otherwise altered as a result of the \$995 million reduction in appropriation between 2022–23 and 2023–24.

ANSWER:

I am advised this question was answered on page 12 of the uncorrected transcript.

40. What was the impact of this reduction on frontline service delivery, particularly within Service NSW and the Digital Restart Fund?

ANSWER:

I am advised this question was answered on page 12 of the uncorrected transcript.

Privacy Breach – Former Ministers' Home Address

41. Has the Information or Privacy Commissioner been formally briefed on the accidental release of home addresses of former Ministers? If so, on what date and what information was disclosed?

ANSWER:

I am advised this question was answered on page 39 of the uncorrected transcript.

42. What protocols have been implemented or revised to prevent such breaches in future?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Premier.

43. What notification, if any, was provided to the affected former Ministers?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Premier.

Digital Restart Fund – Oversight and Extensions

44. Please provide a list of Digital Restart Fund projects extended or funded beyond their

original allocation, including revised completion dates and additional funding provided.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Information about projects funded through the Digital Restart Fund is available in the DRF annual reports and financial statements at www.digital.nsw.gov.au

45. What independent evaluations have been conducted on the ROI claims, and will these be tabled?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

An independent economic appraisal of the Digital Restart Fund was conducted in 2023. A second independent evaluation was conducted in 2024, as required under TPG22-22 Treasury Policy and Guidelines: Evaluation and will be published on nsw.gov.au.

Digital Birth Certificate

46. On what date did the digital birth certificate pilot commence?

a. When will the service be publicly available?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

A pilot of the Digital Birth Certificate ran from 9 April to 31 May 2024.

The Department of Customer Service is planning to integrate the DBC into the NSW Digital Wallet.

47. What budget allocation has been made to support its full implementation, and what KPIs are in place?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This will be subject to normal Budget processes.

Customer Service Funding

48. I note that the 2024-2025 half yearly infrastructure statement - 2.3 Customer Service notes that the budget includes \$1.0 billion in capital spending for Customer Service initiatives and projects over the four years to 2027-28, can you explain to the committee in your own words the major priorities of this capital expenditure?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Major priorities receiving capital funding include the Critical Communications Enhancement

Program, Licencing NSW and cyber security measures.

49. I note that \$97.9 million capital expenditure over four years from the Digital Restart Fund has been allocated including \$42.6 million capital expenditure for cyber security measures, can you detail to the committee the substance of the Digital Restart Fund?

a. Is this an increase or decrease from last year? If so by how much?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

In total \$240.7 million was made available from the Digital Restart Fund in the FY24/25 budget to focus on delivering reusable digital infrastructure for the NSW public sector, improving cyber security and transforming key legacy systems to provide more accessible, secure and responsive services for the community.

50. Which projects have been cut or de-prioritized from the Digital Restart Fund?

a. Who made the decision to cut these projects?

b. Was the Department asked to highlight projects that could be cut?

c. Did you fight to keep these projects or did you agree that they needed to be cut?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

A substantial number of projects from across the NSW public sector seek Digital Restart Funding annually. Government prioritises projects that align with the legislative requirements of the DRF and are assessed as high priority. Funding decisions are subject to normal Budget processes.

Cyber Security

51. One of the key projects commencing in 2024-25 included in the budget is termed Reducing Extreme Cyber Security Risk - Digital Restart fund, \$18.0m over four years, what is this money being used for?

a. Do you think that \$18.0m is sufficient to implement the departments Cyber Security Strategy?

b. Have there been any cuts to resourcing, personnel or funding to Cyber Security NSW?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

a. The investment in addition to other funding streams supports the DCS Cyber Security Strategy which enhances security and capabilities for the Department's technology assets.

b. The NSW Government has directed funding to Cyber Security NSW in both the 2023-24 and 2024-25 Budgets after the agency was left unfunded in these financial years by the previous

government. It is not possible to cut funding which had not been committed by the previous government.

52. It was reported in September 17 by the Mandarin, in an article titled Cyber Security NSW jobs shed amid Department of Customer Service restructure, that the 'NSW government will shed several positions in the state's crucial Cyber Security NSW function despite a sustained uptick in hostile state-sponsored activities, as Australia's adversaries continue to seek to compromise critical systems'. What is your comment?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 51(b).

53. How many people work at Cyber security NSW?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 36.

54. Regarding the 14 jobs that were cut from Cyber Security, the so called 'realignment', can you detail which jobs were cut?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The realignment impacted 7 staff who have been supported to access the internal mobility program.

55. In October 2024, the Audit Office found that none of 26 of the largest state-sector agencies had met their target levels of maturity. Last month, the auditor found that two of the 26 had not funded plans to improve their cybersecurity, while a further nine had not finalised remediation plans to address shortcomings against the Cybersecurity Policy. What are you doing as Minister to ensure that this is addressed?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Under the revised NSW Cyber Security Policy, NSW has progressed from a focus on maturity to a risk-based implementation of controls to counter threats faced by agencies. Cyber Security NSW reviews inputs, including NSW Audit Office reports, NSW Cyber Security Policy reporting, incident data and other information, to inform new initiatives that support the development of capability across the public sector.

56. On cyber briefing, how often are you briefed on Cyber issues?

a. By whom?

ANSWER:

My office and I have recurring meetings with representatives from the Department of Customer Service with responsibility for Cyber Security NSW.

57. Is the Premier regularly briefed on Cyber security?

a. By whom?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Premier.

Agency Oversight & Fiscal Responsibility

58. Service NSW is forecasting a \$30 million deficit for 2024–25. What internal controls failed to prevent this outcome?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Service NSW is forecast to operate within budget limits for 2024-25.

59. With grants and contributions to Service NSW increasing from \$137 million to \$271 million — nearly doubling — can you provide a breakdown of this additional \$134 million?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The NSW Government is delivering essential cost of living relief to support working families through its \$60 weekly toll cap commitment, with funding for this program the key variance between FY2023-24 and FY2024-25..

60. The NSW Telecommunications Authority is receiving a 22.9% increase in expenditure and 31% in capital investment. What are the measurable outcomes expected from this significant increase?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

NSW Telco Authority (NSWTA) operates the Public Safety Network (PSN) which delivers mission-critical radio communications for emergency and essential services.

NSW is expanding the PSN to deliver a single, statewide interoperable network which removes the need for individual, duplicated agency networks which are largely end of life and are not interoperable.

61. The Long Service Corporation is budgeting for a \$14.8 million deficit in 2024–25. What has led to this reversal compared to the prior year?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Work Health and Safety.

62. The State Insurance Regulatory Authority is forecasting an \$86.8 million deficit — the largest

in the portfolio. What structural problems does this signal?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

An object of the *Motor Accident Injuries Act 2017* and key focus for SIRA is to keep premiums for CTP policies affordable for NSW motorists by ensuring that insurer profits do not exceed the amount required to underwrite the relevant risk.

The deficit is a consequence of SIRA utilising the cumulative surplus from the Motor Accident Operational Fund to offset CTP insurance levies to help address cost of living pressures.

Capital Expenditure & Asset Management

63. Given total capital expenditure is effectively flat across the Department, how are capital investment decisions being prioritised under financial constraints?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Capital funding bids are rigorously scrutinised to ensure strategic alignment with government and department priorities. Funding bids include assessment against an established desirability, viability, and feasibility (DVF) prioritisation framework. Strategic asset management considerations are also factored into decision making.

64. Can you justify the \$42 million increase in capital spending by the Telecommunications Authority, especially amid cuts elsewhere?

ANSWER:

The Public Safety Network (PSN) provides a mission-critical radio communications service for emergency and essential services so they can respond to emergencies and natural disasters to help keep people and places safe.

I am advised the number of PSN sites is expected to grow from 441 to 519 in FY2024-25. This will increase operation costs such as network management fees, link charges, frequency licenses, site rentals, repairs, and maintenance.

65. Are there digital transformation or service access projects being deferred due to reduced funding across the portfolio?

a. If so, which ones?

ANSWER:

I am advised that capital programs are re-sequenced and re-scoped regularly across the Customer Service & Digital Government portfolio.

Governance & Transparency

66. The Department continues to post a negative net assets position, rising from -\$422 million

to -\$202 million. What reforms are being undertaken to reverse this trend?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The net asset budget for 2024-25 indicated an improvement to the net asset position, and also reflects the impact of the previous government's privatisation of the land titles registry.

67. 'Other Operating Expenses' across agencies remains substantial — e.g., \$556 million for the Department alone. Can you provide a detailed list of what is included in this category?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Other operating expenses are set out at note 2(b) of the Department of Customer Service annual report.

Financial Sustainability and Budget Oversight

68. Your department has faced scrutiny over budget allocations and overspending, particularly within Service NSW. Can you clarify how you are ensuring greater fiscal responsibility while maintaining frontline services?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Under the former government, Service NSW expenses were on track to reach almost \$1 billion a year. The number of staff more than doubled between 2018 and 2023 and expenses more than doubled to over \$850 million, with the agency continuously overspending its allocated budget.

Over the past two years, Service NSW has undertaken multiple measures to normalise its operations including organisational redesign, winding up temporary and contract roles no longer needed after the COVID-19 pandemic, and other operational efficiencies.

These changes have been made with a focus on maintaining core services whilst achieving budget sustainability. All Service NSW service centres and mobile service centres remain open and operational and new service centres have been opened at Tallawong, Eastgardens, North Rocks and Glenmore Park. Other channels of support for customers remain open, including online channels and over the phone support.

69. Given that Service NSW faced an overspend of \$179 million, what measures have you taken to ensure that budget reductions do not negatively impact regional communities and critical customer services?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 68.

70. There has been confusion over job cuts within Service NSW. You previously stated that frontline jobs were protected, but documents suggest wider restructuring. Can you confirm

the number of positions that have been cut and where these reductions have occurred?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Service NSW is implementing a revised organisational structure having had expenses and staff more than double between 2018 and 2023 and the agency overspend its allocated budget. The restructure will be rolled out across successive waves and is an ongoing process.

71. Minister Kamper previously stated that the Business Bureau was “fully funded” with no structural changes, but your statements indicate otherwise. Can you clarify whether there have been any staffing changes or service reductions within the Business Bureau?

ANSWER:

I am advised this was answered on page 34 of the transcript for Budget Estimates 2024-25 on 9 September 2024.

Customer Service and Digital Government Performance

72. There have been reports of increasing wait times at Service NSW centres and online due to staffing cuts and budget constraints. What steps are you taking to address service delays and ensure timely assistance for customers?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 68.

73. Digital security is a growing concern for government services. What investments have been made to protect citizen data, and has your department conducted recent cybersecurity audits?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

In addition to the \$20.3 million allocated to Cyber Security NSW in the 24-25 Budget, the Government is investing a further \$205 million from FY2024-25 onwards for cyber security-related initiatives and capability across the sector, on top of ongoing departmental and agency investment in cybersecurity.

74. Many rural communities still struggle with access to digital services due to poor connectivity. How is your department addressing digital access issues for remote and disadvantaged areas?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The NSW Digital Inclusion Strategy aims to ensure people across NSW, including those living in regional communities, have more opportunities to access, afford, and safely engage with digital technologies, services, and online resources.

The NSW Government’s Regional Digital Connectivity Program (led by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development) aims to improve mobile coverage and internet connectivity in regional NSW.

Previous Budget Estimates and Unfulfilled Commitments

75. Several digital transformation initiatives, including improved online government services, were expected to roll out last year. Can you provide an update on their status and explain why some have faced delays?

ANSWER:

An update on digital transformation initiatives can be provided if specific projects are cited.

76. The Minister has spoken about the need for efficiency in Service NSW, yet there has been little transparency on where previous overspending occurred. Can you outline which specific programs contributed to the overspending and how this is being rectified?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 68.

Regional Service Reductions

77. Given that there has been a push to make services more accessible online, has there been a proportional investment in ensuring regional and elderly populations, who may not be tech-savvy, are not disadvantaged?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

In 2023/24 ID Support NSW delivered almost 200 interactive events and engaged more than 51,000 individuals across NSW on identity, privacy, and cybersecurity resilience. Many of these events are targeted at regional and elderly populations as part of the ID Support Regional Roadshow.

The first NSW Digital Inclusion Strategy launched in May 2025 aims to ensure people across NSW, including the elderly and those living in regional communities, have more opportunities to access, afford, and safely engage with digital technologies, services, and online resources.

As part of the Strategy, training and resources will be made available to help the elderly and culturally and linguistically communities (CALD) to protect themselves against scams and privacy breaches through the delivery of a multilingual cybersecurity awareness campaign. The Strategy also explores initiatives such as extending existing digital literacy programs and creating new mentorship networks in partnership with community organisations to deliver hands-on digital skills training for those who need it.

Emergency Services

Lithgow Fire Station

78. In relation to the new Lithgow Fire Station:

a. When will the flood study be completed?

- b. Why can't we cap the whole of the site?
- c. Is it a budgetary issue as to why Lithgow is not getting the fire station it deserves?
- d. Does this land impact on the neighbouring bowling club?
- e. When can we expect work to commence?
- f. What is the timeline for the works to be completed?
- g. Are the members of the local fire brigade being engaged with?
 - i. How and when?
- h. How much has been allocated to the new station?
 - i. How much has already been spent on designs and studies etc.?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

- a. A draft flood report is currently being assessed before being finalised this year.
- b. The entire operational side will be capped.
- c. The NSW Government is making a significant investment in a state of the art facility, incorporating design features to maximise functionality and health and safety.
- d. FRNSW has engaged the local community and directly impacted neighbours such as the Lithgow Club via the Review of Environmental Factors process, which identified mitigation measures that FRNSW will implement to minimise the impacts to adjoining neighbours.
- e. Please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 4309.
- f. Please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 4309.
- g. FRNSW is continuing to consult with local fire crews on the development and progression of the new station.
- h. Please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 4309.
 - i. \$2.1 million has been spent to date including land acquisition and design.

Land Buybacks

79. What arrangements are in place for the ongoing management of land purchased under buy-back schemes in the Northern Rivers and the Central West?
- a. How much funding has been put aside for this ongoing management?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

80. What is the long-term plan for the management of blocks that have been purchased under

these buy-back schemes?

a. Which body will be responsible for the management into the long-term?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Recovery.

Emergency Services Budget

81. On page 17 of the transcript the Minister said he ‘thinks’ the budget allocation for emergency services was \$2.2 billion for the current year. Could you please clarify the exact number?

a. What is the corresponding budget allocation for the previous 5 years?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Budget allocations for Emergency Service agencies are detailed in Budget Paper No.2 Agency Financial Statements. These are available online at www.budget.nsw.gov.au. This site provides access to both the current and previous year budget papers.

Youth Justice

Staffing and Work Place Issues

82. Has the Department received any internal risk assessments warning that current Youth Justice Centre conditions, including increased violence and staff shortages, could lead to large-scale unrest or a riot?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

No. Youth Justice have ongoing discussions with the Public Service Association, oversight bodies, staff, local Work Health and Safety Committees and young people to identify and address matters related to safety and security at the earliest opportunity. Youth Justice also has a centralised Security and Intelligence team that is responsible for identifying potential threats through internal risk assessments, as well as dedicated Incident Response Teams in centres responsible for managing young people with the highest risk classification.

83. Minister, are you aware that current conditions in Youth Justice Centres are being described by staff as “a powder keg”?

a. What steps are you taking to de-escalate risk, both for young people and staff?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 82.

84. Can the Department confirm whether any Youth Justice Centres have fallen below minimum

safe staffing levels at any time in the past six months?

a. If so, which centres and for how long?

ANSWER:

I am advised no Youth Justice Centres have fallen below the minimum safe staffing levels in the past six months.

85. Has there been any increases in staffing levels within Youth Justice NSW over the past 12 months ?

a. If so, what is the estimated annual cost of these additional staff ?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

There has been an increase in overall staffing numbers over the last 12 months, with costs reflected in the employee-related expenses set out in the Department of Communities and Justice annual report.

86. If staffing levels have not increased, how is the Department managing the increased detention population ?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 85.

87. How do the current staffing levels and workforce profile in Youth Justice Centres compare to 2023 data ?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Employment statistics for the Department of Communities and Justice, which includes Youth Justice, are published in its annual report which is available on its website.

Staff Wellbeing and Burnout in Youth Justice Centres

88. With 18% of Youth Justice staff showing signs of all three dimensions of burnout—exhaustion, cynicism and reduced efficacy—what urgent action is being taken to address the sustainability of the Youth Justice workforce?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice NSW is committed to the wellbeing of staff and leverages a range of supports from the broader Department, as well as deploying local initiatives. This includes the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Fitness Passport, Mindarma and the Peer Support Program.

Youth Justice has funded on-site medical checks for staff to assist with general check-ups, early detection of health issues, and opportunities for confidential support/treatment. Youth

Justice works closely with individual staff where they are at risk of or experiencing burnout.

89. Can the Department confirm whether psychological debriefing or counselling is routinely available for Youth Justice staff after violent incidents or critical events?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Incident debriefs are conducted following all violent or critical incidents that occur in Youth Justice Centres. Youth Justice's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is readily accessible and staff are referred for individualised support following incidents. The EAP provider Converge also provides regular onsite support at a number of centres offering support and counselling to staff that have been impacted at work or involved in an incident.

Youth Justice staff have access to the Converge App and Mindarma App and resources for additional support.

Recruitment, Retention and Staffing Ratios

90. The recruitment satisfaction rate is just 43%, with concerns around capability and merit-based processes. How is the Department ensuring that high-quality candidates are recruited into Youth Justice roles?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice has a robust process for attracting and recruiting high-quality candidates. This includes targeted advertising in local areas and organising information sessions through local networks during the advertising phase for bulk recruitments.

Operational Youth Justice staff are engaged to evaluate candidates through an assessment centre process for custodial roles, which is followed by rigorous pre-employment screening and checks.

Youth Justice is committed to encouraging qualified and talented people, who bring a variety of skills, to apply for a range of positions within the department.

91. How many current vacancies exist across Youth Justice centres, and what is the average time taken to fill frontline roles?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

As of 23 April 2025, there were 51 vacancies.

92. What is the current turnover rate in Youth Justice roles, and how does it compare to previous years?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This data is not readily available as a consequence of the Department of Communities and

Justice implementing a new human resources data system in the past 12 months.

93. With 16% of Youth Justice staff having experienced bullying, what support and protection is available for new and younger staff who report workplace harm?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice takes any form of bullying and harassment seriously and it is treated as misconduct when identified and reported. Mandatory online training in the prevention of bullying and harassment is deployed across Youth Justice. Youth Justice has also run multiple campaigns targeting bullying and other inappropriate behaviour.

New staff are supported through an induction process that ensures they are aware of supports available to them. They are supported by their direct line managers and the Peer Support Program representatives within their local area.

Youth Justice has also established a dedicated Workplace Support Unit to support staff experiencing issues within the workplace. A conduct committee meets weekly and can assess all allegations of misconduct to ensure that the most appropriate response is applied in each case.

Leadership Confidence and Communication

94. Only 46% of staff expressed confidence in senior executives, with just 38% saying they feel listened to. What mechanisms are in place to ensure Youth Justice staff feedback reaches senior decision-makers?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Youth Justice Executive actively promotes direct communication and engagement with staff at all levels across the state. This includes in-person site attendance, online forums, newsletters, blogs and consistent messaging regarding the availability of direct contact with all members of the Youth Justice Executive Team.

Staff across Youth Justice regularly and openly provide feedback to their local leaders, and to the Executive Team directly.

Youth Justice is continuously working to improve how it communicates the actions taken, and positive outcomes achieved, based on feedback received from staff.

95. Given that only 36% of staff believe action will be taken on this year's survey results, can the Department explain how it is restoring trust with the Youth Justice workforce?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice is working to improve how it communicates the actions taken on feedback received through the annual People Matters Employee Survey. Youth Justice is implementing an action plan which will address how staff receive information on actions taken as a result of

the survey.

96. What steps is the Department taking to increase visibility and engagement of executives with Youth Justice Centres and regional staff?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 94.

Learning, Development and Role Support

97. With only 55% of staff positive about learning and development, and just 46% satisfied with professional development opportunities, what is being done to enhance training for Youth Justice staff in areas like trauma-informed care and de-escalation?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice has a comprehensive approach to the induction and training of all front-line staff. It deploys a wide range of courses that are available to staff as they progress in their careers. These include eLearning courses, virtual classroom courses, face to face, and practical programs.

98. Does the Department offer specific pathways for Youth Justice staff to advance their careers into management or specialist roles?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice offers a range of pathways for staff to advance their careers into management or specialist roles. These include individualised performance development plans, leadership courses, temporary acting opportunities and expressions of interest to be involved in specific projects or programs.

Safety and Incident Management

99. How many serious assaults or critical incidents have occurred in Youth Justice Centres in the past 12 months involving harm to staff?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Between April 2024 and April 2025, 175 physical assaults by young people on staff were recorded; the majority of these incidents did not result in injuries.

100. Is there a minimum staffing benchmark to ensure safety during high-risk operations in Youth Justice Centres?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Yes.

101. What escalation protocols are in place for when staffing drops below safe operating levels, and are these protocols triggered automatically?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Vacant staffing posts are covered via the use of on-call-casual staff and overtime where necessary.

Retention and Intention to Leave

102. With 36% of respondents indicating they are actively looking to leave the department, and 31% citing poor senior leadership, how is the Department responding to this risk within the Youth Justice workforce?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff remains a focus of Youth Justice. A sustained effort to uplift recruitment practices and processes has established a strong pipeline of new employees within a competitive job market across the state.

Youth Justice has also invested heavily in the development of its leaders across all levels. This leadership development will remain an ongoing pillar to support the retention of staff and continuation of high performing teams.

103. What proportion of Youth Justice staff have left in the past 12 months, and what were the top reasons cited in exit interviews?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 92.

104. Does the Department conduct internal pulse surveys or listening sessions specific to Youth Justice operations to prevent attrition?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice deploys a range of methods to seek input from staff. This includes intermittent surveys, direct requests for input on specific topics, working groups, advisory committees, annual quality assurance reviews and more.

Inspector of Custodial Services

105. What is the current staffing level of the Inspector of Custodial Services?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Corrections.

106. there been any increase in funding or staff numbers for the Inspector's Office

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Corrections.

Regional and Remote Youth Justice Challenges

107. What percentage of young people in detention are from regional NSW?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

On 11 April 2025, there were 161 young people in custody from regional NSW.

108. How does the Department ensure regional youth justice centres have the same level of programs and services as metro-based facilities?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The newly created Statewide Programs Coordinator provides oversight and governance of programs across all centres. This role is developing systems to help manage the distribution of resources based on the specific needs of each centre.

109. What consultation was conducted with regional community organisations before the recent funding round for youth justice programs in Moree?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Between April and October 2024 Youth Justice engaged with a range of Aboriginal providers in Moree through the Moree LGA Youth Crime Local Governance Group, local interagencies, the Grandmothers' Group and informal networks. An Aboriginal consultancy group has also engaged in community conversations with Aboriginal stakeholders across Moree, on behalf of Youth Justice, since September 2024. In October 2024 all Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations based in or working in Moree were invited to participate in an Expression Of Interest to tender for the Bail Accommodation Program, with a select tender opened in November 2024.

110. What proportion of funding for community-based youth justice programs is allocated to regional and remote communities?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

65% of funding for community-based youth justice programs is allocated to regional and remote communities.

Aboriginal Youth Incarceration and Closing the Gap

111. Over the past five years, the rate of Aboriginal child incarceration in NSW has been increasing, despite an overall decline in general youth detention rates. What specific programs

are in place to reduce Aboriginal youth incarceration?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice provides statutory youth justice services for young people who are remanded or sentenced to detention. It also operates a number of programs to reduce reoffending risk, including:

- A Place to Go Program
- Broadmeadow Children's Court Program
- Short-term Remand Initiative
- Cockatoo Initiative
- My Path Initiative
- Casework Support Program
- Youth on Track Program
- Rural Residential Rehabilitation Services
- Domestic Family Violence Family Workers
- Aboriginal Cultural Mentoring Program
- Aboriginal Re-Integration Program
- Safe Aboriginal Youth Program
- Visting Aboriginal Legal Service

112. Have any new justice reinvestment initiatives been trialled?

ANSWER:

This question should be referred to the Attorney-General.

113. Two thirds of Aboriginal children in detention are from regional NSW. What specific programs are being implemented in these regions to divert Aboriginal youth away from detention?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The programs listed in answer to Supplementary Question 111 are available in regional NSW with the exception of A Place to Go and the My Path Initiative.

114. What specific collaboration exists between Youth Justice NSW and NSW Police to complement community-led diversion initiatives?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Youth Justice works collaboratively with the NSW Police Youth Command in community-led diversion initiatives, including individual responses to high-risk young people. These include:

- A Place to Go program in the Penrith Police Area Command
- Broadmeadow Children's Court Program in the Newcastle PAC
- Short-term Remand initiative in the South Sydney PAC and Riverina Police District

Youth Justice – Bail Reforms and Custody Rates

115. Has the Department conducted or commissioned an impact evaluation of the bail law reforms (particularly s22C) on custody rates, including by location, age, and Aboriginality?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Attorney-General.

116. How is the increase in detention being reconciled with NSW's Closing the Gap targets?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Attorney-General.

117. Will the Government consider legislative reform to mitigate unintended impacts of bail amendments?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Attorney-General.

Safe Aboriginal Youth Program – Moree Delays

118. What specific planning milestones were not met for the Safe Aboriginal Youth Program in Moree and why?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

All milestones have been met for the Safe Aboriginal Youth (SAY) Program re-commissioning in Moree.

119. On what date will the bail accommodation be operational and how many places will it offer?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This is subject to a suitable property being sourced.

120. Will similar delays be experienced in Coffs Harbour and Dubbo, and what lessons have been learned from the Moree implementation?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Contract arrangements are being finalised with providers in both locations.

Cost of Youth Detention vs. Diversion

121. Has the Department explored any scalable fiscal modelling to illustrate long-term savings from reducing demand for custodial services via early intervention?

ANSWER:

I am advised this question was answered on page 43 of the uncorrected transcript.

122. Can the Department table any current or recent evaluation comparing cost-effectiveness of therapeutic diversion programs to detention?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 121.

General questions

CFMEU meetings

123. 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 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 Premier's 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 meetings

124. 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 the 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:

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(<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures>).

Ministerial disclosures to The Cabinet Office

125. 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(s)/Agency(s) Employees

126. 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?

- c. On what page are redundancies published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Redundancies are published in the respective department/agency annual report under employee related expenses. Published annual reports can be accessed on respective departmental websites.

Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports

127. On what date were the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio published?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The annual reports were tabled in accordance with the requirements of the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*.

128. Were the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio printed?

- a. If yes, what was the printing cost(s) for each department / agency?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Annual reports should be prepared in accordance with the NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines *TPG23-10 Annual Reporting Requirements*. TPG23-10 also requires that an agency's annual report contain the total external costs incurred in the production of the report, including printing costs.

129. Did the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio use in part or full an external production / body / consultant to draft?

- a. If yes, what was the cost(s) for each department / agency?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

In accordance with the Treasury Policy and Guidelines TPG23-10 Annual Reporting Requirements, an agency's annual report must contain the total external costs incurred in the production of the report, including fees for consultants.

130. In what month will the 2024-25 annual report(s) 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 Annual reporting requirements.

131. Will the 2024-25 annual report(s) for the department / agency in your portfolio include a printed copy?

a. If yes, how much is budgeted for printing in 2024-25 for each department / agency?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Annual reports should be prepared in accordance with the NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines TPG23-10 Annual Reporting Requirements. TP23-10 also requires that an agency's annual report contain the total external costs incurred in the production of the report, including printing costs.

State Records Act

132. 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 recordkeeping obligations under the *State Records Act 1998*.

The Cabinet Office also provides guidance, advice, training and support on these obligations for Ministers' offices.

Further information is available on State Records NSW's website (www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/dciths/state-records-nsw).

Advertising

133. On what page is advertising published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) annual report(s)?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Annual reports are published on the website of the relevant department or agency and are also held by the Parliamentary Library.

Agency expenditure must be reported in accordance with TD23-11 Annual reporting requirements and TPG23-10 Annual Reporting Requirements.

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

134. 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 website URL?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Agencies within my portfolio maintain a register. The following registers are available online:

- Fire and Rescue NSW at <https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9437#gifts>
- Premier's Department at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/access-to-information/gifts-and-hospitality-register>
- Youth Justice NSW at <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/resources/policies/gifts-benefits-and-bequests.html>

Ministerial staff disclosure of gifts and/or hospitality

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

a. If yes, what is the website URL?

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.

136. 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

137. 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

138. 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 a 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.

139. Do public servants in your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) been issued with department/agency credit cards?

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.

140. If yes, what is the website URL of the credit card policy?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Each department or agency within the portfolio has a specified policy, which was provided in the response to Supplementary Question 85 following Budget Estimates on 31 October 2023.

Department(s)/agency(s) desk or office

141. 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

142. As at 1 February 2025, how many senior executives in your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) have a driver?

ANSWER:

<https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/access-to-information/disclosure-log>

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/access-to-information/premiers-department-disclosure-log>

<https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/access-to-information#:~:text=Under%20the%20Government%20Information%20%28Public%20Access%29%20Act%202009%2C,applications%20it%20receives%20under%20the%20GIPA%20Act%20.>

<https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/about-us/gipa/disclosure-log.html>

TikTok

146. Are you on TikTok?

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

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Circular DCS-2025-01 Cyber Security NSW Directive - Restricted Applications List advises how NSW Government agencies are required to appropriately manage risks to NSW Government information on government-issued devices or personal devices that are used for government business.

Signal

147. Are you and/or your ministerial staff on Signal?

a. If yes, do you and/or your ministerial staff access Signal from a NSW Government device?

b. If yes, does Signal comply with the State Records Act?

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

148. 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 training on the Respectful Workplace Policy.

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.

Ministerial Office Budgets are managed in accordance with the Ministers' Office Handbook.

Cabinet documents

149. 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*.

The Premier's Memorandum 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

150. 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.

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

ANSWER:

I am advised:

No.

152. Has your Parliamentary Secretary ever used your Ministerial Vehicle?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Ministers' Office Handbook provides that:

- the Premier's Department will provide each Minister with a designated vehicle, which may be used by other drivers nominated by the Minister from time to time.
- the Premier's Department transport services may be used by Parliamentary Secretaries for official business trips in connection with their duties as Parliamentary Secretaries, with costs paid from the Ministers' office budget.

Media releases and statements

153. 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.

Overseas Travel

154. As Minister, do you approve overseas travel for public servants from your portfolio department(s)/agency(s)?

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.

Data Breaches

155. Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) keep a register of data breaches in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection (PPIP) Act?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Departments and agencies in my portfolio each keep an internal register of eligible data breaches as required by section 59ZE, Part 6A of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (PPIP Act).

Agencies are required by section 59ZD to prepare, publish and make publicly available a data breach policy. The PPIP Act does not provide for the internal register to be made public.

Under clause 17, of Schedule 1 to the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, it is conclusively presumed that there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of information contained in a document prepared for the assessment of an eligible data breach under the PPIP Act, Part 6A, if the information could worsen a public sector agency's cyber security or lead to further data breaches.

156. If yes, what is the website?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 155.

Discretionary Fund

157. As Minister, do you have a discretionary fund?

- a. If yes, what department(s) / agency(s) administer it?
- b. If yes, what is the website URL detailing expenditure?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Minister for Emergency Services Discretionary Fund is administered by the Premier's Department. Further information is available at:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/minister-for-emergency-services-discretionary-fund#:~:text=The%20Minister%20for%20Emergency%20Services%20Discretionary%20Fund%20provides,and%20those%20supporting%20community%20resilience%20to%20natural%20disasters.>

Qantas Chairman's Lounge

158. Are you a member of the Qantas Chairmans Lounge?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 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 NSW Parliament.

Local Government Councillors

159. How many of your Ministerial staff is a local government councillor(s)?

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*. 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).

Questions from Amanda Cohn MLC

Heatwave Emergency Sub Plan

160. What is the status and expected release timeline of the Cool Places Guideline being developed by State Emergency Management?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Premier's Department is coordinating the development of a Cool Places Good Practice Guide on behalf of the State Emergency Management Committee. The release timeline is subject to the development and planning process still underway.

161. What support will be provided to local government sector and community organisations in preparing for extreme heat events?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Premier's Department developed comprehensive ready-to-use heatwave exercise materials for Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) and Regional Emergency Management Committees (REMCs). The Premier's Department has also made funding available to LEMCs and REMCs under its Emergency Management Exercise Program to deliver multi-agency heatwave exercises before 30 June 2025. These exercises support the local

government sector to assess operational readiness and strengthen community safety, preparedness, response, and recovery in relation to heatwave emergencies.

RFS

162. What is the total number of operational hours for the CH-47 Chinook for firefighting?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 46.

163. How many hours of downtime has the CH-47 Chinook had due to mechanical or maintenance issues?

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Question on Notice 46.

164. What is the expenditure in this financial year on maintenance and operations of the CH-47 Chinook?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

As at 29 April 2025, a total of \$817,777 has been invested in servicing, repairs and fuel.

165. In reference to recommendation 61 of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry, what upgrades are planned and/or budgeted for fire control centres at Wagga, Queanbeyan, Bega, Cooma, and Yass, or any other location?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

As indicated at page 35 of the Uncorrected Transcript, projects at Tumut and Moruya are in development as well as projects in the Hawkesbury, Cooma, Clarence Valley and Narrabri.

The Rural Fire Service continues to work with relevant local councils on future opportunities for FCCs and EOCs, which will be subject to normal Budget processes.

166. What progress has been made on retrospective screening of volunteers who joined RFS prior to the requirement for police checks?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Junior members under 16 years of age undergo a criminal history check when they transition to ordinary membership. Criminal history checks are also conducted when existing members apply to join or transfer their membership to another brigade.

The RFS also undertakes an internal service check of any existing or previous RFS membership to identify any issues that may impact the decision regarding an application.

167. Regarding the review and update of Planning for Bush Fire Protection (PBP):

- a. Who were the key stakeholders consulted in 2024?
- b. Which agency and industry representatives have been invited for engagement and consultation on the draft document?
- c. Is the review considering changing conditions and fire behaviour due to climate change?
- d. Is the review considering the safety of firefighters and other emergency services personnel?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The review of Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 (PBP) is under way for anticipated release in 2026. The key stakeholders consulted were:

- RFS Development Assessment Officers
- State agencies (Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Department of Customer Service, NSW Reconstruction Authority)
- Local government authorities
- Industry groups including Fire Protection Association Australia, Housing Industry Association, Planning Institute of Australia and the Urban Development Institute of Australia.

The RFS will also seek to engage the Office of Local Government, National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Forestry Corporation, Fire and Rescue NSW and land management agencies such as Crown Lands as well as communities on bush fire prone land.

The aim of PBP is to provide for the protection of human life. Its key objectives are to ensure that appropriate operational access and egress for emergency service personnel and occupants is available and to ensure that utility services are adequate to meet the needs of firefighters. The PBP review will consider whether the sections relating to these objectives remain fit for purpose. The review is also considering how climate change could potentially impact fire behaviour and appropriate measures to mitigate these changes.

Department of Communities and Justice

168. What was the cause of delays in the opening of, or deliveries of essential supplies or staffing to, evacuation centres before and during Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Housing.

169. What review or improvements are being made to prevent similar delays reoccurring in future?

ANSWER:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Housing.

Questions from Abigail Boyd MLC
SIRA

170. SIRA's 2023/24 Annual Report says 'In the 2023-24 financial year, SIRA completed 4 quarterly audits and reviews and publishes results of these on SIRA's website'. The following Audits/Reviews are listed: Liability decisions on psychological injury claims (published on SIRA website October 2023), Audit of new claims service provider onboarding and performance - Gallagher Basset (published April 2024), Audit of new claims service provider onboarding and performance - DXC (published May 2024), Premiums and Policy review (expected to be published in October 2024).

- a. Please provide a link to each report.
- b. If the reports are no longer hosted on the SIRA website, please provide a copy.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

- Liability decisions on psychological injury claims:
<https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/resources-library/workers-compensation-resources/publications/sira-reports/nominal-insurer-audit-report-july-2023>
- Audit of new claims service provider onboarding and performance - Gallagher Basset:
<https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/resources-library/workers-compensation-resources/publications/sira-reports/nominal-insurer-audit-report-november-2023>
- Audit of new claims service provider onboarding and performance – DXC:
<https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/resources-library/workers-compensation-resources/publications/sira-reports/nominal-insurer-audit-report-february-2024>
- The Premiums and Policy Review report is being finalised by SIRA ahead of publication.

171. In relation to primary psychological injury workers compensation claims, for each financial year from 2013/14 - 2024/25 (to date), how many have received a Whole Person Impairment rating of:

- a. 0-10%
- b. 11-14%
- c. 15-29%
- d. 30%+

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This data is directly collected and generated across multiple government agencies. Questions about icare data should be directed to the Minister for Work Health and Safety.

SIRA makes available a wide range of open data sets on its website, noting that it does not generate or collect the data and cannot confirm the accuracy of the data provided by insurers.

172. How many Employer Improvement Notices have been issued to government employers in relation to failure to have a compliant Return to Work Program, and to which government employers, in:

- a. FY 2022/23
- b. FY 2023/24
- c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Employer Improvement Notice statistics are published in the SIRA quarterly and annual reports, which are available on its website.

173. How many Employer Improvement Notices have been issued to government employers, and which government employers, in relation to failure to notify injuries to the insurer within 48 hours, in:

- a. FY 2022/23
- b. FY 2023/24
- c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 172.

174. How many Penalty Notices have been issued to government employers, and to which

government employers, in relation to failure to have a compliant return to work program, in:

- a. FY 2022/23
- b. FY 2023/24
- c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Penalty Notice statistics are published in the SIRA quarterly and annual reports, which are available on its website.

175. How many Penalty Notices have been issued to government employers, and to which government employers, in relation to failure to notify injuries to the insurer within 48 hours, in:

- a. FY 2022/23
- b. FY 2023/24
- c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer to Supplementary Question 174.

176. How many Caution Letters have been issued to government employers, and to which government employers, for failure to notify injuries to the insurer within 48 hours, in:

- a. FY 2022/23
- b. FY 2023/24
- c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Caution Letter statistics are published in the SIRA quarterly and annual reports, which are available on its website.

177. How many other regulatory actions has SIRA undertaken against government employers, and to which government employers, in:

- a. FY 2022/23
- b. FY 2023/24

c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Regulatory action statistics are published in the SIRA quarterly and annual reports, which are available on its website.

178. For the TMF, what percentage of physical injury claims have their liability accepted?

a. FY 2022/23

b. FY 2023/24

c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Work Health and Safety.

179. For the TMF, what percentage of psychological injury claims have their liability accepted?

a. FY 2022/23

b. FY 2023/24

c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Work Health and Safety.

180. For the Nominal Insurer, what percentage of physical injury claims have their liability accepted?

a. FY 2022/23

b. FY 2023/24

c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Work Health and Safety.

181. For the Nominal Insurer, what percentage of psychological injury claims have their liability accepted?

a. FY 2022/23

b. FY 2023/24

c. FY 2024/25 (to date)

ANSWER:

This question should be referred to the Minister for Work Health and Safety.