

Paul Mills

Questions Taken on Notice

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: In this document, which you'll be given in a moment, the three columns of "contact person", "contact person number" and "contact person email", your job was to ensure that those columns were correct?

PAUL MILLS: So "contact person", "contact person number" and "contact person email"?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Yes.

PAUL MILLS: Yes.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Your job was not to determine whether the other columns—"commitment" or "allocated expenditure"—were correct? That's your evidence? You weren't the interface—to use your word—on those two columns, "commitment" or "allocated expenditure"? You were the interface on "contact person", "contact person number" and "contact person email"?

PAUL MILLS: As I've stated, my job was to ensure that the contact details were correct.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So you didn't fill out the column that says "allocated expenditure"?

PAUL MILLS: As I've stated, my job was to ensure that the contact details were correct.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: And that was your only job with this spreadsheet?

PAUL MILLS: Yes.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Presumably, then, you were given a spreadsheet that had the "commitment" column and the "allocated expenditure" column filled in, and then you needed to just essentially assess the other three columns?

PAUL MILLS: It was two years ago. There was a lot happening. What I can say factually was my job was to make sure that those details were correct. I'm happy to take it on notice if you'd like. As I said, it was two years ago.

I have nothing to add to the testimony I gave on 27 June 2025.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In relation to the last project on that list that is in front of you in relation to Rough Edges and that contact person, how did you get those contact details? Where did they come from?

PAUL MILLS: I feel like I've answered that question already.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: No, you said it was your job to put in the contact details.

PAUL MILLS: Yes, that's right.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So where did you get that name and those contact details from? Did you google it? Did you talk to someone?

PAUL MILLS: Sorry, my apologies for interrupting, but I refer you to Cherie Burton's evidence that she gave earlier this morning.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm not asking about Ms Burton. With respect, Mr Mills, you've just told us your part of the job was to populate the contact details. My question to you is, for Rough Edges, there is a contact person here, an email address and a phone number, presumably, that's redacted. Where did you get those details from, specifically for that Rough Edges project, in order to populate this sheet, which you've just given us evidence under oath that that was your job? Where did that come from?

PAUL MILLS: I've stated that I did not interact with the member for Sydney.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I didn't mention the member for Sydney. I'm just saying to you, where did—

PAUL MILLS: Can I please finish my answer? I was not the interface with the member for Sydney.

Cherie Burton was the interface with the member for Sydney, so if I didn't engage with that person—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: With respect, Mr Mills, I didn't mention the member for Sydney. I'm asking you. You had to fill out this sheet. Where did you get the details for the contact person who was the appropriate contact person for Rough Edges? Did you google it?

PAUL MILLS: I think I'm going to take that on notice.

I do not recall and have nothing to add to the evidence I gave at the 27 June hearing.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: So you were working this spreadsheet in a hard copy format when you were checking the details.

PAUL MILLS: The details you have in front of you—it was two years ago. There's a lot that was going on. But, like I said, it was given in hard copy, as explained by my director.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And she gave you that hard copy as well?

PAUL MILLS: Yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You got it from Ms Burton.

PAUL MILLS: Because there's only one.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: If you had to correct one—the contact person, contact person number or contact person email—it's quite unusable in a hard copy format. What did you do? You how did you correct it if it was in hard copy?

PAUL MILLS: Yes, I obviously had to fill it out—like, not on the hard copy document. How do you do that? Well, like I said, I've—referring back to your initial question, I received it in hard copy.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So when you got it in—

PAUL MILLS: But I had to fill it out, obviously. I believe many documents have been sent to you by SO 52 showing those details being passed on to the department.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When you got it in hard copy, can you recall were there nine projects on this list when you were first given it?

PAUL MILLS: No, I can't. Sorry.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can you take that on notice?

PAUL MILLS: Yes, I can.

I do not recall and have nothing to add to the evidence I gave at the 27 June hearing.

The CHAIR: Can you tell us who coached you in your answers before you came to this Committee?

PAUL MILLS: Obviously, I did receive support in preparation for this Committee.

The CHAIR: Who was giving you support and training ahead of this Committee for your appearance?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Well, Cherie in the Strangers last night.

PAUL MILLS: I speak to a lot of people. My job is like—

The CHAIR: I have a lot of sympathy for your position because you are here as a more junior person than we would normally get here. I'm trying to help you. Can you tell us who coached you and trained you for your appearance ahead of this Committee hearing?

PAUL MILLS: I would have received advice from people, yes. I can't state one person. I'm happy to take that on notice, if you'd like.

I reject the imputation that I was “coached” or “trained.” I took advice from The Cabinet Office and I found useful the material sent by the Legislative Council to prepare me for my testimony.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Post-election, then, you're working in the caucus liaison office and you're dealing with the LSCA program. Was the conflict of interest in Riverstone ever raised with you in the post-election process?

PAUL MILLS: I just want to refer you to my opening statement. My job was to fill out the contact details and make sure they were correct.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: So it was not raised with you.

PAUL MILLS: I'd just refer you to my opening statement.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just further on that, your job might have been to fill out the contact details, but you've just told us that you were an organiser, including for the seat of Riverstone. So is your evidence, under oath, to this Committee, knowing full well what the impacts are if you don't tell us the truth and that you might well find yourself back here again, Mr Mills—are you saying that not one person asked you about any of the issues to do with Riverstone, noting your involvement in it pre the election?

PAUL MILLS: It was two years ago. I'd have to take that on notice.

I have nothing to add to the testimony I gave on 27 June 2025.

The CHAIR: Mr Mills, in Ms Burton's evidence this morning we heard for the first time this information that there had been an error in the list with the Sydney amounts. Ms Burton claimed that that was her error. When did you first discover that Ms Burton had made an error?

PAUL MILLS: Like I said, my job is to fill out the lists. Any conversations privy to any errors being made, I wasn't privy to.

The CHAIR: With respect, could you just answer the question? When did you first find out?

PAUL MILLS: I can't recall. I'd have to take that on notice.

I have nothing to add to the testimony I gave on 27 June 2025.

The CHAIR: When you were listening to the evidence today of Ms Burton, and she said it was an error, did you register surprise? Was this new to you?

PAUL MILLS: I'd have to take it on notice.

Ms Burton has said in various ways under the committee's questioning that the election commitments for Sydney that were made prior to the election were the ones that went forward for funding. That was and remains my understanding.