

**INQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRITY, EFFICACY, AND VALUE FOR  
MONEY OF THE LOCAL SMALL COMMITMENTS ALLOCATION  
PROCESS**

**Hearing: 27 June 2025**

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**

**Ms Cherie Burton, Director, Caucus Liaison Unit, Office of the Hon Chris Minns MP**

(1) In evidence Josh Wright said that everyone knew from the beginning of the LSCA program that only projects and amounts proposed before the election day could and would be funded once in government. You have said you worked on the allocations in the seat of Kogarah, so was this your understanding about the LSCA format too? If so, why did you allow Mr Greenwich to alter the allocations in Sydney, as subsequently corrected by Damian O'Connor?

**As per my testimony on page 22 of the uncorrected transcript of the 24 March 2025 hearing and elsewhere, "The election commitments for Sydney that were made prior to the election were the ones that went forward for funding."**

(2) Prior to the Sydney LSCA grants being finalised, what contact had you had with Will2Live or its former director and the owner of its Botany Road Alexandria premises, Brent Maksimovich, or his renovation company Maksim Potential?

**To the best of my recollection, I cannot recall any such contact.**

(3) What conversations did you have with Skye Tito about her LSCA allocations in the seat as Sydney? What did she tell you and when?

**I refer to my evidence on page 14 of the uncorrected transcript of the 27 June 2025 hearing.**

(4) Did you attend the meeting with the Premier and Mr Greenwich on 11 January 2024 (2-3pm) in the Premier's office? Were the LSCA allocations for Sydney discussed and if so, what lobbying argument did Mr Greenwich present and how did you and the Premier respond?

**To the best of my recollection, I did not.**

(5) The following day, 12 January 2024, Mr Greenwich held a meeting in his office to discuss

funding support for homelessness services in his electorate. Did he contact you after that regarding the LSCA allocations? What was the outcome of that discussion?

**I refer to evidence I have already given, including at page 23 of the uncorrected transcript of the 24 March 2025 hearing and page 11 of the uncorrected transcript of the 27 June 2025 hearing.**

(6) When did you first discuss with a) James Cullen and b) Chris Minns the need for Premier's Discretionary Fund top-ups in the seat of Sydney to compensate Mr Greenwich's proposals following the decision of John Graham and Damain O'Connor to return the Sydney allocations to what they thought were the 'Original' amounts?

**Recipients for the Premier's Discretionary Fund are selected by ministerial discretion to meet the program objectives.**

**This program is administered by Premier's Department.**

(7) In the various SO52s on the LSCA, why didn't you return your copy of the document George Psihoyios gave you off his phone after his 12 February 2024 meeting with Damain O'Connor? What other documents have you withheld?

**I have complied with my obligations relating to orders for the production of documents under Standing Order 52.**

(8) Other than in the Sydney seat, what other changes did you make to the LSCA allocations in the other 92 NSW electorates, between receiving the pre-election master list, in whatever format, and lodging the so-called 'Source of Truth' document with the Program Office on 28 July 2023?

**I refer to my evidence at page 21 of the uncorrected transcript of the 24 March 2025 hearing.**

(9) How do you explain that in Matt Cross's GIPA of 21 June 2023, Skye Tito's allocations for Sydney were initially lodged and recorded after the election as a blanket \$400,000 allocation for the needs of vulnerable people in that electorate? That is, under the terms of the program guidelines, with that lack of specificity by the Labor candidate, the \$400,000 should have been transferred to local Councils for park improvements. Why didn't this happen?

**As per my testimony on page 22 of the uncorrected transcript of the 24 March 2025 hearing, “The election commitments for Sydney that were made prior to the election were the ones that went forward for funding.”**

(10) To the best of your recollection, who was the Secretariat of the ERC? In which office was it located?

**I assume that the question refers to *Shadow* ERC.**

**I was not involved in the pre-election process.**

(11) In your evidence you stated “The election commitments were \$400,000 for homelessness shelters. There was a list that was provided to me. That was the original list. When we contacted Alex to get the contact details, which I've stated before, Alex had very strong views about where he felt the money should go, which any good MP would.”

(a) In reference to the “original list” with election commitments for the electorate of Sydney of “\$400,000 for homelessness shelters” did this original list correspond with the details of projects and allocated amounts in Matthew lemma’s email to Kate Meagher of 1 February 2024 which states “Hi Kate. Cherie has advised me that it has come to her attention that there was an error in the Sydney electorate LSCA. Could you please amend accordingly; • \* Shelter NSW: \$50,000 • \* Homelessness NSW: \$50,000 • \* Matthew Talbot Hostel - St Vincent de Paul Society; \$50,000 • \* St Patrick's Church Hill: \$50,000 • \* Wayside Chapel: \$50,000 • \* Canice's Kitchen: \$50,000 • • Will 2 Live; \$100,000 If you have any further questions, please contact Cherie direct on Kind Regards, Matthew lemma Caucus Liaison Unit”?

(b) Where is the list that was provided to you – “the original list” – with these projects and amounts listed?

- Has it been provided in response to any of the order for papers relating to the Local Small Commitments Allocation?
- Has it been destroyed?
- Is it still in your possession?
  - If so, please provide a copy to the Committee.

(c) Who entered the new projects and altered funding allocations as proposed by the Member for Sydney on to the document labelled *230728 \$400K local commitments master list.xlsx* which you delivered to the LSCA Program Office on 28 July 2023?

(d) Why did you tell the LSCA program office that this master list contained the election commitments made under the LSCA when you knew that some of those listed for the electorate for Sydney were not on the “original list” given to you but had been added to the list in the Premier’s Office on the recommendation of the Member for Sydney, including \$30,000 to Street Level and \$30,000 to Rough Edges?

- (e) Are you aware that the brief for Tranche 7 prepared by the LSCA Program Office and provided to the Special Minister for State for his approval on 1 December 2023 stated that the \$30,000 for Rough Edges met the eligibility criteria of being an election commitment by the Labor candidate for the electorate?
- Are you aware that this assertion was based solely on its inclusion in the 28 July 2023 master list and your word that all projects on that list were election commitments?
- (f) When did Damian O'Connor first raise with you concerns about whether the projects being processed by the LSCA Program Office for the electorate of Sydney were the "original" projects and funding allocations?
- (g) When did you inform the Member for Sydney that the "original list" of projects and funding allocations, which you had altered at his request, would be restored?
- (h) Did you discuss this with the Premier or with the Chief of Staff before informing the Member for Sydney?
- (i) Who first proposed separate funding, such as from the Premier's Discretionary Fund, to cover the funding offers totalling \$135,000 which would no longer proceed under the LSCA Program?
- (j) Did you ask George Psihoyios to attend Damian O'Connor's office and take a photograph of a printed email relating to LSCA allocations for the Sydney electorate with handwritten annotations written by Mr O'Connor? Why?
- (k) Why was this approach adopted to get this information rather than using email? Was it to attempt to avoid a documentary trail?
- (l) Did Mr Psihoyios show you the photograph?
- (m) How did Matthew lemma obtain the details of the projects and funding allocations for the "amendments" he, acting on your behalf" asked Kate Meagher to make on 1 February 2024 for the Sydney electorate LSCA?

**As per my testimony on page 22 of the uncorrected transcript of the 24 March 2025 hearing, "The election commitments for Sydney that were made prior to the election were the ones that went forward for funding."**

**The Government complies with its obligations for orders for the production of documents under Standing Order 52.**

**State records are a vital public asset, and access to Government information is essential to maintaining public trust in government. I comply with my obligations under the State Records Act 1998.**

**Recipients for the Premier's Discretionary Fund are selected by ministerial discretion to meet the program objectives. This program is administered by Premier's Department.**

**The LSCA Program is being administered by the LSCA Program Office within the NSW Premier's Department. Final decisions on the award of funding are made by the NSW Special Minister of State.**

In addition to documents released to the Legislative Council in response to SO52 calls for papers, advice given to, and decisions made by, the Special Minister of State have been proactively disclosed at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/access-to-information/local-small-commitments-allocation-advice-and-decisions>

(12) The table published by the Cabinet office at:

[https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/TCO\\_A5794143%20-%20Disclosure%20log.pdf](https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/TCO_A5794143%20-%20Disclosure%20log.pdf) lists the electorate of Sydney as having just one nominated project for a total of \$400,000. When, and on whose initiative, was this increased to seven projects as on the list you originally provided to the Member for Sydney?

**As per my testimony on page 22 of the uncorrected transcript of the 24 March 2025 hearing, "The election commitments for Sydney that were made prior to the election were the ones that went forward for funding."**

(13) The table published by the Cabinet office at

[https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/TCO\\_A5794143%20-%20Disclosure%20log.pdf](https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/TCO_A5794143%20-%20Disclosure%20log.pdf) lists the electorates of Castle Hill, Epping, Kellyville, Murray, Orange and Wollondilly as having no nominated projects and \$400,000 of unallocated funds. How did specific projects and funding allocations come to be added against those electorates between 14 July and 24 July 2023 before you gave the master list to the LSCA Program Office and described these as "election commitments"?

**The election commitment was for \$400,000 in funding for each electorate in NSW. The Local Small Commitments Allocation (LSCA) Program is a \$37.2 million grants program established by the NSW Government. The Local Small Commitments Allocation Program provides grants to the value of \$400,000 to each of the 93 NSW electorates.**

**The funding is administered as follows:**

- **Community organisations were nominated prior to the March 2023 election to receive grants to fund small projects ranging from capital works, services and programs, supplies and equipment, events, charitable donations, to playground and park upgrades.**
- **The election commitment ensured \$400,000 goes to every electorate in NSW.**
- **In some electorates a number of community projects have been nominated, with the remaining portion of the allocated \$400,000 nominated for playground and park upgrade projects to be delivered by local councils.**
- **LSCA Program is a non-competitive, one-off grants program. Projects are processed through a rigorous assessment process in accordance with the LSCA Guidelines and the NSW Grants Administration Guide.**

**The LSCA Program Guideline can be found here:**

**<https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/Local%20Small%20Commitments%20-%20Guideline.pdf>**

**The NSW Grants Administration Guide can be found here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/grants-administration-guide>**

(14) Have you ever spoken with Skye Tito about her election commitments?

(a) If so, when did this occur?

**I refer to my evidence on page 14 of the uncorrected transcript of the 27 June 2025 hearing.**