

James Cullen**Questions Taken on Notice**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Wayside Chapel actually got money under both the LSCA and the Premier's Discretionary Fund. Are you aware of any other organisations that got money through both the Premier's Discretionary Fund and the LSCA?

JAMES CULLEN: Not specifically, but it wouldn't surprise me. Can I say, I probably got more experience through the role in from time to time—not routinely but from time to time—sending information to the relevant team in the Premier's Department to process PDF grants. It's sort of unsurprising and often common that a member of Parliament or an organisation would come to you directly and explain their circumstances. Often it is: "We've been unsuccessful in a grant round elsewhere. We've only received part of what we want." Those sorts of things are pretty common, to be honest. So I am not surprised.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take on notice then perhaps whether any projects received money through the Premier's Discretionary Fund and also got LSCA?

JAMES CULLEN: LSCA and also—organisations? I'm happy to take that on notice.

Local Small Commitments Allocation Grants Approved can be found publicly here:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/lzca/local-small-commitments-allocation-program-approved-grants>

Premier's Discretionary Fund grant recipients can be found publicly here:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding/premiers-discretionary-funding>

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I might just move on to some of the evidence we heard from Josh Wright before. Who was on shadow ERC when you were in opposition?

JAMES CULLEN: I'd probably have to take it on notice. I understand you might have asked a similar question to Mr Graham, who was reluctant to go into details in terms of the confidentiality of that particular forum. It wouldn't surprise me if they had the shadow Treasurer and the shadow finance Minister, for example, but let me take it on notice and see if I can come back to you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The Leader of the Opposition would have been on it, I'm assuming.

JAMES CULLEN: You might speculate that, yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Cullen, come on—as if the Leader of the Opposition wasn't going to be on the shadow ERC. You don't have to be cute.

JAMES CULLEN: To be fair, time's marching on and—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Are you seriously suggesting that the now Premier wasn't on your shadow ERC when he was the Leader of the Opposition? Come on.

JAMES CULLEN: I'm confident he is, but why don't I take it on notice to get you an accurate answer.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Did shadow ERC approve all the LSCA projects prior to the election?

JAMES CULLEN: I wasn't a member of shadow ERC. Let me take it on notice and, trying to help the Committee, see if I can come back to you with something on that.

I do not hold records about who attended shadow ERC.

I refer to the Special Minister of State's evidence at the 28 March 2025 hearing, including but not limited to page 16 of the uncorrected transcript of that hearing, in relation to his membership of shadow ERC and his comments about shadow ERC processes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Thank you, Mr Cullen. You said earlier on that Alex Greenwich was keen for funding from the Premier's Discretionary Fund. Was that a verbal representation, or was there something in writing?

JAMES CULLEN: I don't think there was anything in writing. I'm happy to take that on notice. I didn't have—no, there was no conversation with Mr Greenwich.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: How do you know he was keen for funding, as you gave evidence earlier on?

JAMES CULLEN: Again, the period of time—I think it was somewhere between 18 months and two years ago in terms of me sending that PDF request to the Premier's Department, for those four organisations. It came to me indirectly. It wasn't from—it was a conversation in the office. It wasn't from him direct at all, no. Let me take it on notice, particularly to see if there was—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Who in the office were you speaking to?

JAMES CULLEN: A lot of people. There are a lot of people in the office.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: We've been through some of the people—

JAMES CULLEN: Sure. Yes, I'm aware of that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: —and there's only one person who has given evidence to say they spoke to Alex Greenwich directly, and that was Cherie Burton. Were you talking to Cherie Burton?

JAMES CULLEN: It could have been Cherie. It might have been someone else.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Could you take that on notice and also find out if there was a written submission?

JAMES CULLEN: I'm happy to.

I refer to the evidence I gave at page 69 of the uncorrected transcript. The question relates to matters from over 18 months ago. I have nothing to add.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Well, it wasn't the one you were answering. That is how often do members just ring up on the telephone and get money and without a written submission or any analysis?

JAMES CULLEN: Do they ring up? Yes, ring, email, send in mail—all of it.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: To answer my question, how often do they just ring up?

JAMES CULLEN: Probably weekly.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sorry?

JAMES CULLEN: I would say weekly.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Just ring up and get the money? Nothing in writing?

JAMES CULLEN: They would make the request. Members of Parliament routinely make requests for funding under the PDF.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you take on notice how many MPs have got PDF money just by a telephone call, which appears to be the case here?

JAMES CULLEN: The answer will—and I can tell you, I'll make sure it goes back five years, because it will be every single—I've got Mark Speakman's letter here asking for funding. It's routine.

People contact the Premier's Office in a variety of ways regarding Premier's Discretionary Funding. Premier's Discretionary Funding has been granted to projects requested by, and/or in the electorates of, Coalition MPs. For example, my understanding is that:

- **The Cronulla Chamber of Commerce received \$11,000 in Premier's Discretionary Funding towards the 2024 Cronulla Jazz and Blues Festival.**
- **The Cronulla Chamber of Commerce received \$11,000 in Premier's Discretionary Funding towards the 2025 Cronulla Jazz and Blues Festival.**
- **The Cronulla Surf Festival received \$25,000 in Premier's Discretionary Funding.**
- **The Women's Shelter Armidale received \$20,000 towards the Women's Shelter Armidale Food Project.**
- **The Manly Wheelchair Basketball Association received \$50,000 towards Funding to host games at the NWBL 2024.**

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: We know from Alex Greenwich's diary, Mr Cullen, that he had a meeting with the Premier between 2.00 p.m. and 3.00 p.m. on Thursday 11 January 2024. It is listed in his diary as being at the Premier's office at 52 Martin Place regarding the equality bills. Were you part of that meeting?

JAMES CULLEN: The equality bills—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It's 11 January, so you're coming back from leave early last year. It's in the time zone where there's—

JAMES CULLEN: No, I don't believe I was.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Could you take it on notice and check your own diary? I assume you keep a diary.

JAMES CULLEN: I'd be confident the answer is no, but I will take it on notice.

To the best of my recollection, I was not.