

Inquiry into the integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process
Hearing: 27 June 2025

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Question 1

Documents provide in response to the order for papers show that at some time after you told Cherie Burton on 21 October 2023 that “We will need to include Alex Greenwich in our COI process” the four Sydney projects that had been assessed were moved a separate folder in SmartyGrants labelled “Sydney electorate – pending review” where they remained until 29 November 2023. Why were these projects moved into this separate folder?

Answer:

The SmartyGrants workflow for these projects was held until the questions regarding any consultation with the member for Sydney were clarified.

Question 2

Why were these projects moved out of this folder on 29 November and processed as Tranche 7?

Answer:

There was no further action required and the workflow was resumed.

Question 3

Prior to 1 February 2024 did anyone discuss with you the possibility that there were errors in the projects and funding allocations for the electorate of Sydney?

Answer:

No, the LSCA Program Office was advised of the corrections to the nominated Sydney electorate projects on 1 February 2024.

Question 4

When you were informed by the Premier’s Office on 1 February 2024 that there were errors in the master list for the electorate of Sydney did you make any inquiries as to how those errors came to be made?

Answer:

No - the LSCA Program Office accepted the advice from the Premier’s Office regarding the required corrections to the Sydney electorate nominated projects.

Question 5

The LSCA Program Office in preparing the brief for Tranche 7 assured the Special Minister for State that there had been an election commitment to Rough Edges of \$30,000 by the Labor candidate made prior to the election. Why was this assurance given?

Answer:

The assurance was given based on the information provided in the final LSCA nominated project list received on 28 July 2023 (also referred to as the “master list” or the “source of truth”).

Question 6

The LSCA Program Office later made a similar assurance that there had been an election commitment to Will2Live of \$100,000 by the Labor candidate made prior to the election. Why was this assurance given?

Answer:

See response to Question 4.

Question 7

After learning that Cherie Burton had falsely assured you that the master list given to you on 28 July 2023 contained an authentic list of election commitments but that she now claimed that list contained “errors” in relation the election for Sydney, what grounds did you have for accepting her word that the new list of nominated projects and funding allocations for that electorate were actually election commitments made by the Labor candidate for Sydney?

Answer:

See response to Question 4.

Question 8

Do you stand by your assurance to the Special Minister of State that the Labor candidate for Sydney committed to give Will2Live \$100,000?

Answer:

See response to Question 4.

Question 9

The first table published by the Cabinet office at: 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. The GIPA letter to the applicant, Mr Matt Cross MP, indicates that this document “Record 5” was created on or before 21 June 2023. What was the single

project listed for the electorate of Sydney that was known to the WestInvest Program Office as at 21 June 2023?

Answer:

The document linked in the Member’s question was a working document created in June 2023 to support early modelling for any unallocated funds.

In the document, the reference to one allocated project in the Sydney electorate reflects the information available at the time. The Premier’s Office had advised the LSCA Program Office that project details were still being verified, with the final list of nominated projects being provided on 28 July 2023.

Question 10

What was the source for identifying the number of projects and total allocated funding amounts for each electorate as set out in this table?

Answer:

This preliminary information about projects nominated to apply for LSCA funding was taken from an incomplete paper list provided by the Premier’s Office in a meeting on 14 June 2023.

Question 11

Why have no documents relating to this source been provided in response to the orders for papers relating to Local Small Commitments Allocation?

Answer:

This document is a preliminary and incomplete version of the LSCA list (the “master list”) provided to the LSCA Program Office on 28 July 2023.

Question 12

Have they been destroyed? If not, please provide any and all documents created prior to 21 June 2023 that relate to nominated projects and funding allocations under the Local Small Commitments Allocation.

Answer:

No documents have been destroyed. All records are stored appropriately and according to the requirements of the State Records Act.

Question 13

In the table the electorates of Castle Hill, Epping, Kellyville, Murray, Orange and Wollondilly are each shown as having no nominated projects and with \$400,000 of unallocated funds. Did you receive any

information prior to receiving the 230728 \$400K local commitments master list.xlsx from Cherie Burton on 28 July 2023 that there would be nominated projects for these electorates?

Answer:

See response to Question 9.

Question 14

Apart from disclosing that there had been consultations with the Member for Sydney about the projects and funding allocations for the electorate of Sydney, did Cherie Burton or anyone else from the Premier's Office ever suggest to you that nominated projects for Castle Hill, Epping, Kellyville, Murray, Orange and Wollondilly had originated from anyone other than the Labor candidate for those electorates, including from the sitting members for Murray, Orange and Wollondilly?

Answer:

No, the nomination process was not handled by the LSCA Program Office. The Program Office relied on the final nomination list received on 28 July 2023 and the Program Office accepted that accuracy checks were made prior to the list being finalised.

Question 15

Did you ever inquire about the source for projects added to the list of nominated projects after 21 June 2023 when the table provided in response to a GIPA request shows just one project for Sydney and no projects for Castle Hill, Epping, Kellyville, Murray, Orange and Wollondilly?

Answer:

See response to Question 14.

Question 16

In asserting in a brief for approval by the Special Minister of State that each of the projects ultimately funded for Castle Hill, Epping, Kellyville, Murray, Orange and Wollondilly was an election commitment were you relying solely on the word of Cherie Burton when she told you on 28 July 2023 that all the projects listed in 230728 \$400K local commitments master list.xlsx?

Answer:

The LSCA Program Office relied on the final LSCA nominated project list that was received from the Premiers' Office on 28 July 2023.

Question 17

After she withdrew this categorical assurance on 1 February 2024 in relation to the electorate of Sydney and proposed a new list of projects and funding allocations, why did you continue to rely on her assurance of 28 July 2023 in relation to all other electorates and use this as the sole basis for advising the Special Minister of State that each project he was advised to approve for funding met

the mandatory eligibility criterion of having been nominated by the Labor candidate for the respective electorate prior to the March 2023 election?

Answer:

The LSCA Program Office was satisfied with the advice received from the Premier's Office regarding any corrections to the final nominated projects list and moved forward with establishing the Program and coordinating the assessment of projects.