



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 3 – EDUCATION

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025-2026

Supplementary questions

Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education

Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

(Whan)

Hearing: Friday 29 August 2025

Answers due by: Responses due by Thursday 2 October 2025¹

Budget Estimates secretariat

Phone (02) 9230 2851

BudgetEstimates@parliament.nsw.gov.au

¹ The original due date was Thursday 25 September 2025. An extension was granted by Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education on Tuesday 9 September 2025 to move the due date to Thursday 2 October 2025.

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025-2026

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Questions from Hon Tania Mihailuk MLC
--

Questions To Distinguished Professor George Williams, AO

- (1) Given that the Minister confirmed that 10,500 sqm of the 33,482 sqm at Western Sydney University tower is going to be leased for use for the relocation of Bankstown TAFE:
 - (a) When did you first notify Canterbury-Bankstown Council of the fact that 31.36% of your campus will be tenanted on commercial terms for non-university use?
 - (b) Have you advised Canterbury-Bankstown Council that Western Sydney University has entered into a commercial lease arrangement beginning on 1 January 2026.
 - i. Will the university begin to pay commercial rent rather than the \$1 peppercorn lease?
- (2) Did you use external consultants to negotiate the commercial arrangement with TAFE NSW?
 - (a) If yes, please name the consultancy.
- (3) How much did Western Sydney University receive in total from the sale of the former landholding in Milperra?
- (4) Have you provided or offered to provide the Minister for Tertiary Education with a report of your commercial activities, including the sale of land at Milperra, and the contractual arrangements at the Bankstown tower, as per sections 32C and 32D of the *Western Sydney University Act 1997* (NSW)?

Questions from Ms Sue Higginson MLC
--

Questions To Distinguished Professor George Williams, AO

University Investments

- (5) What is the total sum of university investments, both direct and indirect, in fossil fuels?
- (6) Can you please provide a complete list of partnerships with fossil fuel companies or lobby groups over the last 5 years?

- (7) What is the total sum of university investments, both direct and indirect, in Israeli corporations?
- (8) Can you please provide a complete list of partnerships with Israeli corporations over the last 5 years?
- (9) What is the total sum of university investments, both direct and indirect, in weapons corporations?
- (10) Can you please provide a complete list of partnerships with weapons corporations or lobby groups over the last 5 years?
- (11) What is the total sum of university investments, both direct and indirect, in gambling companies?
 - (a) How much does the university have directly or indirectly invested in gambling companies or poker machine manufacturers?
- (12) Can you please provide a complete list of partnerships with the gambling industry over the last 5 years?
- (13) What existing partnerships does the University have with Israeli Academic Institutions?
- (14) What is the total sum of money held in any assets with, or investment in directly or indirectly, the following companies:
 - (a) BAE Systems?
 - (b) Lockheed Martin?
 - (c) Northrop Grumman?
 - (d) Elbit Systems?
 - (e) Electro Optic Systems?
 - (f) Raytheon?
 - (g) Thales?
 - (h) Boeing?
 - (i) Chrysos Corporation?
 - (j) NIOA Group?
 - (k) Airbus Group?

- (l) ASC?
- (m) IBM?
- (n) QINETIQ?
- (o) SAAB?
- (p) DXC?
- (q) ExecuJet MRO Services?
- (r) Dassault?
- (s) Bouygues?
- (t) NSO Group?
- (u) Q Cyber Technologies?
- (v) Intellexa?
- (w) Maravilhas Solutions?
- (x) Stone & Chalk?
- (y) AustCyber?
- (z) Red Piranha?
- (aa) Willyama Services?
- (bb) Alethea
- (cc) Cybersixgill?
- (dd) Alchemy Security Consulting?
- (ee) 11point2?
- (ff) Vectra?
- (gg) Splunk Sention?
- (hh) R1i.Technology?
- (ii) Providence Consulting Group?
- (jj) Redarc?
- (kk) Hanwha?
- (ll) Ferra?

- (mm) HTA?
- (nn) Quickstep?
- (oo) Ionize?
- (pp) Insync Solutions?
- (qq) Fifth Domain?
- (rr) DTEX?
- (ss) CyberOps?
- (tt) Wabtec Corporation?
- (uu) SOIO?
- (vv) School of Information Operations?
- (ww) Coherics?
- (xx) Caterpillar?
- (yy) Dassault Systèmes?
- (zz) General Dynamics?
- (aaa) shkosh?
- (bbb) Rheinmetall AG?
- (ccc) Rolls-Royce Power Systems?
- (ddd) RTX?
- (eee) ThyssenKrupp?
- (fff) What is the total monetary value of funding received by the University from these companies in the form of:
 - i. Research grants or other sources of funding?
 - ii. Sponsorship of facilities, programs or events?
 - iii. Scholarships?
 - iv. Consulting fees for university expertise?
 - v. Licensing fees?
 - vi. Equipment donations or discounted purchases?

- (ggg) Has the University paid money to any of these companies for:
- i. Licensing fees to use corporate software, databases, or technology?
 - ii. Equipment and service purchases?
 - iii. Consulting fees?
 - iv. Facility rental or co-location costs?
- (hhh) What is the total monetary value of costs paid by the University to these companies?
- (iii) Has the University made any joint venture investments with any of these companies?
- (jjj) Will the University commit to divesting from these companies, who have been named by international lawyers as complicit in Israel's genocide in Gaza?
- (15) What is the total sum of money held in any assets with, or investment in directly or indirectly, the following companies:
- (a) Woodside Energy Group?
 - (b) Santos Limited?
 - (c) Origin Energy?
 - (d) Beach Energy Limited?
 - (e) Karoon Energy Ltd?
 - (f) AED Oil?
 - (g) Ampol?
 - (h) Australian Worldwide Exploration?
 - (i) Beach Energy?
 - (j) Blue Ensign Technologies?
 - (k) ExxonMobil Australia?
 - (l) Gull Petroleum?
 - (m) HWR Group?
 - (n) Penrite?
 - (o) Queensland Energy Resources?
 - (p) Roc Oil Company?

- (q) Senex Energy?
- (r) Shell Australia?
- (s) Woodside Energy?
- (t) Xtract Oil?
- (u) Chevron Corporation?
- (v) Shell PLC?
- (w) BHP?
- (x) BP PLC?
- (y) Anglo Coal Australia Ltd?
- (z) Bloomfield Collieries Pty Ltd?
- (aa) Hunter Valley Energy Coal (HVEC)?
- (bb) Centennial Coal?
- (cc) Coalpac Pty Ltd?
- (dd) Cornwall Coal?
- (ee) Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd?
- (ff) Enhance Place Pty Ltd?
- (gg) Ensham Resources Pty Ltd?
- (hh) Felix Resources Limited?
- (ii) Yancoal?
- (jj) Foxleigh Mining Pty Ltd?
- (kk) Idemitsu?
- (ll) Ensham Resources?
- (mm) Illawarra Coal Holdings Pty Ltd?
- (nn) Appin West?
- (oo) Jellinbah Group?
- (pp) Lithgow Coal Company Pty Ltd?
- (qq) Macarthur Coal?

- (rr) Muswellbrook Coal Company Ltd?
- (ss) New Hope Group?
- (tt) Peabody Energy Australia?
- (uu) Rio Tinto Coal Australia?
- (vv) Vale?
- (ww) Wesfarmers Coal Ltd?
- (xx) Whitehaven Coal?
- (yy) Glencore Holdings Pty Limited?
- (zz) ActewAGL?
- (aaa) Alinta Energy?
- (bbb) APA Group (Australia)?
- (ccc) Australian Gas Networks?
- (ddd) Carbon Energy?
- (eee) Engie Australia?
- (fff) Fremantle Gas and Coke Company?
- (ggg) Gladstone LNG?
- (hhh) Jemena?
- (iii) Kleenheat Gas?
- (jjj) Linc Energy?
- (kkk) Multinet Gas?
- (lll) QGC?
- (mmm) South Australian Gas Company?
- (nnn) State Energy Commission of Western Australia?
- (ooo) What is the total monetary value of funding received by the University from these companies in the form of:
 - i. Research grants or other sources of funding?
 - ii. Sponsorship of facilities, programs or events?

- iii. Scholarships?
- iv. Consulting fees for university expertise?
- v. Licensing fees?
- vi. Equipment donations or discounted purchases?

(ppp) Has the University paid money to any of these companies for:

- i. Licensing fees to use corporate software, databases, or technology?
- ii. Equipment and service purchases?
- iii. Consulting fees?
- iv. Facility rental or co-location costs?

(qqq) What is the total monetary value of costs paid by the University to these companies?

(rrr) Has the University made any joint venture investments with any of these companies?

(sss) Will the University commit to divesting from these fossil fuel companies?

Jillian Segal Recommendations

- (16) What steps has your University taken to push back against Jillian Segal's report's recommendation for government funding to be withheld from universities, programs or individuals within universities?
- (17) Given Jillian Segal claimed in her report that "We are on a dangerous trajectory where young people raised on a diet of disinformation and misinformation about Jews today risk becoming fully-fledged antisemites tomorrow", can you point to any specific examples of this disinformation?
 - (a) Do you share the concerns of your students that genuine criticism of the genocide in Gaza is being conflated with criticism of Jewish people?
- (18) Is an individual who categorises Jewish organisations with which they disagree as "a fringe group with no representative mandate... [that] does not speak for the vast majority of Jewish Australians, nor for the long-established community organisations that have led the fight against antisemitism for decades. Its opposition to the IHRA definition is completely out of step with national and international consensus including the Australian Government" an appropriate person to be prescribing university policy on the protection of Jewish students?

- (19) Is an individual whose husband donates to Advance Australia, a far-right lobby group who have supported Nazi-backed rallies, an appropriate person to be prescribing university policy on the protection of Jewish students?
- (20) Are you aware that your university's definition has been described as "closely aligned" with the IHRA definition?
- (21) Are you aware of the federal court judgement in Wertheim v Haddad [2025] FCA 720, where it was ruled "not all Jews are Zionists or support the actions of Israel in Gaza and that disparagement of Zionism constitutes disparagement of a philosophy or ideology and not a race or ethnic group. Needless to say, political criticism of Israel, however inflammatory or adversarial, is not by its nature criticism of Jews in general or based on Jewish racial or ethnic identity...The conclusion that it is not antisemitic to criticise Israel is the corollary of the conclusion that to blame Jews for the actions of Israel is antisemitic; the one flows from the other." ?
- (22) Are you concerned that your university's definition of antisemitism may contravene a federal court judgement?
 - (a) If not, on what basis?
 - (b) If so, what steps will you take to address this?
- (23) How many students have faced misconduct proceedings resulting from protest activity in:
 - (a) 2024?
 - (b) 2025?

Misconduct

- (24) How many warnings have been issued to students resulting from protest activity in:
 - (a) 2024?
 - (b) 2025?
- (25) Has the university employed external contractors or consultants to manage the misconduct and complaints processes?
 - (a) If so, who?
 - (b) If so, how much money has been spent?

- (c) If so, what training or advice is provided to ensure the procedural fairness of disciplinary proceedings?

StandWithUs Australia and Israel-Is Affiliation

- (26) How many events has your university conducted with StandWithUsAustralia?
- (27) How many events has your university conducted with Israel-IS?
- (28) Who at your University was involved in the decision-making process for approval of these events?
- (29) Does your University acknowledge that affiliations with these organisations, who seek to rationalise Israel's genocide in Gaza in the view of many human rights advocates, has harmful affects on Palestinian and Lebanese students on your campus?
- (30) Before having an event with IDF soldiers, did your university conduct any consultation with Palestinian students?
- (31) Does your University now acknowledge this was an error?
- (32) Has any mental health support been offered to Palestinian students in the wake of this decision?

Protest

- (33) How many protests have not been authorised by your University in:
- (a) 2020?
 - (b) 2021?
 - (c) 2022?
 - (d) 2023?
 - (e) 2024?
 - (f) 2025?
- (34) Can you please justify the decision made to have security staff attend a pro-Palestine student meeting, monitor social media, and feed information to police with regard to a student demonstration, revealed in an email sent on August 13 2024?

- (35) Why does a video after the protest in October 2024 show provost Kevin Dunn speaking to students and informing them that “We did not request them” in regard to police involvement, when leaked emails now show that was not the case?
- (a) Has any statement been put out to clarify that Mr Dunn’s statement was false?
 - (b) To your knowledge, was Mr Dunn aware of police involvement at the time?
- (36) Since this process, has police assistance or oversight been requested for any other protest activity or event at the WSU campus?
- (a) If so, on what dates was police assistance requested and on what basis?
- (37) How do you respond to the allegation that racial profiling occurred by police as a consequence of your University’s decision to contact police in relation to this matter?

Surveillance

- (38) Can you categorically rule out any knowledge of direction given to University staff to surveil the social media accounts of pro-Palestine protestors on your campus?
- (a) If not, can you please detail what formal and publicly available policy the University has in place for this process?
- (39) Can you categorically rule out that the University uses its Wifi network to surveil students in any way?
- (40) Has your University made any changes to its Wifi Terms and Conditions since 1 January 2023?
- (a) If so, what was the date or dates that the Terms and Conditions changed?
 - (b) Can you please provide the text of the exact changes made?
- (41) Can you please outline the process undertaken at your University where a student faced disciplinary action for tapping on the window of the Michael Spence Building?
- (a) On what date did University staff become aware of this incident?
 - (b) On what date was disciplinary action taken in response to this incident?
 - (c) What was the nature of the disciplinary action?

People's Inquiry into Campus Free Speech on Palestine

- (42) Have you read the Preliminary Report of the People's Inquiry into Campus Free Speech on Palestine?
- (43) What is your response to the Report's finding that "Australian universities have restricted the free speech and academic freedom of staff and students on the question of Palestine"?
 - (a) Specifically, do you accept or reject the finding?
 - (b) What specific steps have you taken to address the issues outlined in this finding?
- (44) What is your response to the Report's finding that "Australian universities have targeted students and staff who express support for Palestine for surveillance and discipline;"?
 - (a) Specifically, do you accept or reject the finding?
 - (b) What specific steps have you taken to address the issues outlined in this finding?
- (45) What is your response to the Report's finding that "Universities have used existing policies and devised new policies in an opaque way to target and censor students and staff expressing support for Palestine."?
 - (a) Specifically, do you accept or reject the finding?
 - (b) What specific steps have you taken to address the issues outlined in this finding?
- (46) Given the Inquiry found that there were multiple incidents of cancelled events on the Israel genocide, how many guest lectures, film screenings or other events have been cancelled or otherwise intervened upon by your university in:
 - (a) 2023?
 - (b) 2024?
 - (c) 2025 to date?

Syqe Affiliation

- (47) On what date was the research agreement between Syqe and NICM Health Research Institute first proposed?
- (48) On what date was the research agreement between Syqe and NICM Health Research Institute first agreed to?
 - (a) Who made the final determination at WSU?

- (b) What consultation occurred with students and staff in relation to this decision?
- (49) Do you acknowledge that Syqe will benefit if regulatory approval is given as a result of WSU research?
- (50) Do you acknowledge the views of international genocide scholars and United Nations experts that Israel is committing the crime of genocide?
 - (a) If so, how can you justify indirectly providing benefit to the Israeli military, given they are committing genocide?
 - (b) If not, on what basis do you dispute the views of experts in international law?
 - (c) Do you acknowledge that thousands of children have lost limbs in Gaza?
- (51) Do you acknowledge that Syqe medical have stated “We are proud of the strategic partnership with the [Israeli] Ministry of Defence”, and “honored for the opportunity to make a positive impact”?
- (52) On what basis do you disagree with the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, who have passed a motion calling for the NICM to boycott their affiliation with Syqe?
- (53) What actions have you taken to support the democratic decision of the Student General Meeting on Thursday 21st of August 2025 that WSU should:
 - (a) Cut all ties with Syqe medical?
 - (b) Reinstate suspended students?
 - (c) Halt job cuts?
 - (d) Call for Sanctions on Israel?

Israeli University Partnerships

- (54) Given WSU has engaged in an International Social Work Summer School, where Hebrew University of Jerusalem is a participating university, and HUJ is deeply enmeshed in Israel’s military occupation, how can you justify WSU partnering with universities that develop technology used in repression and surveillance of Palestinians?”
- (55) Universities in South Africa were once boycotted for their role in upholding apartheid. Why is WSU today taking the opposite path, building ties with Israeli institutions that are part of an apartheid regime?

- (56) WSU's Code of Conduct and ethical research standards require research to avoid harm and conflicts of interest. How does collaborating with a company supplying the Israeli military fit within those standards?
- (57) Given the widespread global condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza—including by United Nations experts who describe it as genocide—why is WSU choosing to continue business-as-usual with Israeli companies and institutions?

University Complaints

- (58) How many complaints with regard to references to the Israel genocide have been received in:
- (a) 2023?
 - (b) 2024?
 - (c) 2025 to date?
- (59) Of complaints received with regard to references to the Israel genocide, how many resulted in disciplinary cation in:
- (a) 2023?
 - (b) 2024?
 - (c) 2025 to date?

University Enrolments

- (60) How many students enrolled at your University identify as:
- (a) Palestinian?
 - (b) Israeli?
 - (c) Lebanese?

Questions on behalf of the Opposition
--

Questions to all University Vice-Chancellors

- (61) Does your university have, or are you planning to have, a similar plan (as undertaken by Sydney University) to “indigenise and decolonise’ your own University curriculum? And if so, what actions are being undertaken?

- (62) How many jobs have been cut from administrative staff over the last 12 months and 24 months respectively?
- (63) How many jobs have been cut from academic staff over the last 12 months and 24 months respectively?
- (64) How many courses have been cancelled at the beginning of the academic years, 2023, 2024 and 2025 respectively?
- (65) How many courses have been cancelled mid academic year, 2023, 2024 and 2025?
 - (a) What impact has this had on students, including financial, emotional and social?
- (66) How has the University measured or assessed the impact?
- (67) How has the University assisted students, addressing financial, emotional and social impact and needs?
- (68) Can you provide a list of courses at your university in 2025 that focus on Gender Studies, Race Studies, or critiques of Western colonisation, and what is their enrolment?
- (69) How do you justify the inclusion of courses perceived as 'woke' in terms of their economic and social value to NSW?
- (70) What evidence do you have that graduates of these courses secure employment in roles that contribute to NSW's economy?
- (71) Are there plans to review or adjust course offerings to prioritise disciplines with higher employment outcomes, given taxpayer funding?
- (72) Are there plans to review or adjust course offerings to meet identified skill shortages, given taxpayer funding?

Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

Questions to Western Sydney University

- (73) The VC has this year pointed to 'pay confidence' (wage theft remediation) and cybersecurity upgrades as a major contributors to the projected deficits for 2025, 2026 and beyond. A combined figure for these initiatives has been offered which has varied between \$20 and \$26M a year over multiple years. But no breakdown of these costs has ever been provided. What is this money being spent on?
- (74) The 2024 annual report, and information subsequently released to the University, seem to suggest that actual pay remediation has been a very small part of the 'pay confidence' budget,

and that by far the largest expense has been in auditing and consultancy costs. What is the breakdown between payments to external providers and pay remediation to staff?

- (75) A major rationale for the ‘Reset’ restructure commenced in 2025 was the introduction of AI – and specifically the AI chatbot for student services known as Western100. However, I understand no information about Western 100 has been provided to the University community- or to staff potentially affected by this technology. What is the size and scope of the contract with Microsoft (and potentially also other outside firms) to create and maintain Western 100?
- (a) Why has there been no change process connected to the introduction of Western 100?
 - (b) Why did the VC’s most recent webinar fail to mention AI as a rationale for change – even though it had featured prominently in previous webinars?
 - (c) Why has there been no mention of AI in initial discussion with directly-affected staff in the restructure?
- (76) I understand the VC has told the University and multiple media sources that the ‘Reset’ restructure is being conducted in-house, and that no use is being made of external consultants. However, in other communications with the University and the NTEU the VC has suggested instead that external consultations are being used to ‘supplement’ the work of staff in HR. What is the actual role of external consultants in the ‘Reset’ process?
- a. Can you please table any relevant documents about external services?
- (77) The interim CPO – who has general oversight of the ‘Reset’ process - is according to his LinkedIn page an external consultant. He now appears to have been put on some form of retainer by the University – even though his self-description on his LinkedIn page had not changed at last viewing. The same appears to be true of the interim CDO, In addition, at least four other members of the ‘Reset team’ state on their LinkedIn pages that they are consultants outside the University. The VC has insisted that all of these individuals are actually employees of the University. What is the actual employment status and situation of these individuals?
- (78) Why has the interim CDO, if working as a member of staff, been utilising the staff in her consultancy to carry out instructions within the ‘Reset team’?
- (a) Are these people on some form of retainer, and if so what is the nature of this arrangement?

- (b) Why are these people in turn issuing instructions to University staff?
- (79) In his April webinar announcing 300-400 proposed job cuts, the VC reference student load projections from March for 2025, 2026 and 2027 as suggesting a financial crisis. Subsequently (since HECS census date) these student load projections have change markedly. But no information has been released to the University community about these changes. What is the difference between the student load projections as of August 2025 compared with March?
- (a) What difference has this made to the projected budget deficit?
- (80) In 2025 the University has successfully tendered for the police training contract previously held by CSU. These are full-fee paying domestic students. The new student load projections for 2026, 2027 and 2028 suggest that these students will as much as treble the domestic fee-paying (DFP) student load of the University. This information has not been communicated to the University community. What will the impact of the policing contract be on student load and revenue, and how will that impact the proposed budget deficits?
- (81) The former Bankstown (Milperra) campus is still in University hands, and has reportedly been valued as worth up to \$500M. It is currently under development for medium-density housing. Yet in the 2024 annual report it appears only as a liability (maintenance costs). What is the actual value of this property, how and when is that value to be realised, and what impact will that have on the financial situation of the University?
- (82) Has the 'Reset program', potentially involving the loss of 300-400 jobs, received any substantial discussion on the Board of Trustees, and if so which meetings of the Board?
- (83) Please provide an individual breakdown of the full-time student load cost for:
- (a) Master of National Security Policy
 - (b) Master of Applied Cybernetics
 - (c) Master of Public Policy
 - (d) Master of Philosophy
 - (e) Bachelor of Music
 - (f) Bachelor of International Relations
 - (g) Master of Climate Change
 - (h) Bachelor of Science

- (i) Bachelor of Psychology
 - (j) Doctor of Medicine and Surgery
 - (k) Bachelor of Economics
 - (l) Master of Statistics
- (84) The financial briefing provided to the Board (and to the unions) in early May this year contained some important errors – most conspicuously in the PowerPoint labelled ‘Student Numbers Trends’. The graph in this PowerPoint presented alarming EFTSL load figures (dotted line) for 2025, 2026 and 2027 – figures which are not available in any known data-source, and which are far more pessimistic than any figures subsequently released. These figures were then used as a rationale for the supposed existence of a ‘structural budget deficit’. Were these numbers incorrect?
- (a) How did this mistake happen?
 - (b) And when, if ever, was the Board notified that it had been misled?

Questions from Hon Dr Sarah Kaine MLC
--

All University Witnesses appearing during the Vice Chancellor session

- (85) Can you confirm how the Council makes decisions with respect to the remuneration of the VC and the Provost?
- (a) How is the make-up of the Remuneration Committee determined?
 - (b) What information is provided to the broader Council prior to them approving the VC and Provost’s remuneration?
 - (c) How much information about the decision making process is publicly available?
- (86) How is the remuneration for staff in the Chancellery determined?
- (87) Can you please provide clarity on the matters below relating to your University’s Council/Senate/Board of Trustees?
- (a) Is the agenda of your University’s Council/Senate/Board of Trustees meetings publicly available?
 - (b) Are minutes taken at your University’s Council/Senate/Board of Trustees meetings, and if yes who has access to those minutes, are they made publicly available?

- (c) If minutes are not made publicly available what is made publicly available as a record of the meeting? What format is it available in?
 - i. Who prepares the publicly available record of the meeting?
 - ii. What is the cost associated with preparing the publicly available record of the meeting?
 - iii. Who approves the final public record of the meeting for release?
- (d) How long after the meeting is the publicly available record released? Is this standardised? How are interested parties able to keep track of when reports are available?
- (e) What is the annual budgeted expenditure for the operation of your University's Council/Senate/Board of Trustees?
 - i. Are Council members provided any payments, allowances, or reimbursements for their membership on the Council, their attendance at Council meetings or their participation in Council activities?