QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Perhaps I can put it to everybody here. Could you take on notice if there are any research collaborations with Iran? If you could inform us of those, I'd be very grateful.

At an institutional level, UTS has no research collaborations with the State of Iran. However, some individual UTS academics may have research collaborations with colleagues at Iranian universities. Conflicts of interest, including research conflicts, are primarily managed through the university's Conflicts of Interests Disclosure Policy. Staff are required to identify, disclose and manage where a person's research, research engagement responsibilities or any relevant research contracts or ethics processes, conflict with their personal, private or professional interests.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Thank you all very much for appearing today. Before I ask individual questions, I wondered if you all might take on notice to provide your reflections on our progress to the representation of women at the upper echelons of universities in New South Wales. Professor Parfitt, I wondered if I could go to you.

UTS is strongly committed to achieving gender equality and we are pleased to report that a majority of women are represented in both our University Leadership Team (ULT; 9 females and 5 males) and UTS Council (10 females and 8 males). More information about ULT and UTS Council are available from here: https://www.uts.edu.au/about/leadership-governance/leadership, https://www.uts.edu.au/about/leadership-governance/governance/committees/uts-council/council-members.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: On your website, you state that UTS had a $100 million deficit in 2024. However, the audited financial statements show a deficit of $77.95 million. Where does the extra $22 million figure come from?

ANDREW PARFITT: I'd have to take that on notice. The deficit that we published is the $79 million or $81 million that's in the annual report, so I'm not sure where that number comes from. It's certainly declared in the annual report.

Our audited Annual Report for 2024 shows an operating loss of $81 million in 2024 and previously $107 million in 2023 (Vol one: Review of operations, p. 11).

Communications regarding the Operational Sustainability Initiative (OSI) have consistently focussed on our efforts to deliver $100 million in cost savings. It is important to note that this target refers to planned savings, and is not equivalent to the operating loss figures reported in the Annual Report.

UTS's annual reports are available from here: https://www.uts.edu.au/about/leadership-governance/annual-reports

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: I genuinely apologise for interrupting. I have the shortest amount of anyone for this afternoon, so I genuinely apologise. I will put some questions on notice about specifics, if that is the case. We are going to be holding a different inquiry in which we'll have a lot more time to consider these issues. Keeping with the Operational Sustainability Initiative, though, I understand that KPMG was engaged for that for an initial four-and-a-bit million increase to nearly $7 million over four or five months. How much has UTS spent altogether on consultants and contingent contractors as part of the OSI? As a separate part of that question, how much has been spent on wellbeing consultants?

ANDREW PARFITT: I'll have to take that question on notice. The spend on the KPMG part, as you correctly pointed out, is $7 million. The five-year return from the operational sustainability project is intended to return about $350 million to the university. The effort that we're putting in and the care we're taking to try to make the proposals that are able to be consulted by staff to make the best approach to be able to make the savings that we believe we need to make necessitates a very good insight into the operation of the university and the financial challenge.

The total OSI forecast spend for 2025 is $15 million which includes wellbeing training and support. This $15 million includes the $7 million for KPMG and a combination of contractors and fixed term employees both in support of the design and change activity.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: You said "consultation with staff". I received a flurry of concerned

emails, texts and communications from staff a week last Friday—I suspect others around the table did as well— about the suspension of 146 subjects, which I understand wasn't the subject of consultation. Perhaps you can take it on notice as to whether UTS Council was advised of that. I'm a bit concerned about consultation. I would like, if you could, on notice, for you to provide to me details of what consultation took place before the suspension of those courses. Indeed, related to that, did you seek advice from whoever you've engaged to represent you at the Fair Work Commission to advise you that it was a good idea to suspend those courses whilst you're in the middle of a dispute about the structural change that you are undertaking?

See responses to questions 74, 76-79 below.

Additionally, the issue of the temporary suspension of new student intakes for the Autumn 2026 session is currently before the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. As the matter is before the Court, it would not be appropriate for UTS to provide further comment beyond our public announcements.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: I understand through the reporting—and I stand to be corrected—that that information was provided by an external organisation that is contracted. I wondered if you could give me details of how much they had been contracted for to provide those services.

ANDREW PARFITT: This is an ongoing service that's provided to the university, but we can certainly provide that information.

Our Employee Assistance Program is provided by TELUS Health (Australia) Pty Ltd (previously known as LifeWorks.Com Pty Ltd). UTS signed a 3-year contract from 1 May 2023 to 1 May 2026. The fee for service is $190,500 per year exclusive of GST.

The following services are included under the contract:

- 1,100 hours of counselling and coaching service for UTS employees and their immediate family members.
- Psychological management of critical incidents and emergency situations in the workplace.
- Services to be provided in individual and group settings as appropriate.
- Workshops and seminars to manage work and home related issues.
- Online health and wellbeing resources, tools and portals.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: That would be great. Very quickly, at the end, I wanted to consider the KPMG engagement. I'm happy for you to take these questions on notice. Whose idea was it to engage KPMG? Was there a competitive tender process? Can you tell me who within the chancellery and on the UTS Council has existing or previous relationships with KPMG, including having been partners?

ANDREW PARFITT: The answer as to how they were selected is that it was a competitive process. The answers to the others, I'm not sure. I think there was a general conclusion that some level of both capacity and scrutiny was necessary to obtain, so the decision was to make it a competitive process and obtain some assistance. I'd stress that it is assistance. We take full responsibility for decisions and recommendations that we make. In relation to prior relationships with KPMG, I'll have to take that on notice. I don't believe that there are any.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: I think you have a director of government and external relations who was a partner before she commenced at UTS.

KPMG was engaged following a competitive process conducted by the University Program Management Office.

No UTS Council members or members of the University Leadership Team have existing or previous employment relationships with KPMG, including having been partners. Two Chancellery staff (those staff with a workspace in the Chancellery CB01.04A and CB01.04B) have had a previous employment relationship with KPMG. This includes Danielle Woolley, Head of Government Relations and Policy, who was a partner at KPMG from 2019-2023. Ms Woolley joined the Chancellery from the UTS Human Technology Institute where she was an Industry Fellow. The second Chancellery staff member is a support staff member who held an executive assistant role at KPMG between 2013-2018.