

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025-2026

Questions on Notice

Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service
Hearing: Wednesday 3 September 2025

QON	Question	Response
1 (Page 5)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Were you aware of how long the application process was open for? Mr JIHAD DIB: Mr Barrett, I accepted the recommendations of the process. Off the top of my head, I can't tell you. I'm happy to refer to the RFS commissioner. He might have more specific details about the length of the thing. But it was all within our procurement guidelines, and it worked within the State procurement guidelines. In terms of that specific detail, I can ask the commissioner. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Can I just get the commissioner to confirm. Was it a six-week period over December-January? TRENT CURTIN: I don't have the period that the tender was open for. I know that it was compliant with the New South Wales procurement framework, and all the legislative requirements, but I don't have the details here as to how long the tender was open. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Would you be able to provide that for us on notice?	I am advised: This question was answered on page 12 of the uncorrected transcript.

	TRENT CURTIN: We'd have to take it on notice. Mr JIHAD DIB: Mr Barrett, I also just want to note that Coulson was actually a provider of services at the time, as well. It wasn't that they'd just come in and had nothing to do with government or with the RFS beforehand.	
2 (Page 5-6)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, when was it decided that you would shift to the 10-year contract? Before that I think it was a season-by-season approach. Mr JIHAD DIB: That was the impetus, I suppose you might say, for looking for a longer term contract. Once we started seeing the cost of the aerial fleet growing exponentially—because, effectively, you hire them from other places—and once we started to see more places hold them for a longer period of time, and also seeing the Northern Hemisphere summer period—or the bushfire danger period, as we would call it—extend into ours. What we are now starting to see is that there could be a chance that we couldn't guarantee an aerial fleet, we couldn't guarantee the support that was required, and we also couldn't guarantee the price. Part of that is reading the tea leaves: This is where we see this heading. Let's get in and make sure that we effectively ring fence ourselves. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, my question was not why. When was that decision made to shift to a 10-year contract? Mr JIHAD DIB: I'd have to take that one on notice or refer that to the RFS. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: If you could.	I am advised: The contract is a five-year initial contract period, with an option to extend for another five years. The previous contracts in place were also 5+5 contracts.

	Mr JIHAD DIB: Off the top of my head, I could not tell you the date. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: My follow-up question would be when that was communicated to industry. You said the community was well aware of this process. Could you advise when that decision was made to go to a 10-year contract and when that was communicated to industry?	
3 (Page 6)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, in budget estimates last time I believe former Commissioner Rogers said that the RFS was looking into mobile water tanks. Are you aware if they have been or how many of these water tanks have been procured? Mr JIHAD DIB: No, I couldn't answer that one specifically. The commissioner can. But I will take the opportunity to say that I have been really pleased to see, over the past 12 months, 291 new and refurbished tanks. On the water tanks specifically, Commissioner, have you got a number? Obviously we're constantly looking at upgrading our resources. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: We can come back to those numbers this afternoon, Commissioner. Or if you can pull them together for us this morning and let us know, that would be fine. Mr JIHAD DIB: They were the mobile ones, right, not the actual water tanks? You're talking about a truck? The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: No, tanks that we can put in place. I'll come to examples.	I am advised: The figure of 291 refers to tankers. The question on notice was answered on page 45 of the uncorrected transcript.

MANDY YOUNG: No, not exactly correct. We have consistently worked with the staff around the functional review which kicked off, as you say, earlier this year, around January or February, where we started to look at what is the best way to structure SIRA, moving forward, to meet its policy and legislative functions. Through that process, we also talked about the fact that we aren't actually looking at reducing budget. There is no overall budget reduction that we are looking for, but we're looking for what does that look like, moving forward. We've been through the functional review process, and that has taken a lot of work and a lot of time and a lot of engagement with staff right through. I have consistent communications with staff through town halls monthly. I also have a fortnightly drop-in session where this has been consistently discussed.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Just to clarify, because I'm being told that staff heard nothing for eight months about this restructure—

MANDY YOUNG: No. We've spoken on numerous occasions right through those processes and given them updates—

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Could you provide, on notice, a list of when it was noted?

MANDY YOUNG: Sure. Just to say in relation to the restructure itself, the consultation process closed, actually—

Mr JIHAD DIB: Yesterday.

MANDY YOUNG: —yesterday at 5.00 p.m. We went through our standard government consultation process where we put out a proposed restructure management plan. What's in that proposed restructure management plan actually isn't a

I am advised:

Between December 2024 to September 2025 consultation included:

- 92 team activities and focus groups.
- 7 sessions where the Chief Executive provided updates and responded to issues raised by staff.
- 7 town hall sessions, which featured a standing item for the Chief Executive to provide updates on the functional review.
- 4 additional sessions for specific announcements.
- Distribution of recordings and materials from all sessions to staff
- Distribution of 84 pieces of written communication including updates via a weekly email to all staff, intranet news articles, emails from Executive Directors to their directorates, cascading messages from Chief Executive and town hall sessions, and touchpoints with staff on leave or secondment (acting in roles outside of SIRA).

	reduction in the number of staff. There is a reduction of nine overall, but that reduction isn't a reduction of people, because that reduction is actually transferring our inspectorate work to SafeWork. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I was going to ask you about that, because that's the return to work inspectorate. MANDY YOUNG: It's some of what the return to work inspectorate does. We're working through that at the moment to understand which component parts will go to SafeWork and which would stay in SIRA to help inform SafeWork on the work that they do.	
5 (Page 19-20)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I will come to some of the other findings in the Robertson review, particularly around surveillance and other issues. Coming back to this PwC engagement, who determined the terms of reference for the PwC review within SIRA? Mr JIHAD DIB: That was before my time. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Do you know, Ms Young? Mr JIHAD DIB: No, I think that was in 2022. It was before, actually, our Government. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Perhaps Mr Head knows? Mr JIHAD DIB: That was before your time, wasn't it? GRAEME HEAD: The Minister is correct: The review was commissioned in 2022. It was a different with the then management of SIRA on the development of the terms of	I am advised: The Department of Customer Service is not aware of any record of involvement by Mandy Young in the preparation of the terms of reference for the PwC investigation.

	reference. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Who was it at DCS— GRAEME HEAD: We have not been able to identify exactly who signed off on the terms of reference, and Mr Robertson was— Mr JIHAD DIB: It was before all of us. It was before Mandy, before Mr Head and before myself. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Ms Young, you don't know? It wasn't when you were at DCS? MANDY YOUNG: It was when I was at DCS. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Were you the deputy secretary involved at the time? MANDY YOUNG: I was the chief operating officer. However, when it came to investigation processes, I would sign off on the expenditure but not necessarily the terms of reference. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: So you didn't look at the terms of reference? You weren't involved? MANDY YOUNG: I can't recall. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Are you able to take that on notice and have a look to see? MANDY YOUNG: Yes. Mr JIHAD DIB: To have a look to see—do you mean who set up the terms of reference? Just to be clear about that.	
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	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'm interested specifically whether Ms Young was actually involved in the terms of reference or had any review function or looked at the terms of reference at all. Mr JIHAD DIB: I'd like to think she knew if she was involved in it. MANDY YOUNG: I wasn't involved in the investigation process at all.	
6 (Page 21)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: My question is what have you actually got on the ground. How many bail accommodation beds are available in New South Wales for children who have no safe place to stay? What's the number? Mr JIHAD DIB: I'd have to take that on notice, but I can tell you that we've got the Bail and Accommodation Support Service, which is a service specifically trying to assist young people. We've also got Youth on Track. We've got A Place to Go, which I think is where you and I have both been out. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Yes, I've been there. Mr JIHAD DIB: That was the one out near the Riff somewhere—Penrith, I should say. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: So you'll take that one on notice about how many actual beds there are? Mr JIHAD DIB: Paul, is there a way that we can get an answer for that? The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Perhaps you'll also take on notice the total funding for the bail support programs, and	I am advised: This question was answered on page 41 of the uncorrected transcript.

	how does it compare to the demand? Mr JIHAD DIB: We can say that with the funding this year—and I talked about it—Youth Justice has received more funding than it's ever received before, particularly a great deal focused around diversion and support strategies. I'm happy that we've been able to secure funding that is not based on a fiscal cliff. This is funding that's going to be ongoing into the forward estimates. But I'm happy to get a little bit more info for you around that— more than happy to. Unless, Mr O'Reilly, do you— The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: No, I'll ask Mr O'Reilly in the afternoon, if that's okay. Mr JIHAD DIB: Maybe if Mr O'Reilly answers it, then I don't have to get it to you. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: You were talking about support services for young people.	
7 (Page 22)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Perhaps on notice, Minister, because I've only got 50 seconds, would you be able to supply the return-to-detention rates for children released from sentenced detention and children released from remand, or would it be better if I asked that in the afternoon? PAUL O'REILLY: We can give you some of that in the afternoon. Mr JIHAD DIB: Off the top of my head, you can imagine I can't give you that answer.	I am advised: This question was answered on page 41 of the uncorrected transcript.
8 (Page 26)	The CHAIR: Obviously tablets in cells are available to adults in	This exchange does not contain an undertaking to take a question on notice.

	prisons. What's the additional challenge that has blocked the use of tablets specifically for young people? Mr JIHAD DIB: I probably would be better off asking either Mr O'Reilly or Ms Stewart to answer about so forth. We've got screens in young people's room, and we're really focused on making sure that every young person, where possible, has their own room. But even those screens are encased in something that is a protective case. That sometimes can also act as a stopper, as a blocker of not the wi-fi reception but connectivity. So it's not just as simple as saying, "Here's an iPad and off you go."	
9 (Page 28-29)	Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm not sure if anyone has asked you yet about this. I've been in the other hearing room so, if they have, forgive me. The State of New South Wales recently settled the case involving a young person who was in detention and who was imposed with a punitive detainee risk management plan, a DRMP, including being denied access to social interaction, schooling, phone calls, visits, as well as excessively handcuffed and stripsearched. Are you aware of DRMPs being used in breach of the legislation? Mr JIHAD DIB: I get briefed on a lot of different things, Ms Higginson, particularly around what we're doing in terms of supporting young people. Obviously, there are some instances where we've also made changes, for example, the introduction of X-ray machines to try to mitigate the stripsearching and things like that. There would be situations, of course, where young people might need to be isolated, but I don't have the specifics of that case. I don't have it on me. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: My understanding is that there are several civil claims and cases that have been made and a number of	This exchange does not contain an undertaking to take a question on notice.

	settlements have taken place. Are you aware of this allegation that the DRMPs are being used in ways that they weren't designed to be used? Mr JIHAD DIB: Let me just double-check for you but I'm pretty confident that those things were replaced a couple of years ago. I think that, since I've been the Minister, they haven't been used. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Have we got rid of those management plans? PAUL O'REILLY: Do you want me to respond? Mr JIHAD DIB: Would you mind if Mr O'Reilly— Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Mr O'Reilly, I'm coming back for you this afternoon— Mr JIHAD DIB: I'm pretty sure they are but I don't want to give you the wrong info. Ms SUE HIGGINSON: —but yes, if you wouldn't mind.	
10 (Page 39-40)	Dr AMANDA COHN: That work in terms of guidance and resources for exercises is certainly welcome. I'm not about to criticise that. Coming back to the Minister, the problem that I'm seeing is that while this work is happening within the Premier's Department and within Emergency Services, within the local government sector, things are unintentionally going backwards because of the financial sustainability of councils. They are making decisions like reducing opening hours of public libraries, community centres and swimming pools because they can't afford to staff them. We're actually losing	I am advised: The Disaster Ready Fund is managed by the Commonwealth Government, with \$1 billion allocated over 5 years to 2028. The University of Newcastle was awarded \$1,367,184 under a previous funding round for a Heatwave Hub. As noted on the Disaster Ready Fund website: “The Hub initiative addresses heatwave risks in vulnerable NSW communities through comprehensive risk assessments, co-designing plans/toolkits, focus groups, and workshops. Outcomes include the 'Heatwave Hub' website, LGA heatwave action plans, and community capacity building. The project

	the cool spaces we already have, while the Premier's Department is trying to provide support and guidance to councils to provide cool spaces. My key question here is whether you will advocate for funding to local councils to actually make available the cool spaces we already have, while this really important work is happening. Mr JIHAD DIB: We'll continue the advocacy. To let you know, I've just been advised that the budget has \$1.36 million towards the strategy, and it's shared between the Commonwealth and the State, and we'll continue to advocate. That might be for things like, I suppose, potentially where councils—and we've done that with one of the regional councils up in the northern part of New South Wales, in the north-west area, where the pool was closed at a certain time because it was a small country town. They were funded to be able to provide the payment for lifeguards and people to be there at the pool. Little things like that make a big difference. I said to you I could probably get you a dollar figure. That's the attached dollar figure at the moment. I imagine, given that it has been acknowledged as a priority, then there will be some additional funding that will flow with that. Dr AMANDA COHN: That example you've just given of a swimming pool is exactly the kind of work I'm talking about. Is the Disaster Ready Fund money available to councils, moving forward? How can people access funding for that? Mr JIHAD DIB: Can I just check that one. That's an example that I use and it's an example that, obviously, you're very familiar with, but it really makes a lot of sense. That money there is available. I'm assuming that's what it is, but maybe let me just double-check. We can get back to you on that one as well. Dr AMANDA COHN: I'd appreciate an answer on notice with the	will promote informed planning for effective heatwave preparedness and improved wellbeing.” Round 3 is currently in progress, with applications having closed in April 2025. Councils were eligible to apply. As the NSW Reconstruction Authority administers the application process for NSW, this is a matter for the Minister for Reconstruction.
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	detail.	
11 (Page 42)	Mr JIHAD DIB: To the Committee, more than happy to get back to you about all of the stuff. I think, Ms Hurst, we'll get back to you about that service stuff, and Ms Cohn, I'll get back to you as well about the stuff around the heat thing specifically. Mr Barrett, I'll see you on the footy field fairly soon.	This exchange does not contain an undertaking to take a question on notice.
12 (Page 43-44)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Is that a centralised team or does each area have their own teams? TRENT CURTIN: It's a centralised directorate, where we have teams spread out across the State who undertake those activities. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Have these people come to RFS as planners or are they RFS people that have become planners? TRENT CURTIN: It's both of those, as I understand. You get the expertise of people with a planning background, but, importantly, you need to bring in the operational experience of people who have worked bushfires who understand our operational capabilities and capacities and can make decisions about availability of water, access and egress, and bushfire modelling. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Can you give me a general indication of how many are sitting with RFS at any one time? TRENT CURTIN: At any one time, I can't. I should be able to provide you with the number that we've processed in the last 12 months, if you want me to find that for you.	I am advised: Over the course of 2024-25, the RFS processed 3,561 applications and provided additional services such as pre-DA lodgment advice. This does not include additional services such as advice for Planning Proposals and State Significant Developments.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Do you have time frames for them as well?

TRENT CURTIN: For the ones in the last 12 months?

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Yes.

TRENT CURTIN: What I can say is that I understand that our performance in terms of meeting those time frames has improved over the last couple of years. We've met that time frame 83 per cent of the time in the last year, with our target being 90 per cent. So we've come up quite significantly. We received some funding from the department to increase our capacity to move some of the backlog. We've been working closely with the department on the housing targets and trying to progress matters as quickly as possible. But we understand that these are very complex matters, and that for bushfire risk and planning, both now and the future, with the increase in bushfire risk and the discussion we had previously about climate change and the impacts on communities in the future, we need to be very serious about the way in which we assess these projects.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: The concern would be that this process is taking expertise away from firefighting to admin. Is that a concern within the brigade?

TRENT CURTIN: My understanding is that, under the current arrangement, it costs about \$5 million a year for us to run that function. We receive about \$216,000 in income per year for the section under the Rural Fires Act, but we don't get any cost recovery or income mechanism from the referrals that come in from consent authorities. That is a reapportionment of resources that would otherwise be used for volunteer

	training, volunteer equipment and supporting our volunteers to be ready for bushfires. We are using it for these development processes. We've been trying to provide as much resource as we possibly can. We accept that with more resources we can process things more quickly, but it is a reapportionment from other parts of the organisation. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Can I revisit that? To play this role, it costs you about \$5 million a year. TRENT CURTIN: Yes. I can send you something on notice, if that would be useful. But it's around \$5 million a year in salaries, as I understand.	
13 (Page 47)	Dr AMANDA COHN: I've got questions for both fire commissioners this afternoon, starting with Fire and Rescue. There was a discussion this morning about some of the issues around recruitment for retained firefighters. I understand there has been a quite well-received Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy. What is the funding allocation to that strategy for this year? Are you looking at expanding it? JEREMY FEWTRELL: We have been running that Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy, or IFARES, as we call it, for over 10 years now. It has been a very successful program. We've now got over 5 per cent—I think we're at 5.3 per cent—of our staff are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, so significantly over the Government targets in that. That is starting to pay some really big dividends for our people. You're seeing a lot of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander firefighters being very comfortable and proud talking about their culture, sharing their insights and starting to better inform the way we engage with the communities, not only in the response but in the prevention and preparedness type	I am advised: This question was answered on page 79 of the uncorrected transcript.

work that we do and even something we're working on at the moment leading into the recovery space and connecting communities with other parts of government through that emergency response. I can take on notice the costs that we have for that program.

But, certainly from a value perspective, it has been an immense value and the payback has been much greater. We currently have one of the classes going through that process at the moment. They're in the last couple of weeks of the program. The program runs for about six or seven months and they undertake a certificate III through TAFE NSW. Recently we have just reviewed all the arrangements supporting that program and renewed the arrangement with TAFE as the education provider. Prior to that, we do get a lot of applicants and we run a selection course as well called Tracks to IFARES. That's a chance for us to select the strongest of the candidates, who are the most suitable and bring the most to the table, I guess. Given the competitiveness and the numbers, we need to do that.

We would look to consider expanding. It has been a very successful one. I think the renewed partnership with TAFE will show significant dividends over the coming years. That new partnership has only just been finalised and locked in earlier this year. This course that we're running now is the first one under the new arrangements. Certainly, as part of that process, they're exploring a few other options that might come with it. They're looking at the moment about what type of certificate III that they do provide—up until now, that certificate III has been in fitness leadership—and looking to broaden it to provide a more diverse skills and job readiness type qualification. I know there is some work that will happen as part of an after-action review after this current program to

see what we do there.

Then there are some initial conceptual discussions happening around how that might be able to be—build upon the IFARES program and the success of the IFARES program to put in the context more of a retained firefighter employment pathway. That is very early stages. As I say, it's just at the conceptual process now. But, given the success of the IFARES program, we'll be able to demonstrate that type of model can work. I'll use the example of Brewarrina. I think the crew at Brewarrina there now is probably, if not two-thirds, very close to two-thirds Aboriginal in a community with a very high Aboriginal population. I used to work out in that area. Previously they had no Aboriginal firefighters. Then we had one and we've built it up since then. It's very heartening to see the difference, to have a really sustainable crew out there because of the connections and the efforts that have gone into building those pathways but also the trust with the local community. We'll take those learnings from that sort of case study of the towns like Bre, where it has worked well before, and the learnings from the broader IFARES program, which has been primarily a pathway to permanent employment, and see what we can do with a retained model.

Dr AMANDA COHN: That's very helpful. I appreciate you might need to take the numerical questions on notice, but you mentioned the competitiveness of the program in your answer. How many applicants did you have for that last round of IFARES versus how many people are accepted into the program and then complete it?

JEREMY FEWTRELL: I'll just double-check. We took 20 on to the IFARES course. Tracks had—we had 150 applicants, and 24 participants went on to the full program. From memory, I

	think there were about 50 to 60 participants in the Tracks program.	
14 (Page 50)	The CHAIR: Last week the Government announced an investment of \$4.2 million over two years to extend the pilot program for young people in the Riverina and Western Sydney at risk of interacting with the youth justice system. That's the Cockatoo Initiative and My Path in Penrith. Are you able to advise how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have actually accessed these programs? PAUL O'REILLY: We can give you that on notice.	I am advised: Between November 2024 and June 2025, the Cockatoo Initiative provided direct support to 116 young people including 36 who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Between January 2024 and June 2025, My Path provided direct support to 81 young people including 59 who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
15 (Page 51)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: My understanding at the moment is that there are over a hundred Business Connect advisers out in the field, but there are only 44 business concierge—I don't know what you call them—consultants. GREG WELLS: I'll clarify the numbers exactly for you on notice, but it's closer to about 70 or 80 frontline business concierges, and then there would be a number of people that team-lead some of those organisations or help with content for businesses or coordinate rostering and support across those front lines.	I am advised: The Business Bureau includes 75 frontline staff such as Business Concierges, specialists and team leaders.
16 (Page 52)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Do you know how many businesses the business concierge service assisted in the previous financial year? And how does that compare with the over 60,000 businesses that Business Connect advisers have done since— GREG WELLS: I will get that for you today. I will have that	I am advised: In 2024-25, Business Concierges supported 30,997 customers, including 11,368 customers provided with ongoing case support.

	somewhere. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: You'll come back to me on notice. I want to ask a question about eConveyancing. Who would I ask? GREG WELLS: Ms Cameron.	
17 (Page 53)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: That's why it was at \$800 million? So that \$684 million, that's about BAU, I guess, as far as a non-fire year is concerned? TRENT CURTIN: It's the current apportioned budget, yes. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: You work around that, but there are certain things that you are required to do—that's sort of the budget that you need to complete those tasks? TRENT CURTIN: Correct. There are mechanisms for us to obtain further funding in the event that we have large-scale emergencies. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I'll just say to all those people behind you—there's lots of strapping young people there—that they should think about joining one of these agencies as soon as they get a chance. I'm sure you'd be a great asset to what we're trying to achieve in here. Commissioner Curtin, do I understand that the fire access and fire trail plans were due to be released October last year, but they've been extended to 2025? TRENT CURTIN: I understand we've been doing a lot of work on the fire access and fire trails, but in terms of a document due in October last year, I'll probably have to take on notice	I am advised: All 52 Bush Fire Management Committees (BFMCs) currently have approved Fire Access and Fire Trail (FAFT) Plans. These plans remain in effect until such time as they are revoked and replaced by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee (BFCC).

	the question that you're asking.	
18 (Page 53-54)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: There's been some pretty wet and trying years as far as major roads are concerned. What is the state of the fire trails across the State, and how close does that \$1 million go to bring them up to the standard required? TRENT CURTIN: It's best to understand there's a lot of work to be done across fire trails across the State. We've done a substantial amount of work with the \$44.9 million. We've had challenges with the damage caused obviously from the 2019-20 bushfires and then from floods and significant rain since that has delayed some of the works that we've needed to do. There will always be more work to be done with fire trails. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: As far as the trails within national parks and on Crown lands you referred to, those agencies are responsible for the upkeep of them from their own budgets? TRENT CURTIN: Yes. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: RFS is then responsible for assessing the standard of them? TRENT CURTIN: Correct, yes. It's a standard set out by RFS that's published. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Is this done through regular checks, aerial checks or a combination of both? TRENT CURTIN: I might have to come back to you on notice to make sure I get that accurate. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Yes, that'd be great if I could get	I am advised: Inspections of fire trails are undertaken by trained fire trail officers driving the fire trail and visually assessing the trail. Expenditure is spent across multiple agencies and is not aggregated in the way requested.

	that update and the breakdown of the spending on those over those last couple of years. TRENT CURTIN: Over the last four years, yes. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: How do you prioritise—you obviously selected 14 maintenance projects. How do you nominate those? TRENT CURTIN: I'll come back to you on notice just so that I get that right. But I understand that's undertaken within the RFS and then it's approved by the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee.	
19 (Page 54-55)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Commissioner Fewtrell, I heard you answer my question earlier. I asked whether desktop surveys or something. Can you just clarify? JEREMY FEWTRELL: Yes. When you made that statement in the session earlier, that was the first I was aware of such a policy in Fire and Rescue, so obviously I've sought advice on that. Then that enabled me to provide some clarification just before the lunch break. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Do you know that a desktop review is surveillance? JEREMY FEWTRELL: And that was only in relation to the matters that are going to litigation as well. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: So what you're saying is that there's not a policy for if there's an injured worker with a whole person impairment over 15 per cent, or there has never been a policy that you then conduct surveillance on that person?	I am advised: Fire and Rescue NSW does not undertake workers compensation investigations. A claims service provider may undertake investigations in accordance with the SIRA Standards of Practice.

	JEREMY FEWTRELL: I'll take that on notice, Ms Boyd, obviously to get as much clarification and make sure I give you the right answer.	
20 (Page 55-56)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Given, though, the findings of unlawful covert surveillance occurring and the impact that has had on people who have been unlawfully covertly surveilled, do you think that they would appreciate being lumped in with a bunch of people who presumably—I'd love you to correct yourself, Commissioner Fewtrell—have some sort of paranoia, when we know that people have been surveilled by Fire and Rescue NSW? JEREMY FEWTRELL: Ms Boyd, I am happy to correct and clarify things. As I said, I was not aware that there was a position of Fire and Rescue about surveillance until you mentioned that earlier. I sought advice and provided a response based on that advice. My comments around paranoia, though, were in a general sense. I use that term very carefully because I'm acutely aware of the sensitivities about that, particularly what people have been through as they go through those processes. I've dealt directly with some of those, and I've seen the impacts that people suffer as they're going through these things, coming to it already potentially damaged from whatever experience they've had that's triggered them into this process. The point I was referencing there was that we had a recent matter where someone suggested to Fire and Rescue that they were under surveillance but that was in no way at all happening. It wasn't anything of a seriousness that would have triggered the thresholds you talked about earlier, and I was making it in the general sense that things have happened in the	I am advised: Please see the response to Question on Notice 20.

	past. Perceptions around what may or may not go on create that sense where people do feel that they're questioning things. If that helps clarify my use of the term "paranoia"—I certainly didn't use it to marginalise anyone, and I'm happy to apologise if that was the case. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not after you. I'll take that on good faith and leave you, perhaps, to come back on notice with more details around exactly what the policy is. That would be very useful, thank you. Ms Young, the law and justice committee recommended SIRA increase the dust diseases contribution levy to employers for workers involved in tunnelling and tasked SIRA with going and having a look at how it could do that. Has that work commenced?	
21 (Page 56)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I understand that men's clothing manufacturers pay a higher levy than site preparation services, and there's a little bit of disconnect there between— MANDY YOUNG: There's definitely some work for us to do, particularly with tunnelling and other WIC codes that sit around that. So, yes, there is work to do. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: So it's ongoing. When do we think that there's going to be a conclusion of that? MANDY YOUNG: I'd have to come back to you on notice on that one.	I am advised: SIRA expects to complete this work in 2026.
22 (Page 56-57)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: The terms of reference for our inquiry on the Public Accountability and Works Committee is not just in relation to the terms of the bill; it's also in relation to the	I am advised: Urbis provided a final Workplace Rehabilitation Provider Evaluation report to SIRA on 23 July 2025.

	economic impacts. The purpose of that is so that we could put forward alternative suggestions, other than cutting people with injury, in order to make savings within the scheme. Were you aware that that was the broader terms of reference? MANDY YOUNG: Yes. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Can I ask about these reports that, again, would be incredibly helpful for our work on PAWC, which we have not yet received? I'm looking at the one that was prepared by Urbis that was just released, I think, a couple of weeks ago, <i>Workplace Rehabilitation Provider Evaluation</i>, which has been very useful. That was prepared by an external party and is dated 1 July 2025. Why did it take so long for SIRA to release it? MANDY YOUNG: Again, we've worked through the reports that come back to us, and we go through a process where we do a fact check. Urbis would have released that report to us at that stage. We would have then gone through a process to make sure that it was— Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Did they not give you a draft beforehand? MANDY YOUNG: There would have been a series of drafts that came before that, but I'd have to be very clear with the team on what they were. There is a process that we undertake to make sure that everything in that is appropriate. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: But this report is dated 1 July. Are you saying that there were no changes made to it? MANDY YOUNG: I'd have to come back to you on notice. I think some of the recommendations were refined from that point. Let me come back to you with that.	Urbis then formally presented findings to SIRA and the Australian Rehabilitation Provider Association, the national peak body for the workplace rehabilitation industry, on 6 August 2025. The report was published on the SIRA website on 19 August 2025.
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	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: If you could, because otherwise it's quite curious that we have all that time. Again, the one in relation to claims management would be so incredibly useful to see sooner rather than later. As you know, the Government has persisted with yet another draft of this bill that they've put in. We're trying very hard to come up with sensible alternative solutions. When are we going to get that report? MANDY YOUNG: As I said this morning, I expect that we will get that in the next couple of weeks. That will be made public. I can, if you want, give you a bit of an overview of what's in it, as I did with the other one, if you just give me a moment to find that.	
23 (Page 58)	The CHAIR: What's the total capacity of each of the six Youth Justice NSW facilities? PAUL O'REILLY: The total capacity of the system is 260. I'd have to come back to you with a centre-by-centre breakdown.	I am advised: Details of Youth Justice centre capacity is available at https://www.nsw.gov.au/legal-and-justice/youth-justice/centres.
24 (Page 58)	The CHAIR: Do you have data around the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that have current NDIS plans within youth detention facilities? PAUL O'REILLY: Not with me. We might be able to get a version of that number. There might be some gaps.	I am advised: As at September 3 2025, 15 Aboriginal young people in custody had an active NDIS plan.
25 (Page 58-59)	The CHAIR: I want to ask some questions about the Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres, the report from 2022. I know I've asked about this report previously. In questions on notice from the last estimates, it said that 51 recommendations have	Please see the answer to Question on Notice 27.

	been fully or partially achieved, with the exception of six recommendations. Two recommendations were referred to Justice Health. Could I just get an understanding of which were the two that were referred on to Justice Health? PAUL O'REILLY: Yes. I'll need a bit of time to shuffle and find that. I may not have it with me, but I'll have a look. The CHAIR: That's all right. While you're looking for that, in case you can't find it, I'll put these questions so we can get them on notice as well. There was also four recommendations that were not accepted by Youth Justice, so I'm just wanting to know what those were, and the reasons why.	
26 (Page 59)	PAUL O'REILLY: The last one was about ceasing use of the holding rooms at Cobham. Holding rooms are a cell in the admissions area of the centre which are used for holding children for short periods of time, to de-escalate them immediately following an incident of violence. We would rather do that in the person's own cell, but it's not always practical. We need to have holding rooms available as a backup, because the incident may occur close to the holding room, and sometimes, rarely, we do have incidents with multiple children, and we need as many rooms as possible to separate them while they are de-escalating. So we couldn't support those four recommendations for practical and safety reasons. The other 51 recommendations we do support. I don't have the detail of the two that I referred to Health—I can't remember them off the top of my head—but we'll come back to you.	I am advised: Recommendations 10 and 38.
27 (Page 59)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Mr Wells, I think you were going to confirm the current number of business concierges	I am advised: The role of a Business Concierge is to provide personalised support

	on notice. Can you also tell me the dollar figure allocated in the budget to that business concierge service? I know you said that at the moment Business Connect and Business Concierge are complimentary. Is Business Connect also under your administration at the moment? Are you doing that? GREG WELLS: I'll cover a couple of those. First of all, \$12.1 million is the number for the frontline Business Bureau resources confirmed as part of this budget. A couple of the other questions you had were around also made 27,000 outbound calls and responded to 4,000 live chats. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: I have one final question. I know you talked through what the qualifications are, but could you perhaps provide a position description for the specific role of a business concierge? GREG WELLS: Yes, we can provide that.	and case management to business customers across the business life cycle. This includes provision of guidance on financial support and applications, business licenses, navigating government requirements and connections to a range of services and trusted advise.
28 (Page 59-60)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Commissioner Curtin, can I confirm whether the purchase of firefighting appliances is a capital expense or an operating expense? TRENT CURTIN: Firefighting appliances are taken as a grant-based recurrent opex in RFS and then vested in councils to become capital in councils. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: What about buildings? TRENT CURTIN: Buildings broadly work in the same way. I can take on notice, if you want, the exact detail so that I can make sure we've got that accurate for you. A lot of our fleet comes from a capital program as well. Let me take on notice the capital or opex treatment of both the fleet and the property.	I am advised: Under Section 119 of the <i>Rural Fires Act 1997</i>, all fire fighting equipment purchased is to be vested in the relevant council of the area for or on behalf of which the fire fighting equipment has been purchased or constructed Under accounting rules, expenditure can only be capitalised if it results in the acquisition of an asset.

	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I appreciate it.	
29 (Page 60)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Ms Young, really quickly, I've raised with you previously Trinity Insurance wanting to expand its remit for specialised insurance. I understand they've previously been under a remediation plan as well. Do you have an update on where that's up to in terms of their application? MANDY YOUNG: We're still considering the application at the moment. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I think it's been eight months now. There was a December consultation and I think you said last time that there was another consultation. MANDY YOUNG: We had one the previous year and then we had the December. That's the consultation process that ran through to January. We have since been working on that application. We've been working on what they've been asking for, what that looks like, and doing the due diligence around assessing the application. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Is the fact that they were previously under a remediation plan a factor that gets considered in that application? MANDY YOUNG: We would always consider their performance more broadly. So, yes, it would be considered in the context of the whole licence. What I would say about remediation plans is that most insurers go through a remediation plan for something at some point. So that's not unusual. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: What was their remediation plan about?	I am advised: This information is available at https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/resources-library/sira-quarterly-reports/sira-quarterly-regulatory-update-period-ending-30-september-2024

	MANDY YOUNG: I'd have to come back to you on notice.	
30 (Page 60)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Ms Young, what is the average wait time between independent physiotherapist consultants receiving a referral for an assessment and the assessment being finalised? MANDY YOUNG: I'd have to come back to you on notice on that. We don't necessarily keep the data in a way that might be helpful for that, but I will come back with what I can for you. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Did SIRA seek approval for recruitment of new IPCs prior to the October 2024 meeting with the IPCs? MANDY YOUNG: Again, I'll have to come back to you on notice. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Again on notice, if approval was sought, why was it not granted? MANDY YOUNG: Can I just say that I think it would be SIRA that would give that approval, but I will have to come back to you on notice. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Does SIRA believe that having half the number of IPCs compared with, say, 20 years ago is acceptable for supporting the needs of injured workers in the current workers compensation system? MANDY YOUNG: I would say I understand that these questions have already been put to us on notice, so we will answer those through that process. But I would say that we are always seeking more medical practitioners for independent medical	I am advised: Data on average wait times is not available. SIRA is undertaking work to strengthen the framework for independent consultants in alignment with the objects of the <i>Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998</i> to better enable additional practitioners.

	examinations and assessments. The more that we have, the better the system will run. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: So you are actively trying to recruit? MANDY YOUNG: I would have to come back to you notice around that as well, in terms of what actual activity is in place right now.	
31 (Page 60-61)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Those were all my questions in that section. Mr O'Reilly, this is with regard to the Child Safe Action Plan implementation. PAUL O'REILLY: For Youth Justice? The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Yes. PAUL O'REILLY: We can have a go. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: How many Youth Justice staff and Youth Justice official visitors have completed the child safe training each financial year since its launch? PAUL O'REILLY: That's a really detailed question. I'll have to come back to you on that, sorry. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: That's okay. Do you know what proportion of current staff and official visitors have completed the training? PAUL O'REILLY: No. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Do you know how many	I am advised: Training is completed by all new Youth Officers during induction, and then on a two-year refresher cycle. Training for Official Visitors is managed by the Inspector of Custodial Services' office.

	training sessions have been delivered. PAUL O'REILLY: No. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: I might put all of these on notice then. PAUL O'REILLY: Yes, that would be great.	
32 (Page 61)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Now that that's completed, were staff made redundant? If so, how many? GREG WELLS: The program did wrap up in June this year, as I just said. It's good to be through that process. Ms MacDonald, as you know, there was a range of attrition, temporary contracts ending and a range of mechanisms. Redundancies were used through that process. It might be easiest because—although the program has wrapped up, there are some people coming back from secondments, leave and other mechanisms. I might, just to make sure I've got you the correct figures, come back on notice with that figure. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: There was a planned integration between the Service NSW app and the myGov app, and it was paused earlier this year. Has it resumed yet? If it hasn't, why not? GREG WELLS: I'm not sure whether there were active plans to integrate myGov and the Service NSW app distinctly. I think—and maybe Ms Christie can add to this—through the national Data and Digital Ministers Meeting, there is certainly alignment of strategies around identity, proofing, credentials and those other things. That's something that we continue to work on.	I am advised: Information about redundancies is published in the annual report under employee related expenditure.

33 (Page 62)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: The Mobile Service Centres that go out had a target of visiting 36 rural and remote communities. Some of those communities weren't able to be visited. Do you know why? GREG WELLS: I'd have to get the specifics, but in some context on Mobile Service Centres generally, it's actually 148 communities that those four services visit in cycle. Three of those services run a nine-week cycle across 100 of those communities. Last year we reconfigured one of those services just to focus on Aboriginal communities specifically, so that looks at the other 48 communities specifically and has just finished the first year of that cycle. I'd really have to take on notice if there were particular issues around some locations that we said we were going to visit that we didn't. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: I think some of them were due to minimal connectivity. GREG WELLS: The Mobile Service Centres are pretty self-sufficient in terms of connectivity. They take connectivity with them that the Telco Authority helps us procure and configure. It might be due to vehicle issues or rostering or staff availability issues but, again, if you can provide those details, I'm happy to take that on notice.	I am advised: From 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, 14 planned Mobile Service Centre visits were rescheduled or cancelled due to the Far West power outage, Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and other flood events. During the Far West power outage, additional visits and support were provided to Menindee, Tibooburra, Packsaddle, White Cliffs and Ivanhoe.
34 (Page 62)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: So it was very independent. Do you know what was the total cost to engage that consultant? PAUL O'REILLY: No. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: That's outside your remit?	I am advised: Expenditure on consultants is reported in the Department of Communities and Justice annual report.

	PAUL O'REILLY: Yes, I don't know the cost. MICHAEL TIDBALL: It falls into mine. I'm happy to provide it on notice.	
35 (Page 63)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: How many serious assault incidents on staff and detainees occurred in the last financial year? PAUL O'REILLY: I can tell you how many assaults occurred. I have that information with me. In 2024-25 we had 193 assaults on staff and 159 of those were physical assaults. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: How many resulted in hospitalisation? PAUL O'REILLY: Very few. I don't have the exact number. For those staff who did need hospital attention, it was very serious—like incredibly serious for those individual people. But the number was low. But we can come back to you with the exact number. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: You said before sometimes you have to do lockdowns because you've got staff training or issues like that—sorry, I was going to ask about isolations. You haven't had anywhere they have been segregated or isolated for more than 24 hours? PAUL O'REILLY: Can I just be really precise about this? Because there are different categories of restrictive practice that have different regulations. Do you want me to explain the data on all of those?	I am advised: One staff member.

	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Yes. PAUL O'REILLY: It will take some time. I hope people don't mind if I—for confinement, the confinement regulations set out in the Act are clear. Children under 16 cannot be confined for more than 12 hours and children 16 or over cannot be confined for more than 24 hours. There were no incidents of that occurring.	
36 (Page 65)	Dr AMANDA COHN: My specific question is around synthetic turf—plastic grass surfaces. The NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer's report was published a couple of years ago into synthetic turf. My understanding is that it's currently tested for flammability under the same sorts of standards for carpet or indoor be the appropriate way to test that material. JEREMY FEWTRELL: I've certainly had no advice about Fire and Rescue's position or thoughts on testing synthetic turf. Anecdotally, though, I recall the fire that we had in Surry Hills in May 2023. We saw neighbouring properties affected by the radiant heat coming off that fire. There was at least one example where there was synthetic turf on one of the balconies catching fire. That's obviously a clear demonstration of how it can be impacted. But I would have to take advice and come back to you on notice with any position or approach that we would be suggesting. Dr AMANDA COHN: I'm very happy for you to take it on notice. In having those conversations, I'm also interested to understand whether this is something that should be permitted in bushfire zones or not—I'm now looking at Commissioner Curtin—given its known flammability and that it's functionally plastic.	I am advised: The National Construction Code (NCC) Clause G6D2 has requirements relating to the testing of Fire Hazard Properties for materials used as wall, floor and ceiling linings in buildings. These requirements also apply to linings used in "occupiable outdoor spaces". The steering committee leading the RFS review of Planning for Bush Fire Protection is considering measures in bush fire prone areas to address the fire risk of synthetic turf.

	TRENT CURTIN: I understand we're in the process of updating our planning for bushfire protection, which includes landscaping. I can come back on notice on the status of that review and how that impacts things like synthetic turfs in landscaping. Dr AMANDA COHN: I'd be really keen to know if that includes synthetic turf and, if so, what the time frame is on that work. I'll stick with the RFS for a moment. What policies have you got in place to communicate changes with your volunteer base, noting how widely distributed and varied they are in terms of their engagement with the organisation?	
37 (Page 65)	Dr AMANDA COHN: I also have a few questions around the aspects of the SES's work where RFS members are also sometimes involved, things like height safety training and flood rescue training. When an RFS volunteer, for example, is involved in flood rescue, what is the training process that they go through? TRENT CURTIN: For the RFS volunteers, I would have to take on notice the training requirements that we provide for them in flood rescue. Dr AMANDA COHN: You have mentioned flood rescue. The other part of the question was if RFS members are being trained in height safety systems and then what that entails. I should clarify, the only reason I'm not asking the SES the same questions is because I did that training myself through the SES, so I'm quite across that. So for flood rescue and flood rescue boat operations, if an RFS member has a boat licence, is there any additional training that they go through to drive a boat under flood conditions?	I am advised: The RFS has a height safety training package and has adopted the State Rescue Policy training requirements for flood rescue operations, along with multi-agency training manuals and skills sheets. RFS training also includes: • Flood Rescue – Land Based • Flood Rescue – In Water • Rescue Boat Operator • Aviation Rescue Crew (for over water rescue operations).

	TRENT CURTIN: Yes, I can take on notice the training package that we use for that.	
38 (Page 65-66)	Dr AMANDA COHN: Staying with the RFS, I have a few questions about the white fleet—the non-firefighting vehicles. What is this year's budget allocation for the white fleet? TRENT CURTIN: Budget allocation for procurement of white fleet, do you mean? Dr AMANDA COHN: Yes. TRENT CURTIN: I don't think I've got that disaggregated. I've got the same for the red fleet but not for the white fleet. I'd have to take that on notice. Dr AMANDA COHN: Are you able to advise what is the planned replacement for the Guardian software system? TRENT CURTIN: I understand that we've got two versions of the Guardian system. You're talking about an upgrade of Guardian 2 or a further replacement? Dr AMANDA COHN: I've been advised that the Noggin software is at the end of its life and may not be serviceable within 12 to 18 months. What work are you doing in terms of considering a successor? TRENT CURTIN: I understand the transition process is underway for that. I can come back on notice with detail.	I am advised: Expenditure related to the white fleet is captured in the RFS annual financial statement under Plant & Equipment.
39 (Page 66)	Dr AMANDA COHN: I'm advised that the mitigation crew and	I am advised: As of 4 September 2025, 3,931 Mobile Data Terminals have been

	crew leader positions no longer require basic firefighting skills or training. Can you advise the rationale for that? TRENT CURTIN: I'm not aware of any change in relation to the qualifications, so I would have to take on notice whether there has been a change in advice for those requirements. Mitigation crews obviously have a specialist piece of work in relation to mitigation work, but I can come back to you on the qualification requirements for our mitigation crews. Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand there's also a budget allocation for the installation of mobile data terminals in all of your vehicles. Are you able to tell us what the current expenditure has been on the project? TRENT CURTIN: As I understand, we've rolled out more than 3,000 mobile data terminals. In terms of the exact expenditure for the project up to date, it would be better I take it on notice so I can give you that figure exactly. Dr AMANDA COHN: I'm also interested in either the number or the proportion of vehicles that have been fitted to date. TRENT CURTIN: More than 3,000. I'll try and find the figure for you and come back to you on that. But it's a large proportion of the fleet, obviously. We've got a little bit more to go to roll out the remaining few districts.	installed. Gross project expenditure to date is \$46.4 million.
40 (Page 66-67)	The CHAIR: I've just got a couple of questions for Commissioner Curtin or Commissioner Wassing. I'm sure you've seen The <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> article that stated: <i>The NSW Planning Department would have the power to override advice from emergency services about housing applications in fire-prone land or</i>	I am advised: The SES attended a meeting about the new authority model in April 2025.

	<i>flood zones under a proposed overhaul of the state's Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.</i> I'm just wondering if either of you were consulted around this or involved in anything with the Minister in regard to what The <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> is stating as "proposed changes"? MIKE WASSING: I can say that our agency has been consulted and continues to be involved in any associated work around proposed changes. The CHAIR: When was this first brought to your attention? MIKE WASSING: I'd have to take the specific date on notice, but it was very early in the piece. It was what I would describe as the initiation of considered changes. The CHAIR: Was it some months ago that these discussions first started? MIKE WASSING: Yes.	
41 (Page 68)	The CHAIR: I'm going to go back now to Youth Justice. We were talking a little bit before about the 2022 report on six youth justice centres. Could I get an update on the recommendations that were partially achieved and the progress that's happening on those particular recommendations? PAUL O'REILLY: I don't have a list in front of me of the ones that are partially achieved as opposed to completely achieved—unless my colleague does? No, my colleague doesn't have that either. We can give you a detailed response on notice.	I am advised: 16 are in progress and involve further work, including research, workforce consultation, and implementation planning to minimise disruption to staff and young people.

42 (Page 68-69)	The CHAIR: Great. How many days are young people spending in Youth Justice custody on section 28 bail? PAUL O'REILLY: I don't have that information with me for 2024-2025. The CHAIR: Is it not available or are you able to take that on notice? PAUL O'REILLY: We can calculate it. I don't have it here, but we can probably calculate how many instances of section 28 bail. We can then try to calculate the duration of those. The CHAIR: Thank you. I appreciate that. Could I also get some more information around Youth Justice strategy to combat racism within Youth Justice? PAUL O'REILLY: Yes, certainly. Youth Justice has developed an anti-racism strategy. That's been in development for some time in consultation with our Aboriginal staff. There are a few elements to it. One element is training around anti-racism capability and awareness of racism. Another element is reporting racism and using appropriate HR policies to address racism and hold people accountable for racism. And, drawing on the reform priorities in Closing the Gap, priority reform three is about transforming institutions. The anti-racism strategy is heavily going to depend on more recruitment of Aboriginal people in the organisation, particularly in leadership and decision-making roles at every level of the organisation, to improve cultural awareness and reduce the likelihood of people experiencing racism.	I am advised: As at September 13, the median length of stay on a section 28 bail order was 2.8 days.
43 (Page 70)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Commissioner Curtin, back to	I am advised:

	you—possibly a high-level answer and then you might need to take some of this on notice. I believe out of the Bushfire Inquiry report there was a recommendation about the 13 fire control centres. I just wonder if you could give me a quick update on where that was up to more broadly and then perhaps on notice some of the specifics around those 13 locations. TRENT CURTIN: I understand we got \$71.5 million for eight of the 13 fire control centres and emergency operations centres. Armidale and Cudgegong are complete. Six further FCCs are in development at the moment, and site construction work has started at Narrabri, Clarence Valley and Monaro. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: There are others at Tumut and Wagga that I could perhaps have some more detail, on notice? TRENT CURTIN: Yes, they're in development. Work is continuing with local councils in those areas: Moruya, Hawkesbury, Tumut, Cooma, Clarence Valley and Narrabri.	The questions were answered on page 70 of the uncorrected transcript.																						
44 (Page 70-71)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: What are our expectations on local councils as far as the fire capabilities on their local tips? TRENT CURTIN: In relation to local tips, we want to make sure that they've got all the right risk mitigation processes in place. We were talking about lithium ion batteries earlier. I understand RFS had 27 tip fires last year. It's not possible always to say how many of those are caused by different reasons. Tip fires are very difficult to find the cause of a fire, but it's important that every landholder and everyone that carries a risk, like tips and other things, take all necessary steps to make sure they protect that from becoming an issue, in terms of community impact.	I am advised: <table><tr><th>FY</th><th>Total tip fires responded to by RFS</th></tr><tr><td>2015-16</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>2016-17</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>2017-18</td><td>31</td></tr><tr><td>2018-19</td><td>21</td></tr><tr><td>2019-20</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>2020-21</td><td>16</td></tr><tr><td>2021-22</td><td>14</td></tr><tr><td>2022-23</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>2023-24</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>2024-25</td><td>11</td></tr></table>	FY	Total tip fires responded to by RFS	2015-16	32	2016-17	32	2017-18	31	2018-19	21	2019-20	18	2020-21	16	2021-22	14	2022-23	18	2023-24	6	2024-25	11
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	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Would you be able to take that on notice and get those numbers over, say, the last 10 years, just so we can try to track that, if possible? Trent CURTIN: If we hold that data, then I'll take it on notice to get that for you.	
45 (Page 71)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: When a young person has had a self-harm episode, what measures are put in place to ensure that they are safe afterwards? PAUL O'REILLY: It depends on the incident. Self-harm is a very broad range of behaviours, and there are a whole range of drivers. Quite often the behaviour of other children around can be a trigger for self-harm, so quite often the response is just to change location. But it is really about getting the expert clinical advice instantly and then implementing a very individualised plan to keep that young person safe. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: If it was a young person on young person, you would also assess that risk as well to see, "Do we need to separate"? PAUL O'REILLY: Yes, we would usually engage in some conflict resolution and restorative justice between the two. However, it does depend on the situation, the seriousness and the level of risk and safety, and intention. The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: I can imagine. With regard to the use of force, is that higher or lower than last year? PAUL O'REILLY: It's almost identical. It's two more incidents.	I am advised: No use of force incidents resulted in hospitalisation.

	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: Did any of those result in hospitalisation? PAUL O'REILLY: Again, it would be very, very rare. But we'll find out.	
46 (Page 72)	The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD: What's the average length of time from when somebody commences the claim to when they return—if they return? PAUL O'REILLY: We have that data, but not here. We can provide that separately, but we do have that data.	I am advised: This question should be directed to the Minister for Work, Health and Safety.
47 (Page 74)	The CHAIR: When you say there's the dingo rescue program, is that with the Sydney Fox and Dingo Rescue? Is that the only organisation? KELLY-ANNE STEWART: Yes, it is. The CHAIR: How often are they coming into centres? KELLY-ANNE STEWART: I haven't got the specific details. It's usually as part of our school holiday program. The timetable for young people during the week and on weekends is pretty jam-packed between school, education and interventions, so it's usually part of our school holiday program, I understand. The CHAIR: Could I also ask you to take on notice that previous question about the RSPCA program, about when that program ceased to exist, but also why the program itself ended?	I am advised: Sydney Fox Rescue visited Cobham in April 2024 for a school holiday program. RSPCA last visited Cobham in 2022. The program was discontinued in order to introduce new programs with Sydney Zoo, Bushbred Horse Assisted Learning and Raptor Reptiles.

	KELLY-ANNE STEWART: I can, yes.	
48 (Page 74)	The CHAIR: Fantastic. I've got some additional questions for Fire and Rescue. I know last estimates we spoke about several thousand animals being rescued by Fire and Rescue in the previous year. I'm just wondering if I could get any update in regard to how many animal rescues there have been in this year. JEREMY FEWTRELL: For 2025-26 year to date? Or 2024-25? The CHAIR: I guess since the last estimates that I— JEREMY FEWTRELL: The last estimates? I'll take that on notice and we'll provide that number for you. The CHAIR: This one might be another one for on notice, but just what kind of animals we're talking about being rescued, and some of the breakdown of those species. JEREMY FEWTRELL: I'm not sure to the extent we'll be able to extract that data, or have that data for you, but whatever we can do we'll provide. In general, though, I would say they do tend to be predominantly domestic pets that have had some sort of misadventure, followed then probably by Australian native animals, particularly possums getting caught in different locations, then other agricultural farm animals.	I am advised: Since the last Budget Estimates hearing (11 April 2025) Fire and Rescue NSW has completed 354 animal rescue incidents (254 domestic animals, 7 commercial animals, 78 wildlife, and 15 involving exotic/imported wildlife).
49 (Page 75)	The CHAIR: In the last few minutes I have left, I have one more question in regard to Youth Justice. This might need to be taken on notice as well. I want to get, if I could, the number of complaints about staff that are recorded at each of the Youth	I am advised: Complaints information is captured through multiple channels. The data is not aggregated in the way requested.

	Justice centres over the last financial year. Is that data collected? PAUL O'REILLY: Yes. It might be helpful if I could clarify. Do you mean complaints from young people? The CHAIR: Yes.	
50 (Page 75)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I will go to Fire and Rescue. I understand, Commissioner, that SafeWork issued Fire and Rescue NSW an improvement notice in relation to its failure to hold the health and safety committee meetings for a year. Why was that? I understand you're going to take action to make sure it doesn't happen again, but why did we not have any meetings for a year? JEREMY FEW'TRELL: There are some sensitivities around that with an individual. I'm not sure how best to handle this one, Ms Boyd. I'm happy to provide some advice on that out of session. But we've certainly been able to resolve that, and we've got a schedule for those meetings to be occurring.	I am advised: The State Health and Safety Committee met in December 2024 and August 2025. In the time between these meetings Fire and Rescue NSW regularly communicated and engaged with Health and Safety Representatives and the Chair. Meetings of the State Health and Safety Committee are only one of several forums for consultation with workers.
51 (Page 75)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I think you've already been asked questions about the Grose Vale incident. There has been concerns raised with us from members of Fire and Rescue that they feel they've not been consulted with when it comes to the safety response or the safety measures put in place following that incident. I know that is has been discussed at meetings of the work health and safety steering committee, which you chair. How have those actions, and progress on those actions, taken into consideration consultation with workers in the absence of having those health and safety committee meetings up and running?	I am advised: Action items from the recommendations have been addressed in consultation with the relevant Health and Safety Representatives through direct communication or sub-committees. Health and Safety Representatives are consulted on items that involve systematic reforms or measures.

	JEREMY FEWTRELL: I'll provide more detail to you on notice, but I'm very aware that there were meetings with all the crews involved in that Grose Vale incident to talk them through the recommendations that came out of the safety investigation relating to that matter. There were obviously a range of sensitivities with that to make sure that was done appropriately from a psychosocial safety perspective and where people were at, given that the incident involved the fatality of one of our firefighters. They've worked extensively with the local crews to explain to them what the investigation found and then how, as an organisation, we were responding to that. As I say, I'll provide further details on notice in terms of the broader consultation with the health and safety representatives and the health and safety committee. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: That would be very useful. Also what these actions—I'm looking at some meeting papers, which are heavily redacted, of your work health and safety steering committee from 16 June. It's just entitled "Progress on Grose Vale actions". Has the nature of those Grose Vale actions been communicated to staff—if they involve systemic reforms or measures being put in place? JEREMY FEWTRELL: I'm probably best to provide the detail for you on that in the response on notice.	
52 (Page 75-76)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Excellent. I'll direct it that way. I understand the program has now cost close to \$70 million. I am wondering what we've got to show for that. Where are we up to? LAURA CHRISTIE: I think that number might be overstated. I think it's closer to \$50 million, but we'll take that on notice	I am advised: \$53 million has been spent on the Digital Identity and Verifiable Credentials (DIVC) Program.

	and provide you with a specific answer. In terms of the split in the program, at Digital NSW my responsibility is to look after the policy and strategy legislation that we are preparing for consideration. Mr Wells and Service NSW support the technical delivery of the program. I'll probably talk to the policy and strategy side of this work. We work really closely with international standards and the national rules that the Commonwealth sets in relation to digital ID and verifiable credentials. We've been pulling together a framework for how we can deliver a New South Wales digital ID and verifiable credentials in the Service NSW wallet that can be interoperable across States and Territories, and with the Commonwealth in terms of their wallet as well. Ms MacDonald was referring to that earlier.	
53 (Page 77)	Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: How many people have used that? You said the Working with Children Check is using those verifiable digital credentials. Is that right? GREG WELLS: The Working with Children Check at the moment is just using the component that strengthens the proof of who you are, and you're able to do that online. Previously, in order to renew your Working with Children Check, you had to come physically to a Service NSW centre to prove your identity. You can now do that online, and 70,000 people have done that with a biometric check. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I was going to ask you how many—70,000 people. GREG WELLS: That's right. That's last year. That continues, obviously, so that's live. Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Could you on notice tell me how much has	I am advised: The Working with Children Check online renewals project total cost was \$2,034,870.39.

	been spent on labour, consultants, vendor technology et cetera in relation to this overall project? That would be really useful. GREG WELLS: We can.	
54 (Page 78)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I have another local member issue. The Junee Correctional Centre, I understand—this is for you, Commissioner Fewtrell, believe it or not—has had a spike in call-outs for false alarms over the last little while. I'm told it is 40 this year. What does Fire and Rescue receive as far as compensation for those call-outs? Does that compensation, for want of a better term, end up being fed back into the local community? JEREMY FEWTRELL: I will provide you the charge that we have for automatic fire alarm activations on notice, just so we get the exact number for you, and correctly. That then is part of Fire and Rescue's revenue stream basically. It's directed back into the organisation. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: At a local level? JEREMY FEWTRELL: No, not necessarily. We do have a team that works in our Fire Safety Branch that is focused on helping businesses or facilities to reduce the number of false alarm activations. I dare say, if that facility has had such a significant spike, the team there that works on the false alarm reduction will be working with the Junee correctional facility. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I'm happy to be corrected if those numbers are wrong too. JEREMY FEWTRELL: Yes.	I am advised: This question was answered on page 79 of the uncorrected transcript.

	The CHAIR: Ms Boyd? Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I just need to correct myself. It was 30,000, not 30 million. I've been getting my millions and my hundreds of thousands and my billions mixed up all day. Sorry about that. But I will provide you full details on notice.	
55 (Page 79)	The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Ms Stewart, can you tell me quickly how many of the—you talked about the shearing program out at Orana. How many of those people are working in sheds now? KELLY-ANNE STEWART: I would have to take that on notice for you, because I'm not sure. Sometimes it's just a point of interest for young people. As I said, we do have a variety of programs. It doesn't necessarily guarantee that young people will exit and enter that trade, but it gives young people a taster. The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: And that's why I asked "in sheds" rather than shearing, because it could lead to rouseabouts or wool pressers or anything. KELLY-ANNE STEWART: Absolutely.	I am advised: Seven young people completed the course facilitated by Lincoln School Education & Training Unit. One young person gained employment in the shearing industry.