

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**Integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process**

Hon John Graham MLC  
Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't comment, because I actually—I know this has been provided to me now, but I haven't—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It's the first time as Minister you've seen this June document?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wasn't aware it was in the call for papers. Just to be clear, I haven't sought to trawl through the—I've answered all the questions.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Will you undertake analysis of it now as to how much changed—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think you've asked that of the program office.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: —the means by which it changed and what appears to be, realistically in politics, the role of Cherie Burton in changing these grants in consultation with crossbenchers for political reasons that just shouldn't have happened? Isn't that the inquiry we now need, seat by seat?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't think the evidence has been stacked up for that. But you've asked for some of that from the program office today, and they've said they'll complete that analysis.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But as the responsible Minister, shouldn't you be ordering that inquiry and investigation, because this looks terrible?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm certainly happy to examine any of the issues that arise out of today.

ANSWER:

I am advised Alison Morgan, Executive Director, Grant Program Office in the Premier's Department has provided that analysis in attachment Table 1 (A8319152) of her supplementary answers to the committee.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**Integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process**

Hon John Graham MLC  
Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Minister, have you ever communicated with anyone about this particular program on Signal or other messaging apps?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would have to take that on notice. I think you've asked at estimates a range of questions about messaging apps.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you use Signal or WhatsApp? What do you use?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I do use messaging apps. I'd have to take on notice the precise messaging apps. I find the number of them slightly overwhelming.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So you're not quite sure?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: He's a Snapchat guy.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: A TikToker.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd have to take that on notice.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Like the former Coalition Government, the NSW Government uses a range of digital systems and communications that have been approved for use and may be utilised where there is a valid business requirement. This has been established practice under successive governments.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**Integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process**

Hon John Graham MLC  
Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

State records are a vital public asset, and access to Government information is essential to maintaining public trust in government. I comply with my obligations under the State Records Act 1998.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Minister, I think it's quite clear that if we're to find out what the election commitments are, we would need to painstakingly ask all 93 Labor candidates at the last election to appear before us and outline to us what projects they promised in the lead up to the March 2023 election. That would be a fair assessment, wouldn't it?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You just need the seven field officers. There are only seven.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Or the seven field officers, at the very least.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept where you're heading.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You said that you will look into electorates or projects when they have been raised by the Opposition or crossbench in the Parliament. Will you commit to looking into the discrepancies between the "source of truth" list and the original list for Wollondilly, Orange, Charlestown, Canterbury and

Heffron, and report back to us those discrepancies on notice?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As I have said, if I had concerns, I have sought briefings. I was satisfied with the explanations I got. Obviously, once again, you've raised a number of issues here. I'm happy to look at all of those. Once again, you've made quite a significant number of errors of fact, so I wouldn't be surprised if some of the things you put today are wrong. But I'm certainly happy to continue the approach that I've tried to take, which is to look at the issues you've raised in good faith.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**Integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process**

Hon John Graham MLC  
Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

**ANSWER**

I am advised Alison Morgan, Executive Director, Grant Program Office in the Premier's Department has provided that comparison in attachment Table 1 (A8319152) of her supplementary answers to the committee.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You said earlier on, on 21 August, the briefing you had from the program office was similar to what we heard earlier today from Ms Morgan.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I've got to say, if I'd heard that information and I'd been the responsible Minister, probably the first thing I would have done after the briefing is pick up the phone and ask Cherie Burton, "Why did these lists change so often? Why were there five different iterations of it? Can you explain that to me?"

Did you do that?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I've got to say, if I'd heard that information and I'd been the responsible Minister, probably the first thing I would have done after the briefing is pick up the phone and ask Cherie Burton, "Why did these lists change so often? Why were there five different iterations of it? Can you explain that to me?" Did you do that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The way it was put to me was there was a first batch, there was a second batch, they were contacting the organisations to get the details and cataloguing the commitments, so there was not a discussion about a list on 14 June, but I asked a range of questions about it and found it reasonably persuasive as I was being briefed on it.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**Integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process**

Hon John Graham MLC  
Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But were you told what we heard today? That there are five different iterations?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There were a number of different iterations. There's the contact details being collected as people were—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Did you check with Cherie why that happened? Wouldn't you check with her directly? How can you make five changes to election commitments that were solid in rock? Inscribed in rock on election night?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As I understood it, this was more about the contact details and the nature of the organisation and collecting those details.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: How can that be true, say, in Wollondilly where Lucy Margeit testified and wrote down that there's just \$400,000 for playgrounds and parks? Three or four months later, how do you get a whole list of new organisations, unless you got it from Judy Hannan?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't know the details of that specific—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you check?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to check.

**ANSWER**

I am advised Cherie Burton appeared before the Public Accountability and Works Committee on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

The CHAIR: How many tranches of this program are we up to now?

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**Integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process**

Hon John Graham MLC  
Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Of which program?

The CHAIR: Of this one. I keep calling it the pre-election Labor candidate slush fund. This one that we're talking about.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The LSCA.

The CHAIR: Thank you, the LSCA. I understand there was a number of tranches. Sydney was in tranche 7 and there was a bunch of tranches.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There are more than 600 projects. The tranches more refer to the bundles of paperwork that come up altogether.

The CHAIR: What are we up to?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There are more than 640 projects I understand.

The CHAIR: How many tranches of documents have we—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I couldn't answer that. I can take that on notice for you. The tranches are more about the waves of paperwork.

**ANSWER**

I am advised

There are 36 tranches published.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, on 20 October 2023 you directed the program office to conduct a conflict of interest review for 15 electorates because you'd been advised there may be a conflict of interest

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE**  
**Integrity, efficacy, and value for money of the Local Small Commitments Allocation process**

Hon John Graham MLC  
Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

question. Most of those were councillors. Who advised you of the conflict of interest question or problem in the seat of Camden?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: My recollection is it was—I thought it was 17 electorates that ended up having that—recalling that the advice to me from the public service was, "The guidelines are quite strict. This isn't required." The Opposition had raised concerns, and I felt that this would add to the program. So I insisted that, wherever there had been issues raised, that this occur. One of those electorates was Camden. I can't recall the way in which that originally came up, but it would have been either a councillor or someone had identified this publicly.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you take that on notice as to who identified it? And was it because of material on the Labor Party website for the election campaign revealing that Mrs Quinnell ran a music business in Camden and was now allocating \$75,000 to the Camden Musical Society, which she'd helped establish?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Why don't I take that on notice? I'm happy to report back, but I couldn't tell you off the top of my head.

**ANSWER**

I am advised

Camden was included in the conflict of interest process because it had been the subject of media reporting.