

**INQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRITY, EFFICACY, AND VALUE FOR
MONEY OF THE LOCAL SMALL COMMITMENTS ALLOCATION
PROCESS**

Hearing: 14 November 2025

Mr Paul Mills, Senior Caucus Liaison Officer, Office of the Hon Chris Minns MP

Questions taken on notice

Page 6:

The CHAIR: Who set up the spreadsheet? Who would be the author of the spreadsheet if we were to look at the metadata?

PAUL MILLS: I'm happy to take that on notice. There's nothing further I can add to my previous evidence.

The CHAIR: I'm giving you the chance to clarify it because I think when we look back at the transcript it does refer to you typing into a hard copy document, which clearly was not the case. You were typing into a document that was already set up before you—

CHERIE BURTON: But I think, yes, he's taking—

PAUL MILLS: Like I said, I'm happy to take it on notice.

CHERIE BURTON: He's taken it on notice. He'll get back to you.

The CHAIR: Okay. I think it's easier if we allow each witness to speak, but—

PAUL MILLS: Yes. Like I said, I'm happy to take it on notice. I've said it twice now.

I do not recall. This question relates to events that occurred more than two years ago.

Pages 9-10:

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That document was not provided under the SO 52 and you don't know where it is now. Is that your evidence?

PAUL MILLS: I don't know where it is and I've complied with my responsibilities under SO 52. I have nothing further to add.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Sure. You said it was a working draft at one point.

PAUL MILLS: Yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But do you accept that that draft document was used to inform the decision—the final spreadsheet—that went into the department for funding?

PAUL MILLS: It was a working draft, yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But it was used to inform the decision or that final spreadsheet that then ended up at the department. That's correct?

PAUL MILLS: It was a working draft.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but it was a document that was used as you started to implement the LSCA commitment that you made?

PAUL MILLS: Yes, that working draft ended up becoming what you have in front of you, which I've provided under SO 52.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Sure, I accept that. That's fine. But, under that rationale, that should have been a document that was provided to the Parliament and, under the State Records Act, that should still exist. Do you want to take on notice and check with your office if anyone knows where it is?

CHERIE BURTON: That's been taken on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: No, he didn't take it on notice.

CHERIE BURTON: It has.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: No, he said he didn't know.

The CHAIR: Let's just make it clear.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just to be clear, I'm very happy if you want to take it on notice and see if you can find it anywhere in your office, if any of your colleagues have it.

PAUL MILLS: Sure.

CHERIE BURTON: We're here to help.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It would be great if you could do that.

The Government complies with its obligations for orders for the production of documents under Standing Order 52 and also Government Information Public Access (GIPA) requests.

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: Mr Mills, have you communicated with anyone in the Government relating to the LSCA program via Signal?

PAUL MILLS: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You can't recall ever communicating to others—

CHERIE BURTON: He's taken it on notice.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Do you communicate inside the Government via Signal in general?

PAUL MILLS: We use various messaging platforms. I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You don't know if you use Signal?

CHERIE BURTON: He's answered it. He said he's taken it on notice.

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.

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The Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Network Services Policy (available online in the Ministers' Office Handbook) confirms that computers, Ministers' Network, mobile devices, internet, remote access, email and any other type of service used for official communications must be used in a lawful, appropriate and ethical way.

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Page 11:

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Mr Mills, if I could refresh your memory, perhaps, on your use of the Signal app. I have an email that's been part of the SO 52 documents from 29 January 2024, from Ryan Park's office to yourself and Matthew Iemma. I'll just quote from it. Basically, the email's asking for contact details in the department. This person's asking:

... could I get that department contact again (It was sent over Signal) to provide to the other schools if they are having the same issues?

PAUL MILLS: Can I have a look at that document, please?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: If you want. It's part of the SO 52. Sure. We can table that. Does that refresh your memory at all about your use of communicating with others about the LSCA program via Signal?

PAUL MILLS: Can I look at it before I give my answer, please?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Sure. We'll let you do that...

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Page 14:

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Mr Mills, does the document you now have refresh your memory at all about whether you've used the Signal app to communicate with other staffers?

PAUL MILLS: What was the question again, sorry?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The first question was do you use Signal?

PAUL MILLS: No, the last question when you provided this document. You read it out.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I was asking you, given this document, does that refresh your memory at all about whether you were using the Signal app to communicate to others about the LSCA program?

PAUL MILLS: I have no recollection of engaging with the person mentioned in this document—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Ever?

PAUL MILLS: —from that period of time.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That's your answer under oath?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: This is a document provided to us as part of the SO 52, of which you now have a copy, so it clearly exists.

PAUL MILLS: I have nothing further to add on that. I'm happy to take it on notice.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Why didn't the SO 52—our request for documents—include the Signal messages that are referred to in this document?

PAUL MILLS: I have no history—I have no recollection of interacting with this person over that period of time. Happy to take that on notice, too.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Is this staffer to Ryan Park lying, or are you lying?

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The Hon. CHRIS RATH: You're a caucus liaison officer. Your role is to liaise with the Labor caucus. Surely Labor MPs are contacting you about projects in their electorates. Do you seriously think that we believe—are you suggesting that on no occasion in the three years that you've been in the Premier's office that you've ever had any contact with any other Labor staffer or MP about the LSCA program via text message or Signal or WhatsApp? Is that really your suggestion?

PAUL MILLS: What's the question, sorry?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Have you ever spoken to any of your Labor colleagues, other staffers or members of Parliament via text about LSCA? Have you ever sent texts?

PAUL MILLS: I just refer you to my previous evidence about having to collect contact details.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I didn't ask that. This is the first time I've asked you this, with respect. Have you ever talked about LSCA via text—received any, sent any about LSCA?

PAUL MILLS: I'd have to take that on notice.

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