



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025-2026 Supplementary questions

Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment

Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, Heritage (Sharpe)

Hearing: Tuesday 24 February 2026

Answers due by: Responses due by 5.00 pm Monday 23 March 2026

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BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025-2026

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Questions from Dr Amanda Cohn MLC

Plastics

- (1) In the hearing on 25 February, the Minister stated that “I think we need to, obviously, minimise where there is microplastics going into the water. We have got a whole range of actions that we are undertaking in relation to it.” What actions are the Government taking relating specifically to reducing microplastics entering NSW waterways?
- (2) Does the department collect data on the presence of polystyrene foam in NSW waterways?
 - (a) If so, to what extent does polystyrene foam appear?
 - (b) Is its presence considered common or high risk?
- (3) How will damaged or end-of-life synthetic turf be managed in line with the Government’s intention to design waste carefully and increase recycling under the Plastics Plan 2.0?

Questions from Hon Mark Banasiak MLC

Early policy development

- (4) On what date did the Minister or Department first receive advice regarding the potential use of closed or closing coal mines for:
 - (a) pumped hydro;
 - (b) large-scale water storage; or
 - (c) other energy infrastructure?
- (5) Were any such briefings received prior to June 2023 in relation to the Hunter Valley or Mt Arthur Coal Mine?
- (6) What distinction does the Department draw between exploratory concepts and proposals requiring formal consultation?

Consultation and sequencing

- (7) What safeguards ensure that energy-transition concepts are not perceived as pre-determined prior to land-use reform and community consultation?
- (8) Has guidance been issued regarding sequencing of:
 - (a) energy feasibility work;
 - (b) mine-closure planning; and
 - (c) community engagement?

Integrity and coordination

- (9) What controls ensure that climate and energy policy development relies on properly disclosed and lawfully obtained information?
- (10) Is there a whole-of-government protocol governing inter-agency communication on mine-site energy-transition opportunities?

Questions from Hon Tania Mihailuk MLC
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Net Zero Commission Governance arrangements

- (11) Given that section 12 (2) of the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023 states “The Commission is a NSW Government agency”, why does the Net Zero Commission not appear in the category of “NSW Government Agency” in [NSW Treasury’s GSF Agency List Guide - March 2025](#)?
- (12) Given that section 12 (2) of the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023 states “The Commission is a NSW Government agency”, can you please advise:
 - (a) The date that either you, or responsible person representing the Commission, notified the Treasurer and Auditor General of the establishment of the Commission as a NSW Government agency in accordance with section 2.8 of the Government Sector Finance Act 2018?
 - (b) If this notification did not occur, the reason why?
 - i. Whether there is an intent to make the notification since 24 February 2026?

- (13) Is the Net Zero Commission's Annual Report 2024 in compliance with Treasury's TPG25-10 Framework for Financial and Annual Reporting?
- (a) If yes:
- i. Which TPG25-10 reporting Group is the Net Zero Commission?
- (14) According to page 36 of the Uncorrected Transcript, you said "The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It's the same as the heritage part of DCCEEW. But we're happy to give you the numbers". According to the [NSW Treasury's GSF Agency List Guide - March 2025](#), the Heritage Council of NSW appears listed as a "NSW Government Agency" in accordance with section 7 of the Heritage Act 1997 which says "The Heritage Council is a NSW Government agency".
- (a) If the Net Zero Commission is, as per your evidence, the same Government Sector Agency category as Heritage, why has the Net Zero Commission's Annual Report failed to include information in its annual report in compliance with 'TPG25-10c Group 3 - Financial Information Return', including the reporting categories of "Management and Accountability" and "Financial Performance" as reflected in the 2024-25 Annual Report of the Heritage Council of NSW, published by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on behalf of the Heritage Council?
- (15) Did you approve a brief to publish the Net Zero Commission's 2024 Annual Report?
- (16) When will the 2025 Net Zero Commission Annual Report be released?
- (17) Have you approved a brief relating to the 2025 Net Zero Commission Annual Report?
- (18) Will the 2025 Net Zero Commission Annual Report comply with TPG25-10c Group 3 - Financial Information Return', including the reporting categories of "Management and Accountability" and "Financial Performance" as reflected in the 2024-25 Annual Report of the Heritage Council of NSW, published by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on behalf of the Heritage Council?

(19) Did the Secretary (or any other officer) from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water approve a brief to publish the Net Zero Commission's 2024 Annual Report?

(20) What was the budget of the Net Zero Commission for FY24/25?

(a) Can you please advise the breakdown of expenses for the following categories:

- i. Employee expenses;
- ii. Office hire;
- iii. Domestic Travel;
- iv. Overseas Travel;
- v. Marketing;
- vi. Engagement of consultants

Coal Mining Emissions Spotlight Report

(21) Were external consultants used to develop the Net Zero Commission's Coal Mining Emissions Spotlight Report?

(a) If yes, please advise:

- i. The name of each consultant
- ii. The cost of engaging each consultant

(22) Of the 6.7 million allocated to the Commission as part of the 2025/26 Budget, how much was expended to produce the Coal Mining Emissions Spotlight Report?

Microplastics Assessment Research Project

(23) When will the outcome of the Science division of DCCEEW's microplastics assessment research project be released?

(a) Will a copy of this report be tabled in Parliament?

(b) If not, then why not?

(24) For each Metropolitan Sydney river estuary, please advise each date that a water quality assessment/monitoring checks was conducted for each river in 2025 and 2026 to date:

- (a) Botany Bay
- (b) Cooks River
- (c) Curl Curl Lagoon
- (d) Dee Why Lagoon
- (e) Georges River
- (f) Lane Cove River
- (g) Manly Lagoon
- (h) Middle Harbour Creek
- (i) Narrabeae Lagoon
- (j) Parramatta River
- (k) Pittwater
- (l) Port Hacking
- (m) Sydney Harbour?

(25) Will future assessments/monitoring checks of Metropolitan Sydney river estuaries include an assessment of the presence of microplastics? If not, then why not?

Cost Benefit Analysis of Container Deposit Scheme refund rate

(26) Has a project to conduct a cost benefit analysis of increasing the refund rate for the NSW Container Deposit Scheme commenced?

- (a) If yes:
 - i. On which date did the project commence?
 - ii. When is the anticipated completed date?
- (b) If no:
 - i. When will this project commence?

Questions from Hon Mr John Ruddick MLC

New England REZ Transmission Project - Planning Integrity and Governance

- (27) Will the Minister release a full breakdown of the \$200 million in taxpayer funds expended on the "Western" corridor for the New England REZ transmission project, detailing why desktop modeling failed to identify basic terrain constraints for two years?
- (28) Does the Minister admit that bypassing the 30-day consultation period for the Draft 2024 ISP in breach of NER 5.22.15(c) renders the current "optimal development path" legally and technically unvalidated?
- (29) Why was the Western corridor designated the "optimal pathway" in July 2024 if subsequent 2025 studies found it to be characterized by "unmanageable risks"?
- (30) Will EnergyCo release the unredacted "unit-cost per kilometer" data and Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) scoring comparing the Gundy route to the rejected "Stock Route" (TSR) alternatives?
- (31) How much of the \$2.1 billion state commitment for REZ transmission has already been spent on "sunk costs" for projects that have yet to reach a Final Investment Decision (FID)?
- (32) Why did EnergyCo designate a "preferred study corridor" in 2024 if it lacked "less than zero evidence" of its constructability in person, as stated by EnergyCo engineers at the November 2025 Gundy hall meeting?
- (33) Will the Minister release the "rejected alternatives" dossier for the Upper Hunter to prove that political interests did not influence the pivot away from previous routes?

New England REZ Transmission Project - Bushfire Safety

- (34) Can the Minister provide a log of all requests from the RFS to de-energize high-voltage lines during the 2019-20 Upper Hunter bushfires, and explain why requests were denied to prevent blackouts in Sydney?

- (35) Since 500 kV lines can be turned off "remotely and instantly," why were 65 separate arcing and flashover events permitted to occur during Black Summer rather than deenergizing the lines proactively?
- (36) Who holds the final authority to deny an RFS Incident Controller's request to de-energize a 500 kV line and what is the mandated timeframe for this decision?
- (37) Has the government conducted a "Life vs. Load" audit to determine how many rural properties were destroyed or lives endangered because transmission lines remained live to satisfy energy demand in urban areas?
- (38) Given the 2009 Victorian Royal Commission findings on electrical asset failure, does the NSW Government accept full legal liability for any "moral hazard" created by refusing to de-energize lines during a fire?
- (39) What technical evidence confirms that RFS ground crews can safely defend properties within the 25-meter "no-go" arcing zone of the proposed 500 kV lines?
- (40) EnergyCo admits 500 kV lines block "aerial firefighting" at Lake Glenbawn; does the Minister admit that moving these lines into the Gundy valley creates a new "aerial no-fly zone" over residential homes?
- (41) Has the government modeled the "intolerable" risk of flashover caused by smoke conductivity on 500 kV lines, as identified by Professor Alex Baitch, and what technical mitigations prevent these lines from igniting secondary fires?
- (42) In the event of a smoke-induced flashover, what is the protocol for "automatic reclosing," and has the government modeled how many secondary fire ignitions this process has caused historically?
- (43) Will the NSW Government provide a full indemnity to landowners whose properties cannot be defended by the RFS due to the presence of 500 kV infrastructure?

New England REZ Transmission Project - Economic Rationality

- (44) Why does the ISP model continue to exclude the full system costs of distributed energy resources (DER) and home batteries?

- (45) Why are "Return on Capital" metrics for network operators redacted in public summary reports, and what is the guaranteed revenue stream for the operator?
- (46) Can the Minister confirm that as of February 2026, zero large-scale renewable generation projects have reached a Final Investment Decision (FID) within the New England REZ?
- (47) Has the government investigated the "renewable catchment" model, centering generation near load centers (Sydney/Newcastle) to avoid the estimated \$9 billion in transition costs for interconnectors?
- (48) Does the government maintain that the NSW Roadmap is still on track to deliver lowercost electricity given the 50% cost blowouts in projects like HumeLink?
- (49) Why did EnergyCo determine that ACERREZ, rather than Transgrid, should take responsibility for system strength procurement, and how does this serve consumer interests under NER clause S5.1.14?

New England REZ Transmission Project - Biosecurity and Road Safety

- (50) Is the Minister aware of the 2007-2008 Rouchel anthrax outbreak, and what property-by-property soil testing has been conducted to prevent unearthing spores during the excavation of 1,318 high voltage transmission towers?
- (51) How will EnergyCo fulfill its general biosecurity duty under the Biosecurity Act 2015 while moving 126,000 trucks of potentially contaminated soil through a historical anthrax zone?
- (52) Does the Minister accept that a single anthrax detection would result in an immediate quarantine of the Gundy valley, leading to billions in economic damage to the Scone Equine Cluster?
- (53) What is the proposed protocol for decontaminating 126,000 heavy vehicles moving between potentially infected properties and public roads?
- (54) Does the Minister accept that 126,000 heavy vehicle movements on narrow rural roads represents a potentially catastrophic road safety failure?

(55) Will the Minister commit to requiring "Rehabilitation Bonds" from REZ developers to ensure communities are not left with industrial dereliction if projects collapse?

New England REZ Transmission Project - Environmental and Cumulative Impacts

(56) Has EnergyCo studied the migratory flight paths of the vulnerable Eastern Bent-winged bat between the Timor and Barry Cave systems, and what is the projected impact of infrastructure collision?

(57) Why was the Timor Caves karst habitat, a critical biodiversity constraint, omitted from initial REZ assessments until the late-stage pivot in October 2025?

(58) Will the Minister release the timeline for the delivery of the New England REZ cumulative impact study, which was promised for release in Q4 2025?

(59) How many hectares of critical Koala habitat will be fragmented by the new 305 km corridor through the Upper Hunter?

(60) Will the government mandate "smart curtailment" strategies for wind farms to mitigate the risk of blade strike to bat populations foraging up to 7 km from Timor Caves?

New England REZ Transmission Project - Consultation Process

(61) Does the Minister accept that a 48-hour window to review six critical technical design documents released on December 10, 2025, constitutes a total failure of meaningful consultation?

Mount Warning

(62) Minister, Congratulations again for re-opening the Mount Warning summit track. You have publicly said this will re-open in July 2027. This is a long time away for this suffering community.

(a) What is the cost of the repairs to the track going to be?

(b) Will the arrangements for access be the same as before or will there be a pay to play in place? If so, who will be managing that scheme and where will the proceeds go?

(c) What happens to any outstanding fines that have been issued to rule breakers already?

(d) What led to this change? Did the Wollumbin Consultative Group think it was the right action or was this a government decision in defiance of the Wollumbin Consultative Group?

Energy shortfalls

(63) Figures from Deloitte published an article from the Sydney Morning Herald published on the 10th of February show that \$52 billion has been or is about to be invested in data centres across Australia. This has more than doubled in the six months prior to publication when that figure was \$23 billion. What is the average energy consumption of a large data center? Are your renewables able to cope with their expected energy needs.

Strategic Benefits Payment Scheme

(64) What is the latest information on the tax implications of the Strategic Benefits Payment Scheme? Are transmission lines still considered as income or have you managed to successfully lobby your federal counterparts so the payments are considered compensation like your media releases show they should be?

(65) During the Second Reading debate into the Uranium Mining and Nuclear Facilities (Prohibitions) Repeal Bill 2025 Minister Houssos cited environmental concerns with regards to uranium mining. How come South Australia has effectively managed these concerns and we are too timid to experiment?

Yanga National Park

Local residents near Balranald have formed the Yabba for Yanga action group, calling for a feasibility study into a dual-use model for Yanga National Park. Their proposal would allow the upper section of the park to host environmentally responsible commercial activities to generate revenue, while the lower section is

preserved for cultural, heritage, and tourism purposes. No activity other than recreational use is currently permitted.

(66) In 2025–26, has any funding been allocated or spent or in 2026–27 is any funding proposed for a feasibility study at Yanga National Park to assess a dual-use management model that would zone parts of the park for sustainable forestry and parts for cultural, heritage and tourism purposes, to support environmental sustainability, economic viability and community engagement? If so, please advise:

- (a) the amount (by financial year);
- (b) the lead agency (and any partner agencies); and
- (c) the expected start and completion dates.

(67) Will the Minister guarantee that any feasibility study includes genuine consultation with the Balranald and Murray communities to ensure the proposal reflects local needs? Murray knows its needs better than Macquarie.

Net Zero

Stephen Anthony is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Canberra and stated in the Daily Telegraph “Australia needs wind energy to rise from about 14GW to 68GW, solar from 20GW to 66GW and storage to increase seven times to 55GW. All to replace just 23GW of existing (baseload) coal generation”

(68) Has anything comparable like this ever occurred in the world?

(69) What is New South Wales’ share of this energy generation?

(70) If we do achieve your ideal vision of Net Zero how much will the weather decrease by? How fewer extreme weather events will we have? How much lesser will extreme weather events be?

Net Zero Housing

On the 9th of February you issued a media release entitled “Net zero home cuts energy bills and emissions” regarding how energy efficient and affordable a “Panorama Net Zero Home ” is. There has also been a bit of media about this in the Daily Telegraph. You say it will save residents \$1700 a year.

- (71) How much is a Net Zero House? Let's say a three bedroom?
- (72) Do you think that is affordable for the intended audience, that is 'everyday families'?
- (73) What is the average income of an everyday family?

Questions from Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC

Cadia

- (74) In relation to the EPA's engagement of Hydrobiology to undertake an independent review of groundwater, surface water, and aquatic ecosystem monitoring programs at Cadia Valley Operations, what steps has the EPA taken to require Newmont to implement the review recommendations?
- (a) Please outline progress against each of the 23 recommendations made by Hydrobiology.
- (b) Has the EPA made changes to the environmental protection licence for Cadia Valley Operations in response to the review?
- (c) Have any additional monitoring points been established in the downgradient of tailings storage facilities, sensitive receptors such as private bores and groundwater-dependent ecosystems?
- (d) Have any additional measures been implemented to stop any further mine water from entering Cadiangullong Creek?
- (75) In relation to Hydrobiology's report titled 'Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) - Review of Cadia Valley Operations', what steps have the EPA taken to require Newmont to implement the review recommendations?
- (76) Has the EPA undertaken any investigations of Cadia Valley Operation's northern and southern tailings storage facilities to assess their structural integrity?
- (a) If so, when and what did the investigation involve?
- (77) In the variation of Cadia Valley Operation's Environmental Protection Licence (Licence - 5590), it is stated that condition P1.3 was varied "to remove groundwater quality monitoring Point 55 (bore MB96) and its replacement

with Point 60 (bore MB101) on account of bore 96 being inundated by rising water levels in the Pit Tailings Storage Facility.” Has the EPA conducted any onsite investigations of the tailings storage pit or bore 96 to:

- (a) Determine the source of the rising water levels?
- (b) Assess whether any leakage or seepage was occurring?
 - i. And, if so, identify the receiving environment?
- (c) Identify potential risks to the surrounding environment should leakage or seepage occur?
- (d) If so, please provide details of the investigations, including date and findings.

Blueberries

(78) In a joint statement issued by the EPA and NSW Food Authority on 3 October 2025, it was stated that data from industry testing provider FreshTest for October and November 2024 showed no evidence of thiometon residue on any berries tested. Can you please provide:

- (a) The full list of chemicals and pesticides that were tested for by FreshTest during the October and November 2024 period;
 - i. If testing was conducted on more than one occasion during this period, please provide a breakdown of data for each testing event;
- (b) The level of sensitivity of the testing for thiometon, i.e. what is the smallest trace amount the test would have been capable of detecting;
- (c) The amount of dimethoate detected, broken down by testing event and sample
- (d) The quantity of berries by weight that a child and an adult would have to consume to exceed the acceptable daily intake level for dimethoate, based on the residual levels detected.

(79) What role, if any, does the EPA play in ensuring the food that makes it to our supermarket shelves is safe to eat and doesn't exceed maximum residual limits for any pesticides, fungicides or other chemicals?

- (a) Does the EPA undertake any direct, independent testing of produce?
 - i. If so, please provide dates for all occasions between 2015-2025 when the EPA conducted testing, the produce tested, the pesticides and chemicals tested and whether maximum residual limits were exceeded for any pesticides or chemicals.
 - (b) Does the EPA independently verify testing done by Freshcare certification bodies?
 - i. If so, please provide dates for all occasions between 2015-2025 when the EPA independently verified testing.
 - (c) Does the EPA have any role in overseeing the certification of the Freshcare certification bodies?
 - (d) Has the EPA ever independently reviewed any of the annual audit data collected for Fresh Produce Growers and Supply Chain Businesses or any of the triennial audit data collected for Viticulture and Wine Industry businesses for the purpose of maintaining Freshcare Certification?
 - (e) Are there any requirements for laboratories that detect a pesticide or chemical that exceeds a maximum residual limit to report that exceedance to the EPA?
 - (f) What regulatory action would or could the EPA take if they were aware of an exceedance of a maximum residual limit?
- (80) In response to supplementary questions following the December 2026 supplementary budget estimates, it was stated that the EPA had received 3883 complaints regarding the potential misuse of pesticides between 2015-2025;
- (a) What proportion of those complaints were related to the berry industry?
 - (b) The EPA issued 3 penalty notices relating to pesticide misuse in the blueberry industry during this time, with fines ranging from \$500-\$1,500. Please provide details of pesticides used, property address and the nature and scale of the pesticide misuse in each case.

- (81) The EPA issued 7 advisory letters as part of its November 2025 compliance campaign of the blueberry industry in northern NSW. Please outline what each letter was for, and the address of the farm.
- (82) Has the EPA undertaken any monitoring or investigation of the potential impacts of pesticide run-off on oyster farms in the Coffs Harbour or Nambucca areas?
- (a) If so, has the EPA tested any oysters for pesticide contamination?
- i. If so, when and what were the results?
- (83) Has the EPA received any complaints regarding mass bee mortalities and/or loss of hives, in the Kempsey, Nambucca, Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Clarence, Richmond Valley or Kyogle Councils?
- (a) If so, please list all complaints/notifications for each year since 2020.
- (b) Have any investigations been undertaken into any of the complaints?
- i. If so, what were the results, including any testing of bees, as part of any investigations?

Great Koala National Park

- (84) Documents obtained through a call for papers, S052 – Resources Regulator and minerals mining, show that on 30 July 2025, Hetherington, a legal firm representing Trigg Minerals Limited, sent a letter to the Great Koala National Park Assessment Team on behalf of their client asking for areas in the Great Koala National Park that overlapped with minerals interests to be converted to State Conservation Area tenure rather than National Park to ensure the industry could meet their operational requirements. Emails released in that same S052 show that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service corresponded with the office of the Minister for the Environment regarding this letter and on 3 November 2025 provided the Minister’s office with a table identifying five mineral exploration licences that overlapped with the proposed Great Koala National Park and undertook to contact NSW Resources to discuss options for some of these licences. What were the outcomes of the

discussion between NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and NSW Resources regarding those exploration licences?

(a) Do any of the following exploration licences fall partially or fully within the updated boundaries of the Great Koala National Park, as announced in February 2026:

- i. EL6465 Scorpio Resources Pty Ltd
- ii. EL8914 Hillgrove Mines Pty Ltd
- iii. EL9743 United Antimony Pty Ltd
- iv. EL9772 Trigg Antimony Pty Ltd
- v. EL8100 Scorpio Resources Pty Ltd

(b) If any of the exploration licences are within the boundaries of the Great Koala National Park, has the Government made a determination on the reserve type for those areas?

(85) Documents obtained through SO52 show that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Mining, Exploration and Geosciences entered into a Memorandum of Understanding titled NPWS Reserve Referral to MEG (MOU undated). Which agency requested the development of the Memorandum of Understanding?

(a) When did the Memorandum of Understanding come into effect?

(b) What triggered NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to enter into the Memorandum of Understanding?

(c) Has NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service ceased, modified or amended any proposed acquisitions or reservations following consultation with or receipt of advice from Mining, Exploration and Geosciences?

EPA restructure

(86) The EPA previously stated in November 2025 that the current restructure process will lead to 69 ongoing jobs being lost and the reduction of six senior positions. However, the PSA reported that there was expected to also be an additional 55 temporary roles cut. Can you please confirm the final number of

roles that will be cut as a result of the restructure? Please provide a breakdown by:

- (a) Full-time, part-time and temporary roles.
- (b) Clerk grades and Senior Executive level roles

(87) Are any jobs in operational and compliance roles under consideration for cutting in the restructure or have any already been cut?

- (a) If so, how many?

(88) How many staff have been lost to natural attrition since the restructure was announced?

- (a) How many of these are in compliance or operations roles?

(89) In regards to the People Matter Employee Survey covering the survey period of 18 August to 12 September 2025, what were the 5 lowest scoring answers and their scores?

- (a) What area of the EPA had the lowest scores?

(90) The EPA's annual report for 2024-25 shows that the EPA engaged Scyne Advisory Pty Ltd at a cost \$284,742, with the consultancy description listed as Operational Model. What specifically was Scyne Advisory engaged to do and what outputs did they produce in relation to this engagement?

Broken Hill

(91) High-volume air samplers that are collecting samples for a 24 hour period every six days can only be used to inform whether lead in air emissions is within the NEPM guidelines if annual averages derived from these measurements are based on at least 75% available and valid data. Between 2015 and 2025, on how many occasions did each of the following Broken Hill mines fail to meet the criteria of 75% available and valid data:

- (a) Perilya Southern Operations?
- (b) Perilya North Mine?
- (c) Broken Hill Operations?

(92) The Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer's Broken Hill Lead Report, released this month, includes a graph that indicates there was a significant spike in annual averages of TDP-Pb at Perilya in 2017 and again in 2022 (figure 6, page 23). Has the EPA undertaken any investigations to determine the likely cause of these spikes?

(a) If so, what did it find and what actions were taken?

(93) The Broken Hill Environmental Lead Response Remediation Working Group "Zonal Remediation Strategy - Updated Problem Statement" of 15 January 2026 (accessed in the Resource Regulator S052, Premiers Department Non Privileged Public Documents Tranche 2 (PD_000001884)) states that "the lack of an integrated air quality monitoring system prevents a comprehensive understanding of pollutant sources, trends, and impacts on the community's health" and that "installation of air monitoring stations in key locations across Broken Hill" is needed.

(a) When will air monitoring stations in key locations be installed in Broken Hill?

(b) What funding has been set aside for an independent comprehensive air monitoring network across Broken Hill?

(94) The Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer's Broken Hill Lead Report references an August 2017 Final Report titled "Pilot Study of lead (Pb) phases in deposited particles from Broken Hill, NSW determined using automated mineralogical scanning." by Anthony L Morrison, Mark P. Taylor, Peter F. Nelson, Chenyin Dong. The study analysed dust deposition samples for 6 Broken Hill urban locations and recommended the implementation of an extended sampling and analysis program to assist in the direction and monitoring of the ongoing Pb remediation/mitigation program." (page 2)

(a) Has there been any further sampling and analysis of lead phases in deposited dust in Broken Hill since this report was finalised?

i. If so, where can information and results from the program be accessed?

- ii. If not, when does the EPA plan to undertake further dust deposition testing in Broken Hill?

(b) When was dust deposition sampling and analysis last undertaken at the six urban locations outlined in the Morrison et al report, namely:

- i. Rainbow Preschool?
- ii. Ryan St?
- iii. Broken Hill High School?
- iv. Brookfield?
- v. Morgan St?
- vi. Willyama High School?

(95) The Broken Hill Environmental Lead Response Remediation Working Group Zonal Remediation Strategy - Updated Problem Statement of 15 January 2026 (PD_000001884) states that baseline water quality data needs to be established in Broken Hill. This recommendation also appears in the Ramboll Conceptual Site Model Report commissioned by the EPA.

(a) When will the EPA commence independent baseline water testing in Broken Hill?

(b) When did the EPA independently test the following sites:

- i. Mulga Creek wetlands.
- ii. Zinc Lake
- iii. The Ryan Street groundwater monitoring point after rain.

(96) In the Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer's notes from a December 2024 meeting with the EPA (PD_000001550), it is stated that there has been 'no soil monitoring since MT [Mark Taylor] review'.

(a) Please outline what soil testing was undertaken for the Taylor review, including where and when the testing occurred.

- (b) Please outline what soil testing the EPA has undertaken (outside of any remediation program) at Broken Hill since 2019 including date, location and who undertook the testing.
- (97) Please provide a breakdown of all soil testing that has been undertaken by the EPA at childcare and day care centres in Broken Hill, for each year between 2015-2025, including the name of the centre, date of testing, who undertook the testing and the results of testing.
- (98) Please provide details of all soil testing undertaken by the EPA at schools in Broken Hill over the last 5 years, including the name of school, date of testing, who undertook the testing and the results of testing.
- (99) Please provide details of all soil testing that has been undertaken by the EPA at playgrounds or sporting ovals in Broken Hill over the past 5 years, including the name of school, date of testing, who undertook the testing and the results of testing.
- (100) Please list all studies commissioned by the EPA in relation to soil in Broken Hill since 2010.
- (a) Please provide details of all testing of daycare centres, childcare centres, preschools, schools and public spaces, including previously remediated public lands, in Broken Hill which has occurred since 2017, including the location, date of testing, who did the testing and the results of the testing.
- i. Is the EPA considering re-testing remediated sites in Broken Hill? If so, when will this occur?
 - ii. Were lead levels assessed at all remediated locations prior to remediation, immediately after remediation and regular intervals thereafter?
 - iii. When was soil testing last undertaken at Rainbow Preschool?
- (b) Has the EPA put in any funding requests for soil testing for the 2025/2026 or 2026/2027 period?
- (c) What funding does the EPA have for monitoring remediated land for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027?

Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp) dam wall and associated water infrastructure

(101) In relation to the Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp) dam wall and associated water supply infrastructure located within Wollemi National Park:

(a) Does the National Parks and Wildlife Service consider that responsibility for the ongoing maintenance, structural integrity and environmental management of the dam wall and immediately associated works rests with the approval holder or with the National Parks and Wildlife Service?

(b) Does the National Parks and Wildlife Service have any current statutory, contractual or practical maintenance or oversight responsibilities in respect of those works?

(c) What formal instrument, if any, authorises the continued presence and maintenance of those works within the national park estate?

(102) Has the National Parks and Wildlife Service been notified of, consulted about, or otherwise become aware of any proposed or actual changes to Mining Purpose Leases, water supply work approvals, or water access licences associated with the Ganguddy dam wall and the former Kandos Cement Works pipeline infrastructure; and if so:

(a) When did the National Parks and Wildlife Service first become aware of those changes or proposals?

(b) What consultation, if any, occurred with the National Parks and Wildlife Service prior to those changes being made or proposed?

(c) What assessment has the National Parks and Wildlife Service undertaken of the implications for the management of Wollemi National Park?

(103) Has the National Parks and Wildlife Service participated in any inter-agency or whole-of-government discussions concerning the regulatory status, variation, cancellation or future use of the Ganguddy dam wall, associated Mining Purpose Leases, or related water infrastructure within Wollemi National Park; and if so:

(a) Which agencies were involved?

(b) What matters were discussed insofar as they related to park management?

(c) Has the National Parks and Wildlife Service formed a view as to whether any proposed changes may affect infrastructure maintenance responsibilities or environmental management within the park?

Questions from Ms Sue Higginson MLC
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ENVIRONMENT

Environment Protection Authority - Pollution

(104) How many active investigations relating to alleged pollution offences are currently underway by the EPA across NSW?

(105) Of those active investigations, how many relate specifically to:

(a) Water pollution incidents?

i. How many of these relate to public land?

(b) Soil contamination?

i. How many of these relate to public land?

(c) Air pollution?

i. How many of these relate to public land?

(d) Waste disposal or illegal dumping?

i. How many of these relate to public land?

(e) Hazardous chemical incidents?

i. How many of these relate to public land?

(106) How many pollution reports have been made in this financial year?

(a) How many in the financial year 24-25?

(b) How many were made in the financial year 23-24?

(c) How many were made in the financial year 22-23?

(d) How many were finalised in the financial year 21-22?

(107) How many pollution investigations have been finalised in this financial year?

- (a) How many were finalised in the financial year 24-25?
 - i. How many of these resulted in a prosecution?
 - ii. How many of these resulted in a clean-up notice?
 - iii. How many of these resulted in a prevention notice?
 - iv. How many of these resulted in an enforceable undertaking?
 - v. How many of these resulted in no further action being taken?
 - vi. How many of these resulted in a warning?
 - vii. How many of these resulted in a penalty notice?
 - viii. What was the total of all financial penalties?
- (b) How many were finalised in the financial year 23-24?
 - i. How many of these resulted in a prosecution?
 - ii. How many of these resulted in a clean-up notice?
 - iii. How many of these resulted in a prevention notice?
 - iv. How many of these resulted in an enforceable undertaking?
 - v. How many of these resulted in no further action being taken?
 - vi. How many of these resulted in a warning?
 - vii. How many of these resulted in a penalty notice?
 - viii. What was the total of all financial penalties?
- (c) How many were finalised in the financial year 22-23?
 - i. How many of these resulted in a prosecution?
 - ii. How many of these resulted in a clean-up notice?
 - iii. How many of these resulted in a prevention notice?
 - iv. How many of these resulted in an enforceable undertaking?
 - v. How many of these resulted in no further action being taken?
 - vi. How many of these resulted in a warning?

- vii. How many of these resulted in a penalty notice?
 - viii. What was the total of all financial penalties?
- (d) How many were finalised in the financial year 21-22?
- i. How many of these resulted in a prosecution?
 - ii. How many of these resulted in a clean-up notice?
 - iii. How many of these resulted in a prevention notice?
 - iv. How many of these resulted in an enforceable undertaking?
 - v. How many of these resulted in no further action being taken?
 - vi. How many of these resulted in a warning?
 - vii. How many of these resulted in a penalty notice?
 - viii. What was the total of all financial penalties?

(108) In how many pollution matters has the EPA briefed the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in the past 12 months?

(109) How many pollution-related prosecutions are currently before the courts?

Land Clearing

(110) How many active investigations relating to alleged unlawful land clearing are currently underway by the Department?

- (a) How many are in the Bogan Local Government Area?
- (b) How many are in the Gilgandra Local Government Area?
- (c) How many are in the Mid-Western Local Government Area?
- (d) How many are in the Narromine Local Government Area?
- (e) How many are in the Warrumbungle Local Government Area?
- (f) How many are in the Dubbo Local Government Area?
- (g) How many are in the Gunnedah Local Government Area?
- (h) How many are in the Gwydir Local Government Area?
- (i) How many are in the Liverpool Plains Local Government Area?

- (j) How many are in the Tamworth Local Government Area?
- (k) How many are in the Walcha Local Government Area?
- (l) How many are in the Armidale Local Government Area?
- (m) How many are in the Glen Innes Severn Local Government Area?
- (n) How many are in the Inverell Local Government Area?
- (o) How many are in the Uralla Local Government Area?
- (p) How many are in the Moree Plains Local Government Area?
- (q) How many are in the Narrabri Local Government Area?
- (r) How many are in the Tenterfield Local Government Area?
- (s) How many are in the Cessnock Local Government Area?
- (t) How many are in the Dungog Local Government Area?
- (u) How many are in the Muswellbrook Local Government Area?
- (v) How many are in the Singleton Local Government Area?
- (w) How many are in the Upper Hunter Local Government Area?

(111) Of those investigations, how many relate to clearing on public land?

- (a) How many are in the Bogan Local Government Area?
- (b) How many are in the Gilgandra Local Government Area?
- (c) How many are in the Mid-Western Local Government Area?
- (d) How many are in the Narromine Local Government Area?
- (e) How many are in the Warrumbungle Local Government Area?
- (f) How many are in the Dubbo Local Government Area?
- (g) How many are in the Gunnedah Local Government Area?
- (h) How many are in the Gwydir Local Government Area?
- (i) How many are in the Liverpool Plains Local Government Area?
- (j) How many are in the Tamworth Local Government Area?

- (k) How many are in the Walcha Local Government Area?
 - (l) How many are in the Armidale Local Government Area?
 - (m) How many are in the Glen Innes Severn Local Government Area?
 - (n) How many are in the Inverell Local Government Area?
 - (o) How many are in the Uralla Local Government Area?
 - (p) How many are in the Moree Plains Local Government Area?
 - (q) How many are in the Narrabri Local Government Area?
 - (r) How many are in the Tenterfield Local Government Area?
 - (s) How many are in the Cessnock Local Government Area?
 - (t) How many are in the Dungog Local Government Area?
 - (u) How many are in the Muswellbrook Local Government Area?
 - (v) How many are in the Singleton Local Government Area?
 - (w) How many are in the Upper Hunter Local Government Area?
- (112) How many investigations relating to alleged unlawful land clearing have been undertaken in the last 36 months?
- (a) How many are in the Bogan Local Government Area?
 - (b) How many are in the Gilgandra Local Government Area?
 - (c) How many are in the Mid-Western Local Government Area?
 - (d) How many are in the Narromine Local Government Area?
 - (e) How many are in the Warrumbungle Local Government Area?
 - (f) How many are in the Dubbo Local Government Area?
 - (g) How many are in the Gunnedah Local Government Area?
 - (h) How many are in the Gwydir Local Government Area?
 - (i) How many are in the Liverpool Plains Local Government Area?
 - (j) How many are in the Tamworth Local Government Area?
 - (k) How many are in the Walcha Local Government Area?

- (l) How many are in the Armidale Local Government Area?
 - (m) How many are in the Glen Innes Severn Local Government Area?
 - (n) How many are in the Inverell Local Government Area?
 - (o) How many are in the Uralla Local Government Area?
 - (p) How many are in the Moree Plains Local Government Area?
 - (q) How many are in the Narrabri Local Government Area?
 - (r) How many are in the Tenterfield Local Government Area?
 - (s) How many are in the Cessnock Local Government Area?
 - (t) How many are in the Dungog Local Government Area?
 - (u) How many are in the Muswellbrook Local Government Area?
 - (v) How many are in the Singleton Local Government Area?
 - (w) How many are in the Upper Hunter Local Government Area?
- (113) How many land clearing investigations were commenced in the current financial year?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?
 - iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?
 - v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (114) How many were commenced in the financial year 24-25?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?
 - iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?

- v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (115) How many were commenced in the financial year 23-24?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?
 - iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?
 - v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (116) How many were commenced in the financial year 22-23?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?
 - iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?
 - v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (117) How many were commenced in the financial year 21-22?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?
 - iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?
 - v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (118) How many land clearing prosecutions are currently before the courts?
- (119) What is the average duration of a land clearing investigation from complaint receipt to regulatory outcome?

Environment Protection Authority - Forestry Operations

(120) How many active compliance investigations relating to Forestry Corporation operations are currently underway?

(a) What are the compartment numbers that are subject to investigation?

(121) Of those forestry-related investigations, how many relate to:

(a) Threatened species prescription breaches?

(b) Failure to identify or protect den trees?

(c) Logging within exclusion zones?

(d) Unauthorised harvesting during roading operations?

(e) Pollution incidents associated with forestry operations?

(122) How many complaints have the EPA received about Forestry Corporation operations in this financial year?

(123) How many forestry compliance investigations have been commenced in this financial year?

(a) How many have been concluded from this set?

i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?

ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?

iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?

iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?

v. How many resulted in no further action?

(124) How many complaints have the EPA received about Forestry Corporation operations in the 24-25 financial year?

(125) How many investigations were commenced in the financial year 24-25?

(a) How many have been concluded from this set?

i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?

ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?

iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?

iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?

- v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (126) How many complaints have the EPA received about Forestry Corporation operations in the 23-24 financial year?
- (127) How many investigations were commenced in the financial year 23-24?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?
 - iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?
 - v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (128) How many complaints have the EPA received about Forestry Corporation operations in the 22-23 financial year?
- (129) How many investigations were commenced in the financial year 22-23?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?
 - iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?
 - v. How many resulted in no further action?
- (130) How many complaints have the EPA received about Forestry Corporation operations in the 21-22 financial year?
- (131) How many were investigations commenced in the financial year 21-22?
- (a) How many have been concluded from this set?
 - i. How many resulted in a penalty notice?
 - ii. How many resulted in a prosecution?
 - iii. How many resulted in a stop-work or prevention notice?

- iv. How many resulted in a clean-up or restoration order?
- v. How many resulted in no further action?

Environment Protection Authority - Restructure

(132) What was the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the EPA as at 30 June 2021?

(a) How many of these FTE were allocated to compliance and enforcement functions?

(133) What was the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the EPA as at 30 June 2022?

(a) How many of these FTE were allocated to compliance and enforcement functions?

(134) What was the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the EPA as at 30 June 2023?

(a) How many of these FTE were allocated to compliance and enforcement functions?

(135) What was the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the EPA as at 30 June 2024?

(a) How many of these FTE were allocated to compliance and enforcement functions?

(136) What was the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the EPA as at 30 June 2025?

(a) How many of these FTE were allocated to compliance and enforcement functions?

(137) What is the total number of expected full-time equivalent (FTE) positions within the EPA at 30 June 2026?

(a) How many of these FTE were allocated to compliance and enforcement functions?

(138) Has any internal risk assessment been conducted regarding reduced compliance capacity as a result of the restructure?

Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp) - Wollemi National Park

(139) Does NPWS consider that responsibility for the ongoing maintenance, structural integrity and environmental management of the Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp) dam wall and immediately associated works rests with the approval holder or with NPWS?

(140) Does NPWS have any current statutory, contractual or practical maintenance or oversight responsibilities in respect of those works?

(141) What formal instrument, if any, authorises the continued presence and maintenance of those works within the national park estate?

(142) Has NPWS been notified of, consulted about, or otherwise become aware of any proposed or actual changes to Mining Purpose Leases, water supply work approvals, or water access licences associated with the Ganguddy dam wall and the former Kandos Cement Works pipeline infrastructure?

(a) When did NPWS first become aware of those changes or proposals?

(b) What consultation, if any, occurred with NPWS prior to those changes being made or proposed?

(c) What assessment has NPWS undertaken of the implications for the management of Wollemi National Park?

(143) Has NPWS participated in any inter-agency or whole-of-government discussions concerning the regulatory status, variation, cancellation or future use of the Ganguddy dam wall, associated Mining Purpose Leases, or related water infrastructure within Wollemi National Park?

(a) Which agencies were involved?

(b) What matters were discussed insofar as they related to park management?

(c) Has NPWS formed a view as to whether any proposed changes may affect infrastructure maintenance responsibilities or environmental management within the park?

Biodiversity certification

(144) Can you please provide a rationale for extending the biodiversity certification of the Growth Centres EPIs on 6 June 2025?

(a) Have you, or anyone from your office or department, had any interactions with anyone from lemma Patterson Premier Advisory regarding this biodiversity certification?

i. Who from your office or department have been party to these interactions?

ii. On what date/s did these interactions occur?

(b) Have you, or anyone from your office or department, had any interactions with anyone from Leamac Property Group regarding this biodiversity certification?

i. Who from your office or department have been party to these interactions?

ii. On what date/s did these interactions occur?

Biodiversity - credits

(145) Where have credit obligations for Southern Highlands Shale Woodland Threatened Ecological Community (also referred to as Southern Highlands Shale Forest and Woodland in the Sydney Basin Bioregion under the EPBC) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?

- ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?
- (c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?
- i. How much money was received by the Department?
 - ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?
 - iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(146) Where have credit obligations for Robertson Basalt Tall Open-forest Threatened Ecological Community (NSW listing) been discharged?

- (a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?
- (b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?
- i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?
 - ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?
- (c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?
- i. How much money was received by the Department?
 - ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?
 - iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(147) Where have credit obligations for Upland Basalt Eucalypt Forest Threatened Ecological Community (EPBC listing) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?

ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

i. How much money was received by the Department?

ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?

iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(148) Where have credit obligations for Robertson Rainforest Threatened Ecological Community (NSW & EPBC listing) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?

ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

- i. How much money was received by the Department?
- ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?
- iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(149) Where have credit obligations for Illawarra Lowlands Grassy Woodland Threatened Ecological Community (also referred to as Illawarra and south coast lowland forest and woodland ecological community under the EPBC) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

- i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?
- ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

- i. How much money was received by the Department?
- ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?
- iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(150) Where have credit obligations for Melaleuca armillaris Tall Shrubland Threatened Ecological Community (NSW listing) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?

ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

i. How much money was received by the Department?

ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?

iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(151) Where have credit obligations for Illawarra-Shoalhaven Subtropical Rainforest Threatened Ecological Community (NSW & EPBC listing) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?

ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

- i. How much money was received by the Department?
- ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?
- iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(152) Where have credit obligations for Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland (EPBC listing) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

- i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?
- ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

- i. How much money was received by the Department?
- ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?
- iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(153) Where have credit obligations for Hunter Valley Weeping Myall (Acacia pendula) Woodland (EPBC listing) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

- i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?
- ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

- i. How much money was received by the Department?
- ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?
- iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

(154) Where have credit obligations for Warkworth Sands Woodland of the Hunter Valley (EPBC listing) been discharged?

(a) How many credits have been discharged through purchase of actual credits in the market?

(b) How many have been discharged through non-credit payments for alternative services such as conservation projects?

- i. What are the specific projects that have been funded, either in part or in full, through the discharge of credit payments?
- ii. For each project, what was the evidence used to assure the BCT or Department that the project would achieve measurable benefits for this specific threatened entity?

(c) Has the Department received any funds through the discharge of credits for this threatened entity?

- i. How much money was received by the Department?
- ii. What were the projects that were proposed to be funded, either in full or in part, by the funds received?

- iii. What was the allocation of funds for each project that received funds?

Heritage listing

(155) What work are you undertaking in relation to a proposed heritage listing of the Bangalow Bowling Club?

Cenagen Waste

(156) Is the Energy from Waste (EfW) policy triggered by the thermal treatment of waste (including incineration, gasification or pyrolysis), regardless of whether the end product is electricity, heat, or a chemical fuel?

(a) Does the production of a chemical fuel (such as methanol) from waste-derived feedstock via gasification constitute energy recovery from waste for the purposes of the EfW policy?

(b) Is the determining factor under the EfW policy the nature of the waste treatment process (i.e. thermal treatment of waste), rather than the ultimate end product?

(c) What are the specific provisions of the EfW policy or associated guidance relied upon in answering?

(157) Has the EPA formed any preliminary, internal, or working view as to whether the Cenagen Pty Ltd Kandos facility, involving thermal gasification of approximately 450,000 tonnes per annum of waste-derived feedstock to produce syngas and methanol, would fall within the EfW policy framework?

(a) If yes:

i. On what date was that view first formed?

ii. Has that view been documented in writing?

iii. Has that view been communicated to any other NSW Government agency or Minister's office?

(b) If not, please explicitly confirm so.

Richmond River

(158) Is the minister aware of the mud that has been tested to be monosulfidic black ooze in the Richmond River, which can become toxic when disturbed as in a flood, and that mass fish kills are a regular feature of summer floods?

(159) Can the minister explain why the situation is deteriorating exponentially despite the Government's responsibility to ensure the health of the river?

(160) Can the minister explain why the river is so poor that swimming is not recommended at Woodburn, Coraki and Lismore?

Koala movements or translocations

(161) When will the review into koala translocations be finalised for public release?

(a) When was the preliminary, or non-final, report from this review provided to the koala translocation panel?

(162) Have any translocations been planned while the translocation program has been paused for review?

(a) How many potential translocations have been subject to development during the review period?

(163) Are there any current plans to move captive bred koalas from Port Macquarie Koala Hospital to the Richmond area?

(a) Have all necessary tests been conducted in the target areas to ensure that any Koalas moved from Port Macquarie will not die?

i. Do these tests include leaf testing for presence of specific nutrients and toxins?

ENERGY

EnergyCo and transmission line routes

(164) What was the date of the first advertisement of the previous (pre-October 2025) study corridor for the Hunter to New England Transmission line?

(a) What were the total number (lowest & highest potential) of private landholders expected to be impacted by this route?

(b) What was the total vertical distance (lowest & highest potential) as part of this study corridor?

(c) What was the total area (lowest & highest potential) of private land likely to be required if this study area were confirmed as the project area?

- i. What was the estimated area of land that had been previously cleared for non-conservation purposes?
- ii. What was the estimated area of land that would have been cleared that is not currently cleared?
- iii. What were the likely estimated impacted species and ecological communities that are listed as threatened, in NSW or under the EPBC, that would have been impacted by any necessary clearing if the study corridor became the project area?
- iv. What was the likely estimated impact, by numbers or area, on any threatened species or ecological community if this study corridor had become the project area?

(d) What was the total area (lowest & highest potential) of public land likely to be required if this study area were confirmed as the project area?

- i. What was the estimated area of land that had been previously cleared for non-conservation purposes?
- ii. What was the estimated area of land that would have been cleared that is not currently cleared?
- iii. What were the likely estimated impacted species and ecological communities that are listed as threatened, in NSW or under the EPBC, that would have been impacted by any necessary clearing if the study corridor became the project area?
- iv. What was the likely estimated impact, by numbers or area, on any threatened species or ecological community if this study corridor had become the project area?

(e) How was the likely impact of potential transmission lines in this study corridor on fire fighting operations expressed in any assessment?

- i. By what percentage would the transmission lines have reduced the effectiveness of operations?
 - (f) What was the total estimated cost of investigating this study corridor?
 - (g) What was the total estimated cost of the proposed project under this study corridor?
- (165) What was the date of the first advertisement of the current (post-October 2025) study corridor for the Hunter to New England Transmission line?
- (a) What are the total number (lowest & highest potential) of private landholders expected to be impacted by this route?
 - (b) What was the total vertical distance (lowest & highest potential) as part of this study corridor?
 - (c) What is the total area (lowest & highest potential) of private land likely to be required if this study area were confirmed as the project area?
 - i. What was the estimated area of land that had been previously cleared for non-conservation purposes?
 - (d) What was the total area (lowest & highest potential) of public land likely to be required if this study area were confirmed as the project area?
 - i. What was the estimated area of land that had been previously cleared for non-conservation purposes?
 - (e) How was the likely impact of potential transmission lines in this study corridor on fire fighting operations expressed in any assessment?
 - i. By what percentage would the transmission lines have reduced the effectiveness of operations?
 - (f) What is the total estimated cost of investigating this study corridor?
 - (g) What was the total estimated cost of the proposed project under this study corridor?

Questions from Hon Chris Rath MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)
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General Questions

CFMEU meetings

(166) Since 28 March 2023, have you met with the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU) that was not disclosed in accordance with the Premier's Memorandum M2015-05 Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information?

ETU meetings

(167) Since 28 March 2023, have you met with the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) that was not disclosed in accordance with the Premier's Memorandum M2015-05 Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information?

Ministerial disclosures to The Cabinet Office

(168) On what date did you last update/make a ministerial disclosure to the Premier and the Secretary of The Cabinet Office?

Workforce Mobility Placement (WMP) Program

(169) Is your respective portfolio department(s)/agency(s) taking part in the WMP program?

(a) If yes, what department(s)/agency(s)?

Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports

(170) Do you have plans to print the 2025-26 annual report(s) for each department / agency in your portfolio?

(a) If yes, what is the budgeted expenditure for printing for each department / agency?

Information Access Self-Assessment Tool and the Privacy Self-Assessment Tool

(171) As Minister, do you ensure that all your respective Department(s)/Agency(s) use the Information Access Self-Assessment Tool and the Privacy Self-Assessment Tool by the NSW Information and Privacy Commission?

Parliamentary Budget Office

(172) In relation to 2023 ALP election policy costings made to the Parliamentary Budget Office, what costings have been successfully fulfilled and/or implemented in your Department(s)/Agency(s) since 28 March 2023?

State Records Act

(173) Have you and your ministerial office had training and/or a briefing about the State Records Act from State Records NSW and/or The Cabinet Office and/or Premier's Department?

(a) If yes, when?

Department(s)/Agency(s) Gifts and Hospitality Register

(174) Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) have a gifts and/or hospitality register?

(a) If yes, is it available online?

(b) If yes, what is the website URL?

Ministerial staff disclosure of gifts and/or hospitality

(175) Does your ministerial office keep a register of gifts and/or hospitality for staff to make disclosures?

(a) If yes, what is the website URL?

(176) Have any staff members in your office been the recipient of any free hospitality?

(a) What was the total value of the hospitality received?

(b) Are these gifts of hospitality declared?

Ministerial Code of Conduct

(177) Since 28 March 2023, have you breached the Ministerial Code of Conduct?

(a) If yes, what was the breach?

Senior Executive Drivers

(178) As at 1 February 2026, how many senior executives in your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) have a driver?

GIPA Act - Disclosure Log & Ministerial Offices

(179) Does your Ministerial Office have a disclosure log in accordance with the Government Information (Public Access Act) 2009?

(a) If yes, what is the URL?

GIPA Act - Disclosure Log & Departments/Agencies

(180) What is the website URL for the Government Information (Public Access Act) 2009 disclosure log each of your portfolio department(s)/agency(s)?

TikTok

(181) Are you on TikTok?

(a) If yes, do you access TikTok from a NSW Government device?

Signal

(182) Are you on Signal?

(a) If yes, do you access Signal from a NSW Government device?

(b) If yes, does Signal comply with the State Records Act?

Mobile phone

(183) Do you have a mobile phone paid for by your ministerial budget?

(a) If yes, how many phones?

Communications and/or Media Training

(184) Since 28 March 2023, have you had communications and/or media training from an external stakeholder that included an invoice and payment paid for using your ministerial budget?

(a) If yes, what is the description of training?

(b) If yes, how much?

Parliamentary Secretary & Ministerial Vehicle

(185) Has your Parliamentary Secretary ever used a Ministerial driver from the pool?

(a) If yes, why?

Media releases and statements

(186) Are all the ministerial media releases and statements issued by you publicly available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases?>

(a) If no, why?

Overseas Travel

(187) As Minister, do you approve overseas travel for public servants from your portfolio department(s)/agency(s)?

Data Breaches

(188) Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) keep a register of data breaches in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection (PPIP) Act?

(a) If yes, what is the website?

Discretionary Fund

(189) As Minister, so you have a discretionary fund?

(a) If yes, what department(s) / agency(s) administer it?

(b) If yes, what is the website URL detailing expenditure?

(190) Airline Lounges

(a) Are you a member of the Qantas Chairmans Lounge?

(b) Are you a member of the Virgin Beyond Lounge?

Ministerial Overseas Travel

(191) Since 28 March 2023, have you formally applied to the Premier to travel overseas?

(a) If yes, was this application accepted?

Private Jet Charter

(192) Have you travelled on a private jet charter in your ministerial capacity?

(a) If yes, was this value for money for taxpayers?

Ministerial Office renovations

(193) Since 28 March 2023, has your Ministerial Office at 52 Martin Place been renovated?

(b) If yes, how much was the expenditure?

Conflict of Interest

(194) Since 28 March 2023, have you formally written to the Premier with a conflict of interest?

(a) If yes, why?

Senior Executives

(195) In your respective portfolio department(s)/agency(s), to date, what has been the percentage reduction of senior public service executive numbers since 1 July 2023?

Sponsorship

(196) Does your respective portfolio department(s)/agency(s) provide sponsorship (incoming and outgoing) to organisations?

(a) If yes, where are the details of this sponsorship reported/registered?

Political fundraising

(197) Have you hosted a political fundraiser in your Ministerial Office at 52 Martin Place?

ENERGY

NSW Energy Infrastructure Roadmap – Sydney Southern Ring (Bannaby to South Creek)

(198) In accordance with the 2022 Integrated System Plan (ISP), Transgrid identified in its ISP Preparatory Activities – Reinforcing Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong Supply (Southern Ring) June 2023 document, the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong area is responsible for three quarters of the demand for electricity for NSW, how far has the critical Southern Ring project progressed?

(199) Does the Sydney Southern Ring still plan to run a 500kV double circuit corridor between Bannaby Substation and a South Creek Substation via Greendale?

(200) In EnergyCo's Hunter Transmission Project Overview November 2023 it identifies the urgency of the Hunter Transmission Project given its status as one of the State's most critical energy projects with an image identifying the future Southern Ring Project, why is this Southern Ring Project not mentioned since?

(201) In Transgrid's System Security Roadmap 2023 the Hunter Transmission Project is listed with a delivery date of 2028, and the Sydney Southern Ring has a listed delivery date of 2031, are these delivery dates still valid?

(202) Given the immaturity of the New England REZ and the maturity of the HumeLink for unlocking the full capacity of Snowy 2.0 for the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong Supply, why is the urgency of the Sydney Southern Ring less than the New England REZ transmission link?

(203) Where is the development of the Illawarra REZ at, given its proximity to the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong Supply?

Port to Orana-Central West REZ Golden Hwy Corridor – Pinch Points

(204) What is the projected cost for improving the following 19 pinch points and intersections along the oversize and/or overmass (OSOM) route?

(a) Quayside Cl/Selwyn St?

(b) Selwyn St/George St/Industrial Dr?

(c) Industrial Dr/Pacific Hwy?

(d) John Renshaw Dr onto Hunter Ewy eastbound exit ramp?

- (e) New England Hwy/Mitchell Line of Rd (Golden Hwy)?
 - (f) Golden Hwy (Mitchell Line of Rd)/Putty Rd?
 - (g) Jerry Plains Rd/Putty Rd?
 - (h) Golden Hwy/Lonsdale St?
 - (i) Pringle St/Golden Hwy?
 - (j) Jerrys Plains Rd (Golden Hwy)/Denman Rd?
 - (k) Denman Rd/Bengalla Rd?
 - (l) Wybong Rd/Golden Hwy?
 - (m) Golden Hwy/Vinegaroy Rd?
 - (n) Golden Hwy/Black Stump Way?
 - (o) Golden Hwy/Castlereagh Hwy?
 - (p) Golden Hwy/Bolaro St?
 - (q) Golden Hwy/Spring Ridge Rd?
 - (r) Castlereagh Hwy/Barneys Reef Rd?
 - (s) Golden Hwy/Saxa Rd?
- (205) What is the individual projected cost for the eight new pullover bays along the OSOM route?
- (a) Jerrys Plains - on Golden Highway near petrol station?
 - (b) Hollydeen - on Wybong Road?
 - (c) Sandy Hollow - on Golden Highway near bus service?
 - (d) Merriwa - west of Glenroy Road?
 - (e) Merriwa - east of Pembroke Road?
 - (f) Uabry near Tongy Road?
 - (g) Golden Highway east of Back Creek?
 - (h) Near Dunedoo - west of Clay Gully?

(206) Is the expected total cost of the \$115.5 million Newcastle Port Logistics Precinct part of the expected total cost of the \$128.5 million Port to Orana Central West REZ Project, or a stand alone cost?

New England REZ Transmission Corridor

(207) The Rouchel area experienced an anthrax outbreak in 2007. Anthrax spores survive in soil for over 100 years. Construction earthworks risk releasing dormant spores, posing a direct threat to construction workers, local residents, and livestock. No comprehensive biosecurity assessment has been undertaken. What has EnergyCo done to address this community concern?

(208) The proposed transmission lines would be located in the exact area where RFS aircraft currently scoop water from Lake Glenbawn. Fixed-wing firefighting aircraft require 5 nautical miles clearance from transmission infrastructure. If this corridor proceeds, Lake Glenbawn becomes unusable for aerial firefighting in one of NSW's most bushfire-prone regions. How is EnergyCo addressing these community concerns?

(209) The corridor passes over the 370-million-year-old Timor Caves, home to 12 bat species including the endangered Large-eared pied bat. EnergyCo's environmental assessment mentioned only ONE of these 12 species. Up to 3,000 hectares of forest may require clearing. What has EnergyCo done to address these community concerns?

(210) The Upper Hunter is the world's second-largest thoroughbred breeding region. The corridor cuts through the Equine Critical Industries Cluster, formally recognised under NSW planning policy. This industry contributes \$2.4 billion to NSW and \$5 billion nationally. The Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association has formally opposed this corridor. Will EnergyCo ensure this critical cluster is not impacted?

(211) EnergyCo's "access roads" are actually goat tracks. The terrain between Sargeant's Gap Road and Niangala is at 1313m elevation, with 93km through snow zones and 170+ wet construction days annually. This route is not fit for purpose, how does EnergyCo expect to deal with this reality?

EnergyCo Contractors Misconduct

(212) Three EnergyCo staff misrepresented themselves to landholders as "water borers". Only when challenged did they identify themselves as EnergyCo representatives. This behaviour has fundamentally destroyed community trust. Will this misconduct be addressed?

(213) The Upper Hunter community assesses EnergyCo is pressuring landholders to participate in refining the corridor from 3km to 1km. They have formally requested that EnergyCo cease this activity, but the pressure continues. This is adding immeasurably to community distress. Will this be addressed?

EnergyCo Consultation Concerns

(214) There was a six-consultation period over Christmas that was less than ideal. Will this be improved in future?

(215) Critical reports have been released 48 hours before consultation submission deadlines. Can deadlines or report release dates allow for more effective consultation?

(216) EnergyCo has provided heavily redacted documents to the Upper Hunter community which is seen to hamper the consultation process. Can maximum transparency be provided to the community?

New England Renewable Energy Zone

(217) How many renewable energy projects located within the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) are currently in the NSW planning system, and what is their combined proposed generation capacity (in MW or GW)?

(218) How many projects within the New England REZ have been withdrawn from the NSW planning system, and what is the total generation capacity of those withdrawn projects?

(219) How many projects located within the New England REZ have received underwriting under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, including Long-Term Energy Service Agreements (LTESAs), and what is the combined capacity of those projects?

- (220) How many projects within the New England REZ are currently under construction, and what is their total generation capacity?
- (221) How many projects in the New England REZ have reached financial close for construction, and what is their total generation capacity?
- (222) Given that the Thunderbolt Wind Farm has not reached financial close more than a year after receiving an offer of federal underwriting under the Capacity Investment Scheme, will the NSW Government provide any additional financial assistance to support the project?

New England REZ - Transmission Capacity & Network Planning

- (223) What is the estimated remaining generation capacity (in MW or GW) that can be accommodated within the New England REZ before existing transmission capacity becomes saturated?
- (224) Has the Government undertaken any updated cost-benefit analysis comparing one, two or three 500 kV circuits for the New England REZ, and if so, will that analysis be tabled?
- (225) What assumptions has EnergyCo used regarding future generation mix (wind vs solar vs storage) when determining the required transmission capacity for the REZ?
- (226) What steps is the Government taking to ensure that new transmission infrastructure in the New England REZ will be fully utilised once constructed?
- (227) What is the estimated cost to NSW electricity consumers of constructing one, two or three 500 kV transmission lines in the New England REZ?
- (228) How does the Government reconcile its proposed transmission build-out for the New England REZ with AEMO's Draft Integrated System Plan, which suggests that later stages of the project may not be in the long-term interests of consumers?
- (229) Has the Government sought formal advice from AEMO on whether the second and third stages of transmission expansion in the New England REZ are still justified?

- (230) Will the Government publish any correspondence or advice received from AEMO regarding the optimal transmission capacity for the New England REZ?
- (231) Will EnergyCo commit to constructing one or two 500 kV transmission lines for the New England REZ, as referenced in the BCDRF documentation?
- (232) Will the Government rule out the construction of a third transmission line that would increase total network capacity to 8 GW, as referenced in the same documentation?
- (233) Can the Government confirm whether it is assessing whether the second stage of transmission development—expanding capacity from 2.4 GW to 6 GW—is in the long-term interests of consumers, as suggested in Appendix 5 of the Draft Integrated System Plan?
- (234) When will affected landowners receive certainty regarding whether one, two, or three transmission lines will ultimately be required for the New England REZ?

New England REZ Transmission Infrastructure Corridor Design

- (235) Regarding the Bulk Corridor Design Refinement Report for the New England Renewable Energy Zone network infrastructure project, published by EnergyCo in November 2025:
- (a) What is the total cost of technical studies, modelling, landowner engagement and design work undertaken on the original corridor since 2022, and how much of this expenditure is now considered sunk due to the decision to shift to a new corridor?
- (b) The report states that the comparative findings for the new corridor are “indicative only” and “subject to change”. Please outline what environmental risks remain unassessed in the new corridor and when these assessments will be completed.
- (c) EnergyCo asserts that the new corridor will reduce costs and accelerate delivery, yet the report confirms that detailed engineering has not been completed for the new alignment. Please provide the cost modelling, risk analysis and schedule modelling that supports these claims.

(d) Please provide the full analysis supporting the claim that the new corridor will enable energisation up to 18 months earlier, including assumptions, modelling inputs and sensitivity testing.

Equine Critical Industry Cluster

(236) Why has EnergyCo selected a new corridor for the New England REZ transmission infrastructure that still intersects the Equine Critical Industry Cluster, despite the industry's repeated warnings about noise, helicopter operations, and construction impacts on high-value horses?

(237) What specific protections are being offered to equine businesses now affected by the new corridor—businesses that were previously told they would not be impacted under the original alignment?

(238) Did EnergyCo conduct any comparative economic analysis of the impacts on the equine industry before deciding to shift the corridor eastward?

(a) If so, can this analysis be provided?

(b) If not, why not?

Status of the 2020 NSW–Commonwealth MoU (“NSW Energy Package”)

(239) Has the Memorandum of Understanding titled *NSW Energy Package*, signed with the Federal Government dated 31 January 2020, been annulled, amended, or superseded by any subsequent agreement or intergovernmental arrangement?

(240) If the MoU remains in effect, which commitments—financial, regulatory, or delivery-related—are still operative, and which have lapsed or been overtaken by later policy decisions?

(241) Does the Government still consider the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone to be a “Pilot Zone... designed to test and improve a delivery model for Renewable Energy Zones that minimises costs to consumers and the governments,” as stated in the 2020 MoU?

(242) Given that the estimated cost of the Central West Orana REZ has increased from \$675 million to more than \$5.5 billion, does the Government

consider that the Pilot Zone has validated the delivery model originally envisaged?

- (243) Has the Government undertaken any formal assessment of whether the Pilot Zone has achieved its stated objective of minimising costs to consumers and governments

Central West Orana REZ - Implications for Electricity Affordability

- (244) Will the Government conduct a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Central West Orana REZ on electricity affordability once the zone is completed and renewable generation is operating within it, before applying the same delivery model to the New England REZ?

- (245) How much does the Government expect the cost recovery for network investments required for the Central West Orana REZ—including synchronous condensers, enabling works, and all associated transmission infrastructure—to add to consumer electricity bills once construction is complete?

- (246) What reduction in wholesale electricity prices does the Government expect the Central West Orana REZ to deliver, and does the Government anticipate that these reductions will be sufficient to offset the increased network charges?

- (247) Does the Government consider that the Central West Orana REZ will have validated a delivery model suitable for replication in the New England REZ if the net effect is an increase in electricity bills for NSW customers?

- (248) Has the Government identified any shortcomings, failures, or inefficiencies in the delivery model used for the Central West Orana REZ that will require changes before applying the model to the New England REZ?

- (249) What specific elements of the Central West Orana REZ delivery model—procurement, governance, sequencing, risk allocation, community engagement, or cost estimation—have been flagged for revision

- (250) Given that the Commonwealth had committed to "enter into negotiations with Transgrid to underwrite, facilitate, or otherwise financially support Transgrid to undertake the planning, construction, and commissioning works

to deliver the Pilot Zone transmission infrastructure by 2022" why did the NSW government not proceed to allow this federally funded Pilot to proceed with Transgrid?

De Energisation of Transmission Lines During Bushfires

(251) In the event of a bushfire affecting an area containing high voltage transmission lines, what is the standard timeframe between:

- (a) notification of the fire to the transmission network operator; and
- (b) confirmation that the 500 kV transmission lines are fully de energised and safe for aerial or ground-based emergency operations?

(252) What technical or operational factors may delay or prevent the de-energisation of a 500 kV backbone transmission line during an active bushfire event?

(253) In the last five years, how many times has a 500 kV transmission line in New South Wales been de energised specifically to facilitate:

- (a) a resident evacuation; or
- (b) a rescue operation on private property?
- (c) For each such instance, will the Minister provide the location, year, and duration of the de-energisation?

THE ENVIRONMENT

Composite power poles and impacts on carbon footprint.

(254) Which providers are supplying Essential Energy with composite poles? Are any interstate suppliers being used?

- (a) Are they being constructed and transported from interstate?
- (b) Have the current suppliers been able fulfill the exact power pole demand for Essential Energy? Have there been any delays or supply issues?

(255) Did Cabinet consider the downstream impact on energy infrastructure procurement – including power pole supply – when approving the Great Koala National Park?

(256) Were other utility providers such as Ausgrid and Endeavor Energy consulted about the impact of removing 176,000 hectares of productive forest on future pole supply?

(a) You are also the Minister for Energy, why wasn't this a priority?

(257) Has the Government assessed whether composite pole procurement will increase network capital expenditure – and therefore future network charges?

(258) Regional customers are being told price increases are necessary to fund the energy transition.

How does transitioning away from renewable hardwood toward composite materials reduce bills or emissions?

(259) Is there any modelling by your agency showing that substituting hardwood poles for composites improves bushfire resilience?

(a) A report published by the Department of Energy titled "Assessment of Commercial Composite Power Pole Performance in 2021" found that:

(b) Composite utility poles currently make up about 1% of the total deployed utility poles globally and that the "primary disadvantages are poor fire resistance, higher cost and unproven long-term use" pg 11. So again, what evidence do you have that supports a major infrastructure change when composite poles are considered a liability in bushfires?

(c) Have you considered that the forestry decisions under your Environment portfolio will directly increase network costs under your Energy portfolio?

(d) As shareholder Minister of a state-owned corporation, what direction have you given Essential Energy regarding the procurement of NSW-sourced renewable timber products?

(e) Do you accept that hardwood poles grown and harvested under regulated conditions store carbon for decades in the network?

(f) If composite poles are manufactured using energy-intensive industrial processes, how does that align with your Government's stated goal of lowering embodied emissions in infrastructure?

(g) Minister, can you explain to regional households why they are paying climate levies through their power bills while your policies increase power prices and increase carbon emissions in the electricity network?

Natural Resource Commission and Great Koala National Park:

(260) Relating to the report 'Koala response three years after harvesting' - November 2025:

(a) Minister, did you have access to this report before announcing the conversion of 176,000 hectares of state forest into a national park?

(b) Given the report states there was "*no significant effect of selective timber harvesting on male koala density three years after harvesting*" ... on what scientific basis did you justify ending harvesting to "protect koalas"?

(c) How do you reconcile your announcement with the finding that national park sites experienced a **32% decline** in mean male koala density, compared with just **5% in state forests**...?

(d) If harvesting is not the primary driver of koala decline, as your own research indicates, why was it treated as the central justification for this policy decision?

(e) Was this report considered in determining the size of the proposed Great Koala National Park – and if it was my did you select the option with the biggest impact on industry and the worst outcome for koalas?

(f) Why was a moratorium imposed when the Government's own independent research found no detectable harvesting impact on koala populations?

(g) This report was released in November and shows harvesting has no impact on Koalas.. what evidence are you currently using to keep the moratorium in place?

(h) Did your department include the independent advice that national park control sites experienced a substantially larger decline in koala density than harvested state forest sites before making the announcement on the 7 September?

- (i) If drought, fire and canopy dieback are identified as likely drivers of decline, why is active forest management being reduced rather than strengthened?
 - (j) Minister, was this decision based on science – or was the science simply inconvenient to a pre-determined political outcome?
- (261) What is date for introduction of the Great Koala National Park legislation?
- (262) How many hectares were logged within the proposed Great Koala National Park boundary between March 2023 and September 2025?
- (263) How many koala habitat clearing approvals were issued in:
- (a) 2023,
 - (b) 2024, and
 - (c) 2025?
- (264) What is the total cost of business continuity payments to timber workers impacted by the creation of the Great Koala National Park?
- (a) How many are currently receiving payments
 - (b) Is there an exit plan for these workers?
- (265) Will the Minister please confirm whether the establishment and management funding for the Great Koala National Park is contingent upon revenue from the Commonwealth's ACCU scheme?
- (266) If the NSW Government's plan to develop the Great Koala National Park relies on the federal government's Australian Carbon Credit Units program, what happens to the Great Koala National Park if the ACCU is not operational by July 2026?
- (267) If anticipated ACCU revenue does not eventuate, what alternative funding sources has the Government identified to ensure the GKNP proceeds as planned?
- (268) Can the Minister guarantee that the creation and management of the Great Koala National Park will proceed regardless of ACCU market performance?

**Improved Native Forest Management in Multiple-use Public Native Forests
Carbon Method:**

(269) As the Minister responsible for overseeing the Improved Native Forest Management in Multiple-use Public Native Forests Carbon Method and also noting the following statement from Timber Queensland; ‘Timber Queensland regards this method, as proposed by the NSW government, as a deliberate politically motivated attempt to curb sustainable public native forestry activities and to create an opportunity to misuse the Emissions Reduction Fund to separately fund its previously stated goal of creating a Greater Koala national park, despite the myriad of technical and policy flaws associated with the method’ :

(a) Are they correct in their assessment of this proposed method by the NSW Government?

(b) Minister, can you confirm that the National Parks and Wildlife Service commissioned the development of the Improved Native Forest Management carbon method?

(c) Was NPWS the contracting agency responsible for engaging the method developer – yes or no?

(d) NPWS has a statutory mandate to expand and manage the national park estate. Do you agree?

(e) If this method is approved, NPWS – as land manager – would be eligible to generate and sell ACCUs from the cessation of timber harvesting in state forests. Is that correct?

(f) So the same agency that stands to receive financial benefit from stopping harvesting commissioned the method that creates that benefit – is that accurate?

(g) What probity measures were put in place to manage the clear financial interest of NPWS in the development of this method?

(h) Was an independent probity adviser appointed during method development?

(i) Will you table all conflict-of-interest declarations made by officials involved in commissioning and overseeing this method?

(j) The National Parks agency was commissioned a carbon method that financially rewards it for stopping timber harvesting - the same agency stands to receive millions in carbon credits if harvesting ends. Are you comfortable with your government robbing the private sector to fund the public sector?

(270) Minister, is it appropriate to have an agency designing a carbon scheme that pays itself. It claims “additional” abatement from a government policy decision. Why should anyone have confidence in the integrity of this scheme or how the government plans to fund policy decisions?

Coal Fired Power Stations - Unplanned Outages:

(271) Have Origin Energy provided estimates for the expected number of unplanned outage hours at Eraring coal-fired power station in:

- (a) 2026
- (b) 2027
- (c) 2028
- (d) 2029

(272) How many unplanned outage hours are expected at Eraring coal-fired power station in:

- (a) 2026
- (b) 2027
- (c) 2028
- (d) 2029

(273) Have AGL provided estimates for the expected number of unplanned outage hours at Bayswater coal-fired power station in:

- (a) 2026
- (b) 2027
- (c) 2028

(d) 2029

(274) How many unplanned outage hours are expected at Bayswater coal-fired power station in:

(a) 2026

(b) 2027

(c) 2028

(d) 2029

(275) Have EnergyAustralia provided estimates for the expected number of unplanned outage hours at Mount Piper coal-fired power station in:

(a) 2026

(b) 2027

(c) 2028

(d) 2029

(276) How many unplanned outage hours are expected at Mount Piper coal-fired power station in:

(a) 2026

(b) 2027

(c) 2028

(d) 2029

(277) Have Delta Electricity provided estimates for the expected number of unplanned outage hours at Vales Point coal-fired power station in:

(a) 2026

(b) 2027

(c) 2028

(d) 2029

(278) How many unplanned outage hours are expected at Vales Point coal-fired power station in:

- (a) 2026
- (b) 2027
- (c) 2028
- (d) 2029

Electricity Bill Relief

(279) What is the total electricity bill relief/concessions provided to NSW households in FY2025-26, by program?

Renewable Energy Zones

(280) What is the current installed renewable energy capacity in NSW (GW),

- (a) and projected additions to 2030?

(281) What is the current total cost estimate for each Renewable Energy Zone versus original estimates at declaration?

Native Forest Management

(282) What is the status of the federal Improved Native Forest Management method?

- (a) And expected determination date?

(283) How many hectares of native vegetation were cleared under the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme by local government area in:

- (a) FY2024-25, and
- (b) FY2025-26 year to date?

Camping Fees and Contracts

(284) What is the outcome of the Supported Camping in NSW national parks - DOC24/483356 tender?

(285) How many responses to the EOI were received?

(286) How many responses from existing providers of services on National Parks property were received?

- (287) Will pricing for supported camping sites be regulated or capped to ensure affordability for families and low-income visitors?
- (288) Has the Department conducted an impact assessment on how supported camping contracts may affect casual or self-sufficient campers?
- (289) Will existing National Parks campgrounds be reduced, reclassified or reprioritised to accommodate supported camping operators?
- (290) Are there any minimum public access guarantees written into contracts?

Annual Report and Budget

- (291) What accounts for the \$200 million shortfall in actual sale of goods and services from contracts with customers listed in the DCCEEW Annual Report?
- (292) Was the \$200 million variance in sale of goods and services revenue attributable to over-forecasting, delayed projects, contract terminations, or lower-than-expected demand?
- (293) Has the Department revised its forward estimates to reflect this variance, and if so, by how much?
- (294) An unexpected \$10 million additional revenue from retained taxes, fees and fines - what is the explanation for that?
- (295) What specific categories of taxes, fees or fines contributed to the \$10 million increase above budget?
- (296) Was this increase the result of new enforcement activity, higher penalty rates, or higher-than-anticipated non-compliance?
- (297) What accounted for the approximately 1,300 staffing head count increase between FY23-24 and FY24-25?
- (298) Were any performance bonuses, executive KPIs, or program delivery targets linked to the original revenue projections?
- (299) Has the Department adjusted its future compliance or revenue assumptions in light of this variance?

Dorrigo National Park World Heritage Listing

- (300) What steps in the Department taking to bolster the Federal Government's application to designate Dorrigo National Park as a world heritage item?
- (301) Has the Department provided scientific, ecological or heritage assessments to assist the nomination, and if so, what have these assessments concluded?
- (302) Is the Department engaging with local communities, Traditional Owners, or stakeholders to ensure their input is reflected in the nomination process?
- (303) Has the Department allocated any additional funding or resources to facilitate the World Heritage nomination?
- (304) What is the current timeline for the nomination process, and what role will the Department play at each stage?
- (305) Has the Department identified any risks or challenges that may affect the success of the nomination, and what mitigation measures are being implemented?

Energy from Waste

- (306) Under the NSW Energy from Waste (EfW) Policy Statement, is regulatory capture determined by the thermal treatment process applied to the waste itself, irrespective of whether the resulting product is electricity, gas, or synthetic fuel?
- (307) For the purposes of the NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement, does the EPA treat incineration, gasification, plasma arc processes and other high-temperature conversion technologies applied to mixed municipal or commercial waste as forms of thermal treatment captured under the EfW framework?
- (308) If mixed waste is thermally converted into syngas and subsequently synthesised into methanol or other fuels, does the downstream synthesis step alter whether the facility is captured under the EfW framework?
- (309) Does the EfW framework contain any exemption for facilities that manufacture transport fuels from mixed waste via thermal processing?

- (a) If a transport fuel provision exists, does it relate only to the use of fuel once produced rather than to its manufacture from waste?
- (310) In the context of State Significant Development, at what stage does the EPA determine whether a proposed facility is captured under the EfW framework – prior to SEARs being issued, during SEARs, or only following submission of an Environmental Impact Statement?
- (311) Does the EfW framework apply to facilities that thermally process mixed waste regardless of whether energy is exported to the grid or embedded in a manufactured fuel product?
- (312) Are there any circumstances in which a facility that thermally processes mixed municipal or commercial waste would not be captured under the EfW framework?
- (a) If so, what are those circumstances?
- (313) Has the Government considered updating the EfW Policy Statement to address emerging waste-to-fuel technologies, including syngas-to-methanol processes?
- (314) Can the Minister confirm whether facilities producing transport fuels from mixed waste are subject to the same location and cap restrictions as other EfW facilities under the Infrastructure Plan?

O'Reilly Electricity Check-up

- (315) How many of the 54 recommendations from the O'Reilly Electricity Check-Up have been fully implemented?

Gas

- (316) The NSW Consumer Energy Strategy, released in September 2024, committed to delivering a "Gas Decarbonisation Roadmap" by late 2026, the Government's website states: "Gas will likely remain an important fuel source for some sectors." Public consultation was supposed to occur in 2025. Can the Minister please confirm whether that public consultation has been completed?
- (317) Is the Gas Decarbonisation Roadmap on track to be delivered by late 2026?

HERITAGE

Ravensthorpe Homestead Buildings

(318) What is the date of last condition assessment of Ravensthorpe Homestead buildings?

(319) Could the Minister please provide a summary of findings?

(320) What is the date of Wannarua Traditional Owner Scott Franks' request for a meeting?

(321) What was the Minister's response?

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

(322) What is the net exhibition floor space in the approved design versus pre-closure, in square metres?

Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs)

(323) In the absence of a coordinated national monitoring program of the native wildlife killed by SGARs, the existing data comes from research programs funded and conducted by academics. Despite the limitations that these programs have faced, studies have consistently shown that SGARs are having deadly implications on wildlife, disrupting entire ecosystems. Given that the NSW government has not committed to banning the sale and use of SGARs, and has ruled out nominating SGARs as a key threat to biodiversity, will you consider investing funding for targeted research programs to systematically monitor wildlife exposure and wildlife deaths, so we can understand the true scale of the problem in NSW?

(324) What is the Minister doing to ensure the EPA is taking pesticide misuse seriously, not just rodenticides but all pesticides, given the alarming impact on native wildlife and biodiversity?

Climate impact of intensive animal agriculture

(325) As the Minister for Climate Change, what action have you taken to address the climate, biodiversity and environmental impacts of intensive animal agriculture?

(a) What data does the NSW government collect to monitor the climate, biodiversity and environmental impacts of intensive animal agriculture?

(326) Given that livestock is responsible for the majority of NSW's agricultural emissions, with enteric methane from ruminant livestock being the largest source at 71% according to the most recent data from DCCEEW, what actions is the NSW government taking to reduce emissions from animal agriculture to meet NSW's net zero targets?

NSW Gas Decarbonisation Roadmap

(327) Is DCCEEW developing a separate strategic plan to provide both financial and technical support for the industrial sector, namely small-medium industries, to decarbonise from gas?

(a) If so, when and how is this being developed, what will be the consultation process, and when will it be released?

Vales Point Power Station

(328) What action has been taken to ensure Vales Point Power Station gradually reduces its pollution the longer it operates so that it complies with the Group 6 emission standards under the Clean Air Regulation?

(329) Will you commit to requiring Vales Point Power Station to comply with the Group 6 emission standards under the Clean Air Regulation?