

Ms Tanya Bosch  
Director  
Budget Estimates  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
SYDNEY 2000

Dear Ms Bosch

I refer to your correspondence, received by me on 26 September, concerning the Estimates Committee hearing of 20 September, 2005.

The answers to questions taken on notice as highlighted in the transcript are set out below.

1) Page 3 and 4 - Liverpool Transitway

Patronage for bus services on the Liverpool-Parramatta Transitway has shown a marked increase as popularity of the services increases. The increased patronage for the year ended January 2005 was 60.8 per cent and from January to August 2005 it was 21.2 per cent.

It's the Government's responsibility to ensure affordable, safe, viable transport for the NSW public.

No public transport system exists to generate a profit.

2) Page 5 – B & N window cleaner

I refer the Committee to my previous answer to question number 1983.

I am advised that Dr Garvan, who at the time was State Transit's consultant doctor, has not acknowledged that correlation between any symptoms expressed by cleaning staff and the products in question. I am further advised that all cleaners were invited to report to him if they had any health concerns. State Transit's records do not show that any cleaners took up this offer.

3) Page 8 and 9 – *Collaroy* incident drug testing

I refer the Committee to my statement made in Parliament on 22 September 2005.

4) Page 8 – Spending on the *Collaroy*

I am advised that, for the financial year 2004/05 Sydney Ferries invested more than \$4.3 million in maintenance and repairs to the *Collaroy* including approximately \$3.3 million for a major docking, mechanical overhaul and safety survey of the vessel.

5) Page 10 – Sydney ferries internal incident reports

I refer the Committee to my statements made in Parliament on 22 September 2005 and 11 October 2005.

6) Page 10 – *Collaroy*

Sydney Ferries Corporation advises:

The *Collaroy* vessel has been removed from service 20 times between 19 September 2004 and 19 September 2005.

Reasons include fuelling, maintenance and other operational reasons including sea trials and incidents on the public record.

7) Page 11 – OTSI investigations

I refer the Committee to the answer I gave at the Hearing recorded on Page 11 of the transcript.

8) Page 12 – Transportation of ferry workers

I remind the Committee that as I stated during the recent Budget Estimates hearing, 20 September 2005, I wrote to all of the transport agencies in August this year regarding taxi usage, reminding them that we have to ensure appropriate vigilance with regard to taxpayer's funds and the use of taxis is no exception.

Accordingly, I requested assurances from the agencies that appropriate measures have been established to monitor organisational expenditure, including approval, monitoring and cost minimization procedures for taxi use and the agencies will be reporting to me on those measures shortly. I will be requesting that all agency CEOs report to me on taxi use on a monthly basis.

Some form of taxi use by all of our agencies is to be expected, however, I have made it very clear to my agency heads that I expect that taxi expenditure to be minimised and to be accounted for and very carefully considered.

Sydney Ferries Corporation operational staff beginning work before 5:00am and finishing after 12:00 midnight are entitled to transport between home and work, paid for by Sydney Ferries, under their negotiated Enterprise Agreement.

At all other times, public transport use is encouraged.

I am advised that Sydney Ferries has recently awarded a contract, following an open tender process, for the provision of these out-of-hours taxi services to achieve the best possible deal for NSW taxpayers.

I am advised this has resulted in a saving of approximately \$100,000 per year.

9) Page 19 – CountryLink coach services

I am advised:

CountryLink has 33 contracts with coach operators to provide services to around 200 destinations throughout rural and regional New South Wales. The total value of these contracts is in the order of \$11.3 million per annum.

10) Page 27 – Delegations to China

The Government's New Export Opportunities Program provided \$800,000 in 2004-05 to assist NSW companies investigate and enter new overseas markets. Trade missions and market visits are a key element of this program.

In 2004-05, the program supported 52 trade missions and market visits to a total of 20 countries, including China.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

John Watkins MP  
**Deputy Premier**  
**Minister for Transport**  
**Minister for State Development**