



**Chris Hartcher MP**  
Minister for Resources and Energy  
Special Minister of State and  
Minister for the Central Coast

## **QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PORTFOLIO OF SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE, AND THE CENTRAL COAST**

**25 OCTOBER 2011, 12.15 pm – 1.00 pm**

**Questions from the Hon Amanda Fazio MLC**

### **QUESTION 1**

In regard to Wallarah 2 Coal Project, at a rally held on the 28 of January 2009 the then Opposition Leader (now Premier) stated "The next Liberal National Government will ensure that mining cannot occur here, will ensure that mining cannot occur in any water catchment area and will ensure that any mining leases and mining exploration permits reflect that common sense... no ifs, no buts, a guarantee! Do you acknowledge that you and the Premier have broken your promises to the people of the Central Coast?

### **ANSWER**

No new application for the Wallarah 2 Coal Project has been lodged.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 2**

Yesterday in Estimates the Deputy Premier stated "proponents of a mining development, which has not yet been decided, would have some sort of expectation... that some sort of development would ensue and that some sort of return on their investment would follow."

- a. Considering that Kores is now submitting a new application for the project site, how can you rule out a coal mine application?
- b. Was the Deputy Premier misleading the Estimates committee?
- c. Have you or staff of your ministerial office been approached by proponents of or Lobbyists of the Korean Government agency Kores?

## **ANSWER**

No new application for the Wallarah 2 Coal Project has been lodged.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

**QUESTION 3**

What type of special legislation will be used to assess Mining Projects on the Central Coast in future?

**ANSWER**

All applications are considered on their merit and in accordance with Government policy.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

#### **QUESTION 4**

Why is the Central Coast different from other parts of the state?

- a. How will this "special legislation" fit in with the review of planning act and the Strategic Land Use Policy and the Minister for Planning's review of the Planning Act?

#### **ANSWER**

All applications are considered on their merit and in accordance with Government policy.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 5**

Opposition you told local ABC 92.5 FM program presenter Scott Levi, that the Central Coast has 5% of the State's population, so it should receive 5% of the State's Budget. What percentage of the Budget did the Central Coast receive, given the massive cut in road funding and not one new school, fire station, police station or ambulance station in the recent Budget?

## **ANSWER**

NSW Budget papers 2011-12 are available at <http://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/>

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 6**

When will the Maternity Ward at Wyong Hospital return to full service as promised by the Member for Wyong and the Member for The Entrance?

- a. What steps are being taken to recruit the necessary staff?
- b. Will this be a 24hr service 7 days a week?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Health.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 7**

Can you advise where the Central Coast Conservation Plan and North Wyong Structure plan is up to?

- a. When will the public get the opportunity to comment on the Conservation Plan?
- b. When will the final version of the structure plan be released to give greater planning certainty to the Northern Central Coast?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and the Minister for the Environment.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 8**

The previous Government invested \$309M in Roads funding for the Central Coast over the 2007 - 2011 period. According to the Minister for the Central Coast's Budget Press Release the O'Farrell Government is committing \$200M over the next four years, that's a \$100M cut. Can you outline the new timelines for the upgrade of the Pacific Hwy through Wyong, the West Gosford Intersection, the Ourimbah to Lisarow Pacific Hwy upgrade, the Kariong F3 Interchange and the Lisarow to Manns Rd Upgrade all identified in the Central Coast Transport Plan given that you've cut the Central Coast Roads budget by more than one third?

## **ANSWER**

Analysis of the 2010-11 Budget papers reveals that while the Keneally Government promised to spend \$100 million on Central Coast roads, actual expenditure fell way short of the mark.

With \$47 million promised for the ongoing upgrade to the Central Coast Highway at Erina Heights and Wamberal in 10-11, actual expenditure was only \$31 million.

**Chris Hartcher MP**



## **QUESTION 9**

Is the O'Farrell Government committing to implement the Central Coast Transport Strategy?

- a. If not, can you tell us which projects from the document the Government will support and which are being shelved?
- b. There was no money, for example, allocated for the North Warnervale Railway Station - has this been scrapped or pushed out into the future?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Transport.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

### **QUESTION 10**

Is the O'Farrell Government committed to supporting the Central Coast Regional Development and Employment Strategy. (REDES)?

- a. Have you held an update meeting?
- b. What progress has been made on achieving the targets in the REDES Strategy?

### **ANSWER**

(a) – (b) Yes.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 11**

The previous Government created the \$5M Central Coast Advantage Fund to assist in attracting investment and strengthening business opportunities for the Central Coast. Can you give us a breakdown on how that money is being expended and how many new jobs have been created since March 2011?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Trade and Investment and the Minister for Planning.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 12**

The 2011/12 O'Farrell Budget allocated \$2M to upgrade the intersection of Wyong Rd and Pacific Hwy at Tuggerah. Given that the Members for Wyong and The Entrance appeared in the Central Coast Express Advocate 7th June, asking the public to comment on the RTAs plan for that intersection which will cost an estimated \$50 - 60M, what is the Government actually committing to do?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

**QUESTION 13**

If it is not the full upgrade, can the Minister explain how the Tuggerah Town Centre Plan can proceed, including the Westfield Development without creating traffic chaos?

**ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 14**

Tuggerah Railway Station was scheduled for a \$5M upgrade including the installation of new lifts under the Easy Access Program. Can you explain why work suddenly stopped after the March election even though one new canopy had been installed and architects had visited the site to do designs for the lifts?

- a. Also can you explain why after more than a year since completion why CityRail still has not taken possession of the \$5M commuter car park from the Dept of Commerce?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Transport.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

**QUESTION 15**

Will the O'Farrell Government commit to the Member for Gosford, Chris Holstein's call to fully fund the dredging of the Channel into Brisbane Waters?

**ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 16**

When will the biocertification process be completed on the Warnervale Town Centre site?

- a. Given there was no money in the 2011/12 Budget for construction of the intersection with Sparks Rd what is the current timeline for beginning construction of the main access road and will the O'Farrell Government guarantee the \$2M secured by the previous Government for that project?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

- (a) This question should be directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

**Chris Hartcher MP**



## **QUESTION 17**

Can you guarantee funding for the Central Coast Regional Development Corporation?

- a. Why hasn't the Government supplemented their funding this financial year?
- b. How can the CCRDC be expected to deliver on The Landing and City Link projects without a substantial funding boost?

## **ANSWER**

This question should be directed to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 18**

Can the Government explain why Central Coast unemployment remains well above the State average of 5.5% at 8.5% as at September 2011?

## **ANSWER**

The Honourable Member may wish to raise the Federal Government's mismanagement of the economy and related unemployment rates with her Federal colleagues.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 19**

In the latest September Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force data the Central Coast unemployment rate jumped from 7.3% to 8.5%;

- a. What is the Government doing to address this unsustainable level of unemployment?
- b. What policies are in place to improve job creation on the Central Coast?

## **ANSWER**

The Honourable Member may wish to raise the Federal Government's mismanagement of the economy and related unemployment rates with her Federal colleagues.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 20**

What is being done to assist the youth of the Central Coast find work given the very high level of unemployment of 29.2% recorded in September?

## **ANSWER**

The Honourable Member may wish to raise the Federal Government's mismanagement of the economy and related unemployment rates with her Federal colleagues.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

**QUESTION 21**

Minister, how many submissions and representations have you made to Cabinet as the Minister for Central Coast?

**ANSWER**

In my capacity as the NSW Minister for Resources and Energy, Special Minister of State and Minister for the Central Coast, I have made a number of submissions and representations to Cabinet.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 22**

How many staff are employed in your office to support you in your role as Minister for Central Coast?

## **ANSWER**

Ministerial staff numbers are publicly available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## QUESTION 23

### Phones

- a. How many blackberries does DPC assign to your Ministerial staff and to whom have they been issued?
- b. How many iPads does DPC assign to your Ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?
- c. How many iPads have you purchased for your office and to whom have they been issued?
- d. How many iPhones does DPC assign to your Ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?
- e. How many iPhones have you purchased for your office and to whom have they been issued?
- f. For each phone or device, how much was each bill from April to October?
- g. How many phones or devices have been lost in your office?
- h. What is the cost of replacing those phones or devices?

## ANSWER

I am advised:

(a) – (e)

For all Ministerial Offices, there is a total of:

- i. Blackberries – 151
- ii. iPads – 19
- iii iPhones - 3

(f) Ministerial Offices in the NSW Government from April 2011 to October 2011 spent a total of \$88,902. This compares with \$238,567 spent under the previous NSW Government from October 2010 to March 2011.

(g) – (h) For all Ministerial Offices in the NSW Government, there has been one stolen phone, which cost \$577 (ex GST) to replace.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 24**

### **Media and Public Relations**

- a. How many media or public relations advisers are employed for each of your portfolio agencies?
- b. What is the forecast for 2011-12 for the number of media or public relations advisers to be employed and their total cost?
- c. How many media or public relations advisers are employed in your ministerial office?

## **ANSWER**

(a) – (b)

Agency staff numbers are in accordance with Government guidelines.

(c) Ministerial staff numbers and salary bands are available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website.

**Chris Hartcher MP**



## **QUESTION 25**

### **Overseas Trips**

- a. Have any of your overseas trips in the past year been paid for in part or in full by using public money?
- b. If so, did any of your relatives or friends accompany you on these trips?

## **ANSWER**

(a) – (b)

Information regarding Ministerial travel is available on the relevant Minister's appropriate agency website, in accordance with Ministerial Memorandum M2009-10 'Release of Overseas Travel Information'.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## QUESTION 26

### Office Costs

- a. What is the annual remuneration package for your chief of staff?
- b. What is the annual remuneration package for your head media advisor?
- c. What is the annual remuneration package for each of your staff?
- d. What is the estimated expenditure for your office budget in 2011-12?
- e. Have any office renovations or fit outs been undertaken in your ministerial office since April?
- f. If so, could you give details of contracted costs?
- g. What is your office budget?
- h. How many political advisors are in your office?
- i. How many administration staff?
- j. How many Department Liaison officers are assigned to your office?
- k. How many staff in the Department are assigned to Ministerial support duties?

## ANSWER

(a) – (c) & (h) – (i)

Ministerial staff numbers and salary bands are available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website.

(d) & (g)

Based on actual expenditure patterns, total forecast expenditures for all Ministerial offices are set out to be \$36,900,000 in 2011/12. This compares to \$47,046,453 spent by the former NSW Government from April 2010 to March 2011.

(e) & (f) Yes. Contracted costs total \$3,006.

(j) I refer the Honourable Member to the answer to the Question on Notice from the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Hunter, and Vice-President of the Executive Council representing the Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney – LC 0681—Premier—DEPARTMENTAL LIASION OFFICERS, that details this information as at 7 August 2011.

(k) Each Minister is provided with a Ministerial driver.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 27**

Cabcharge

- a. In terms of your ministerial office, how much did your office spend on taxi fares, including Cabcharge since April?

## **ANSWER**

I am advised:

For all Ministerial offices, the cost of Cabcharge was \$38,806.38 over 6 months from April 2011 to September 2011.

This is compared with the cost of \$78,023.11 in the 6 months of the previous NSW Government from October 2010 to March 2011.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 28**

### **Restructure**

- a. Are any of your portfolio agencies undergoing a restructure?
- b. How many jobs are expected to be cut as a result of that restructure?
- c. How many people are expected to have their wages cut as a result of that restructure?
- d. How many voluntary redundancies are expected to be offered as a result of that restructure?

## **ANSWER**

(a) – (d) No.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 29**

### **Agency Costs**

- a. What is your agency's catering budget?
- b. Since April, has the agency changed its branding?
- c. How much was spent on rebranding the agency?
- d. How much has been spent on stationary?

## **ANSWER**

All agency costs are in accordance with Government guidelines.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

### **QUESTION 30**

Correspondence

- a. How long is the average turnaround for responding to correspondence in your agency?
- b. How many pieces of correspondence have been outstanding for more than 60 days?

### **ANSWER**

(a) & (b)

I am advised:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet's recommended time frame for completing responses to correspondence from Ministers, Members of Parliament and members of the public is 20 working days from the Department's receipt of the correspondence.

However, it is not always possible to comply with this time frame for any number of reasons including: the nature and complexity of the matter; stakeholder consultation; or further information required from other Departments and sources.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

### **QUESTION 31**

Paying bills on time

- a. Since April, on how many occasions has the agency not paid a supplier or contractor for more than 30 days?
- b. How many bills have been outstanding for longer than that period?

### **ANSWER**

All payments are made in accordance with Government guidelines.

**Chris Hartcher MP**

## **QUESTION 32**

Grants to non-government organisations

- a. Does your department provide recurrent grant funds to non-government organisations?
- b. If yes,
  - i. What are the names of all organisations in receipt of funding?
  - ii. What is the total amount of funding received by each organisation, including goods and services tax?
  - iii. On what date was the funding advanced?
  - iv. What was the purpose for each grant or funding advance?
  - v. Was any funding withheld or returned?
  - vii. If so, what were the reasons for withholding or requiring the funding to be returned?
  - viii. What is the indexation rate applied to non recurrent grant funds in 2011/2012?

## **ANSWER**

NSW Government agencies provide grants to local government councils and a range of non-government, non-profit organisations for the purpose of providing a service to the community or to undertake a project of benefit to the community.

Grants administration in New South Wales occurs within the legal and regulatory framework under which the NSW Government operates.

All Government Departments and authorities are required to publish details of grants made to non-government organisations in their annual report. The requirements are set out in Premier's Memorandum 91-34.

This policy has not changed since the change of Government.

**Chris Hartcher MP**



### **QUESTION 33**

Feasibility studies, audits, taskforces or reviews

- a. Is your department currently undertaking any feasibility studies, audits, taskforces or reviews,
- b. If so;
  - i. What are the terms of reference or details of each study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - ii. Who is conducting the study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - iii. Was each study, audit, taskforce or review was publically advertised seeking expression of interest or competitive tenders?
  - iv. Is there a contract in place detailing terms of engagement for the study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - v. What is the timeline of each study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - vi. What are the details of any costs involved in each study, audit, taskforce or review?

### **ANSWER**

As with previous NSW Governments, the Government undertakes feasibility studies, audits, taskforces and reviews to inform government decision making.

A number of feasibility studies, audits, taskforces and reviews are currently being undertaken across the NSW Government.

**Chris Hartcher MP**