

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No 4
ESTIMATES 2009-10
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Questions relating to the portfolio of Small Business:

QUESTION

Mr IAN COHEN: Could you give a few examples of your successes in the Tweed reflecting on the north of New South Wales?

Mr BUFFIER: I could not give that specifically in terms of case studies, but I will take that on notice and give you a response to that. Today I cannot give you specific examples.

ANSWER

Industry & Investment NSW has provided assistance to several small businesses in northern NSW for marketing, product development and packaging through the New Market Expansion and Business Sustainability Programs, including: Afends Clothing, a producer of street-wear fashion clothing and accessories, 2die4 Live Foods, a producer of specially fermented and processed nuts and seeds, and New Beach Media, a Byron Bay based online media broadcaster and provider of digital interactive services.

The Department is also currently working with two Queensland-based companies to assist them with relocating to and establishing in the Tweed area.



Steve Whan MP
Minister for Small Business

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Mr IAN COHEN: You may want to take this on notice. Do you have a list of businesses in northern New South Wales that have been assisted through that mechanism?

Mr CULLEN: That is something we need to take on notice and talk to Industry Capability Network (ICNNSW) about.

ANSWER

Values of contracts secured by individual ICN clients are confidential. However, I am advised that in 2008-2009 ICNNSW secured \$18.885m of contracts for the northern NSW Region.

The ICNNSW Northern Region office works with the NSW Department of Commerce and prime contractors to identify local businesses for infrastructure projects in the region. These projects include the Narrabri Hospital, Shannon Creek Dam project, Grafton and Nambucca sewage projects, Grafton Hospital and the Keepit Dam upgrade.

ICNNSW Sydney has employed a Research Officer to develop a database of suppliers and contractors specifically for regional NSW construction projects. A qualified listing of 160 New England and 353 North Coast companies has been developed and provided to the managing contractors.



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Minister for Small Business**

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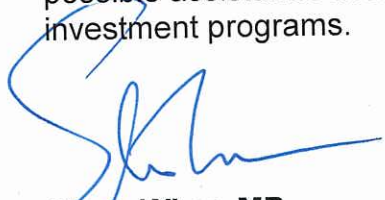
Mr IAN COHEN: For example, there are tax incentives for large wind farms, which is an interesting debate at this point in time. However, there are no similar tax incentives for small- to medium-sized wind farm developments, which are suitable for small farms and small communities. Do you have any information about supporting that type of initiative?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I would have to take it on notice as to whether we can offer any direct support to those.

ANSWER

Industry & Investment NSW offers assistance to firms wishing to establish or expand with the aim of generating investment and jobs in regional NSW.

Any business interested in establishing a wind farm operation that will create jobs in regional NSW is encouraged to contact Industry & Investment NSW to discuss possible assistance available through the Department's regional development and investment programs.



**Steve Whan MP
Minister for Small Business**

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**General Purpose Standing Committee No 4
Budget Estimates 2009-2010
Questions taken on notice**

Questions relating to the portfolio of Emergency Services

The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

QUESTIONS:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What was the \$10 million required for and is this the first time that the brigades have had to request extra money? An inquiry has been established to find out why that money was required and where the money went, and the report is due to be presented in October. What was the problem?

Mr STEVE WHAN: The review will try to identify the cost drivers that caused the budget blow-out.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: What were those cost drivers?

Mr STEVE WHAN: They relate to things such as workers compensation coverage.

Mr HOST: I would like to take that question on notice. There were some additional costs for death and disability expenses.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Last year's annual report indicated that six full-time officers and eight retained officers received partial and permanent income and twelve off-duty retained officers received income. What happened this year that caused the \$10 million blow-out?

Mr HOST: I cannot answer that specifically at this time. I would like to take the question on notice.

ANSWER:

The NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) did not request funding supplementation from Government. It simply requested an increase in its Net Cost of Services by \$10 million in 2008/09.

In recent years, improved efficiencies in back office administrative areas of NSWFB have enabled an increased proportion of the budget to be spent on front-line services to the community.

The strategy of maximising front-line expenditure necessarily requires NSWFB to run a tight budget in its administrative areas, which leaves limited capacity to absorb additional unbudgeted costs.

One such item that cannot be budgeted accurately is Workers Compensation

hindsight premium adjustments which are calculated during the year based on numerous variables including actuarial assessments and the last five years' performance within its defined pool of agencies.

In 2008/09, these payments exceeded the allocated budget by \$7.4 million. There was also a \$5.8 million unfunded insurance premium increase. The balance was offset by an increase in revenue receipts.



Steve Whan MP

Minister for Emergency Services

**General Purpose Standing Committee No 4
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The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

QUESTIONS:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: How many people are currently being paid by the New South Wales Fire Brigades who cannot work while these issues are being resolved?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I am not sure it is about not working while the issues are being resolved. Obviously, some people are receiving compensation, but the cost over-run is not their fault.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: No, I am interested because I have had a lot of people come to me as the shadow Minister, the Opposition spokesperson, saying a lot of jobs are not being done, decisions are not being made within fire brigades, that a lot of people, whether by injury, mental illness or under stress, or whatever, are not fulfilling their work duties. They are on leave but are still being paid. Do you know how many are in that category?

Mr BENSON: No, I am not sure of the exact numbers. I can take that on notice.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: You will take that on notice?

Mr BENSON: Yes. But what I can say is, to the best of my knowledge, no position is currently not occupied facilitating their role. There would always be either a relieving person in that area or we would backfill it.

ANSWER:

As at September 2009, the NSWFB has 91 employees who are unfit for normal duties as a result of work related illnesses or injuries. This number fluctuates from month to month.



Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services

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QUESTIONS:

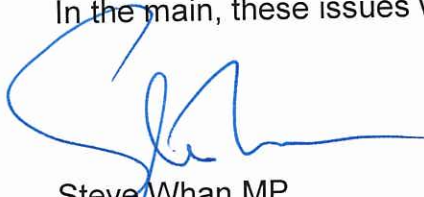
The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Do you list where the complaints have been? Do you have a record of those, where there has been an issue?

Mr FITZSIMMONS: If there is an issue we typically address it, and where that is a reference to the caller we can only work with the limited information on the caller. If there is an anomaly in the boundary or the geographic reference we tailor that as a correction into the system so it is picked up next time. John would be more authoritative on the detail of the system but I cannot recall too many examples in recent times where we have had some issues with that type of response. But I would be happy to have a look at any of them.

ANSWER:

In 2008-09, there were 21,317 emergency calls were passed to the RFS by the NSWFB Communications Centres. Of these, in only 63 incidents were issues raised concerning the notification of the RFS.

In the main, these issues were due to location mapping anomalies.



Steve Whan MP

Minister for Emergency Services

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The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC

Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I have some information in relation to some problems with the delivery of some all-wheel drives. They have been doing some work out at Kariong. The six-inch differential in the area capacity between a four-wheel drive and all-wheel drive is causing some problems. I will leave that question on notice.

Mr FITZSIMMONS: I would be happy to get more details about that query because I have not heard anything on that. I know there was a period of time with the cab chassis on particularly the larger appliances—the transfer cases on the four-wheel drives were a few inches lower and we worked with the manufacturers in the new cab chassis to bring up the transfer cases—

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: When was that?

Mr FITZSIMMONS: It would be in the last few years in terms of the build range, and basically that meant that the approach and departure angles, or the over angles, as they are off-road—some of the transfer cases were a little bit lower than on the previous models. We are subject to national and international standards. All the new cab chassis now are starting to align with Euro standards, so there are changes in the cab chassis and then we adapt the bodies to suit those programs. I am not aware of the all-wheel drive issue, but I would welcome the example.

Answer:

The all-wheel-drive system introduced by Isuzu in 2003 requires a larger transfer box resulting in lower ground clearance.

The “traditional” selectable four-wheel-drive uses a smaller transfer box and therefore has a higher ground clearance.

The RFS is not aware of any widespread concerns regarding ground clearance. However, a Hino alternative is available if increased ground clearance is needed in any particular district.



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Minister for Emergency Services

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Question:

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Can you find out how many have come in during the last financial year to now?

Mr STEVE WHAN: What category of tanker are we talking about?

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: All-wheel drive and four-wheel drive.

Mr STEVE WHAN: In all categories of tankers?

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Yes.

Mr FITZSIMMONS: I can tell you really quickly that in the current year we are delivering 209 trucks across New South Wales and last year there were 200 and something—

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: There were 259 according to the annual report.

Mr FITZSIMMONS: So we would have the programs on where those are.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: If I could find out for each of those two financial years where they are, where they have been sent to and what they are?

Mr STEVE WHAN: For those with all-wheel drive?

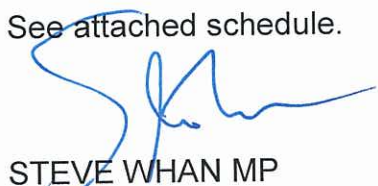
The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: And four-wheel drive. A list of information on the 209 and the 259 would be good.

Mr STEVE WHAN: The actual locations of where the 209 for this year are going have not been signed off yet, so I am not sure if we will be able to get that back to you in terms of brigades in the next 21 days.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: But could you provide the information for the other 259? I did have a question for Mr Tannos.

Answer:

See attached schedule.



**STEVE WHAN MP
Minister for Emergency Services**

RFS TANKER BUILD SCHEDULE 2007-2008
Cat 1 Dual Cab Multi-purpose

District	Brigade	No.	Cat	Type
Barwon Darling Zone		1	1 D/C	Multi
Forbes		2	1 D/C	Multi
Hume Zone		3	1 D/C	Multi
Lower Western Zone		4	1 D/C	Multi
MIA Zone		5	1 D/C	Multi
Narrabri		6	1 D/C	Multi
Narromine		7	1 D/C	Multi
Narromine		8	1 D/C	Multi
Wellington		9	1 D/C	Multi
Wollondilly		10	1 D/C	Multi

Cat 1 Single Cab Grasslands

Bland Temora Zone		11	1 S/C	Grass.
Bland Temora Zone		12	1 S/C	Grass.
Bland Temora Zone		13	1 S/C	Grass.
Bland Temora Zone		14	1 S/C	Grass.
Bland Temora Zone		15	1 S/C	Grass.
Forbes		16	1 S/C	Grass.
Hay		17	1 S/C	Grass.
Parkes		18	1 S/C	Grass.
Parkes		19	1 S/C	Grass.
Riverina Zone		20	1 S/C	Grass.
Riverina Zone		21	1 S/C	Grass.
Riverina Zone		22	1 S/C	Grass.
Riverina Zone		23	1 S/C	Grass.
Riverina Zone		24	1 S/C	Grass.
Riverina Zone		25	1 S/C	Grass.
South West Slopes Zone		26	1 S/C	Grass.
South West Slopes Zone		27	1 S/C	Grass.
South West Slopes Zone		28	1 S/C	Grass.

Cat 1 Dual Cab Village

Blacktown		29	1 D/C	Village
Blue Mountains		30	1 D/C	Village
Camden		31	1 D/C	Village
Clarence Valley Zone		32	1 D/C	Village
Coffs Harbour		33	1 D/C	Village
Coffs Harbour		34	1 D/C	Village
Dungog		35	1 D/C	Village
Eurobodalla		36	1 D/C	Village
Eurobodalla		37	1 D/C	Village
Fairfield		38	1 D/C	Village
Gosford		39	1 D/C	Village

Great Lakes		40	1 D/C	Village
Hawkesbury		41	1 D/C	Village
Hawkesbury		42	1 D/C	Village
Hawkesbury		43	1 D/C	Village
Lachlan		44	1 D/C	Village
Lake Macquarie		45	1 D/C	Village
Lake Macquarie		46	1 D/C	Village
Liverpool		47	1 D/C	Village
Moree Plains		48	1 D/C	Village
Moree Plains		49	1 D/C	Village
Penrith		50	1 D/C	Village
Port Stephens		51	1 D/C	Village
Port Stephens		52	1 D/C	Village
Shoalhaven		53	1 D/C	Village
Sutherland		54	1 D/C	Village
Sutherland		55	1 D/C	Village
Sutherland		56	1 D/C	Village
Sutherland		57	1 D/C	Village
Wingecarribee		58	1 D/C	Village
Wollongong		59	1 D/C	Village
Wyong		60	1 D/C	Village
Wyong		61	1 D/C	Village

Cat 2 Dual Cab

Gloucester		62	2 D/C	Multi
Gosford		63	2 D/C	Multi
Kyogle		64	2 D/C	Multi
Lismore		65	2 D/C	Multi
Shellharbour		66	2 D/C	Multi
Tamworth Regional		67	2 D/C	Multi
Upper Lachlan		68	2 D/C	Multi
Warrumbungle		69	2 D/C	Multi

Cat 7 Single Cab

Bega Valley		70	7 S/C	Multi
Bellingen		71	7 S/C	Multi
Bland		72	7 S/C	Multi
Campbelltown		73	7 S/C	Multi
Campbelltown		74	7 S/C	Multi
Clarence Valley Zone		75	7 S/C	Multi
Clarence Valley Zone		76	7 S/C	Multi
Coffs Harbour		77	7 S/C	Multi
Coffs Harbour		78	7 S/C	Multi
Coffs Harbour		79	7 S/C	Multi
Cudgegong		80	7 S/C	Multi
Dubbo		81	7 S/C	Multi
Dubbo		82	7 S/C	Multi
Gilgandra		83	7 S/C	Multi
Goulburn Mulwaree		84	7 S/C	Multi
Hawkesbury		85	7 S/C	Multi
Hume Zone		86	7 S/C	Multi
Hume Zone		87	7 S/C	Multi
Lake Macquarie		88	7 S/C	Multi

Lake Macquarie		89	7 S/C	Multi
Murray		90	7 S/C	Multi
Nambucca		91	7 S/C	Multi
New England Zone		92	7 S/C	Multi
North West Zone		93	7 S/C	Multi
North West Zone		94	7 S/C	Multi
Penrith		95	7 S/C	Multi
Riverina Highlands		96	7 S/C	Multi
Riverina Highlands		97	7 S/C	Multi
Riverina Zone		98	7 S/C	Multi
Shoalhaven		99	7 S/C	Multi
South West Slopes Zone		100	7 S/C	Multi
South West Slopes Zone		101	7 S/C	Multi
Tamworth Regional		102	7 S/C	Multi
Tamworth Regional		103	7 S/C	Multi
Tamworth Regional		104	7 S/C	Multi
Tamworth Regional		105	7 S/C	Multi
Upper Hunter		106	7 S/C	Multi
Upper Hunter		107	7 S/C	Multi
Upper Hunter		108	7 S/C	Multi
Warrumbungle		109	7 S/C	Multi

Cat 7 Dual Cab

Ballina		110	7 D/C	Multi
Bellingen		111	7 D/C	Multi
Bellingen		112	7 D/C	Multi
Blue Mountains		113	7 D/C	Multi
Blue Mountains		114	7 D/C	Multi
Blue Mountains		115	7 D/C	Multi
Byron		116	7 D/C	Multi
Canobolas Zone		117	7 D/C	Multi
Canobolas Zone		118	7 D/C	Multi
Dungog		119	7 D/C	Multi
Greater Taree		120	7 D/C	Multi
Greater Taree		121	7 D/C	Multi
Hastings		122	7 D/C	Multi
Hornsby		123	7 D/C	Multi
Inverell		124	7 D/C	Multi
Kempsey		125	7 D/C	Multi
MIA Zone		126	7 D/C	Multi
Muswellbrook		127	7 D/C	Multi
Nambucca		128	7 D/C	Multi
Penrith		129	7 D/C	Multi
Penrith		130	7 D/C	Multi
Severn Glen Innes		131	7 D/C	Multi
Shoalhaven		132	7 D/C	Multi
Singleton		133	7 D/C	Multi
Tenterfield		134	7 D/C	Multi
Tweed		135	7 D/C	Multi
Warringah		136	7 D/C	Multi
Warringah		137	7 D/C	Multi
Warringah		138	7 D/C	Multi
Wingecarribee		139	7 D/C	Multi

Wingecarribee		140	7 D/C	Multi

Cat 9

Bellingen		141	9	Multi
Bellingen		142	9	Multi
Blacktown		143	9	Multi
Central Darling Zone		144	9	Multi
Clarence Valley Zone		145	9	Multi
Clarence Valley Zone		146	9	Multi
Cudgegong		147	9	Multi
Cudgegong		148	9	Multi
Cudgegong		149	9	Multi
Cudgegong		150	9	Multi
Cudgegong		151	9	Multi
Cudgegong		152	9	Multi
Cudgegong		153	9	Multi
Greater Taree		154	9	Multi
Hastings		155	9	Multi
Hastings		156	9	Multi
Hawkesbury		157	9	Multi
Lake Macquarie		158	9	Multi
Lithgow		159	9	Multi
Lithgow		160	9	Multi
Lithgow		161	9	Multi
Liverpool		162	9	Multi
Lower Western Zone		163	9	Multi
New England Zone		164	9	Multi
New England Zone		165	9	Multi
New England Zone		166	9	Multi
Richmond Valley		167	9	Multi
Shoalhaven		168	9	Multi
Wingecarribee		169	9	Multi
Wyang		170	9	Multi
Wyang		171	9	Multi
Wyang		172	9	Multi
Yass Valley		173	9	Multi

Cat 11

Warringah		174	11	Village

Extra tankers

Corowa		175	9	Multi
Goulburn Mulwaree		176	7 S/C	Multi
Canobolas		177	7 D/C	Multi
Jerilderie		178	1 D/C	Multi
Leeton		179	1 D/C	Multi
Eurobodalla		180	1 D/C	Village
Bega Valley		181	1 D/C	Village
Lake Macquarie		182	1 D/C	Village
Lower Western Zone		183	1 D/C	Multi

Canobolas		184	1 S/C	Grass.
Jerilderie		185	1 S/C	Grass.
Canobolas		186	2 D/C	Multi

Second Hand Tankers

Donating District	Receiving	No.	Type	
Wyong	Palerang	187	1 D/C	
Wyong	Glen Innes	188	1 D/C	
Camden	LowerNorthCoast	189	1 D/C	
Dungog	Wellington	190	1 D/C	
Baulkham Hills	SWG	191	1 D/C	
Baulkham Hills	SWG	192	1 D/C	
Campbelltown	MIA Zone	193	1 D/C	
Hornsby	SWG	194	1 D/C	
Hunter Zone	Snowy River	195	1 D/C	
Hunter Zone	Tumut	196	1 D/C	
Hunter Zone	Lachlan	197	1 D/C	
Hunter Zone	Parkes	198	1 D/C	
Penrith	Coonamble	199	1 D/C	
Penrith	Oberon	200	1 D/C	
Ku-Ring-Gai	SouthWestSlope	201	1 D/C	
Sutherland	Hume	202	1 D/C	
Sutherland	Corowa	203	1 D/C	
Sutherland	MIA Zone	204	1 D/C	
Wyong	Carrathool	205	1 D/C	
Barwon Darling Zone	Weddin	206	1 D/C	
Blue Mountains	Goulburn	207	1 D/C	
Eurobodalla	Corowa	208	1 D/C	
Eurobodalla	Hume	209	1 D/C	
Eurobodalla	Yass Valley	210	1 D/C	
Eurobodalla	SWG	211	1 D/C	
Eurobodalla	SWG	212	1 D/C	
Barwon Darling Zone	Canobolas	213	1 D/C	
Hawkesbury	Bathurst	214	1 D/C	
Hawkesbury	Bathurst	215	1 D/C	
Hawkesbury	Bathurst	216	1 D/C	
Hawkesbury	Cobar	217	1 D/C	
Hunter Zone	Gundagai	218	1 D/C	
Port Stephens	MIA Zone	219	1 D/C	
Port Stephens	Unicorporated	220	1 D/C	
Lake Macquarie	Carrathool	221	1 D/C	
Lake Macquarie	Walgett	222	1 D/C	
Lake Macquarie	Carrathool	223	7 S/C	
Gosford	Lachlan	224	1 D/C	
Gosford	Lachlan	225	1 D/C	
Wingecarribee	Canobolas	226	1 D/C	
Wingecarribee	Canobolas	227	1 D/C	
Baulkham Hills	Lachlan	228	2 D/C	
Baulkham Hills	NorthWestZone	229	2 D/C	
Baulkham Hills	Parkes	230	2 D/C	
Liverpool	Yass	231	2 D/C	
Hawkesbury	Hume	232	2 D/C	
Hawkesbury	NorthernTablelands	233	2 D/C	

Wollondilly	Parkes	234	2 D/C	
Wollondilly	Yass	235	2 D/C	
Wollondilly	RiverinaHighlands	236	2 D/C	
Sutherland	Snowy River	237	2 D/C	
Bellingen	Upper Lachlan	238	7 S/C	
Bellingen	Bombala	239	7 S/C	
Bellingen	Southern Table.	240	7 S/C	
Coffs Harbour	Bombala	241	7 S/C	
Bellingen	North West Zone	242	7 D/C	
Campbelltown	Deniliquin	243	7 D/C	
Campbelltown	MIA Zone	244	7 D/C	
Bega Valley	Carrathool	245	7 S/C	
Shellharbour	Cooma	246	7 S/C	
Wyong	Snowy River	247	7 S/C	
Bega Valley	Carrathool	248	7 S/C	
Bega Valley	Cobar	249	7 S/C	
Eurobodalla	Cobar	250	7 S/C	
Eurobodalla	Cobar	251	7 S/C	
Hawkesbury	Central Darling	252	7 S/C	
Coffs Harbour	Wellington	253	7 S/C	
Blue Mountains	Wellington	254	7 S/C	
Blue Mountains	Wellington	255	7 S/C	
Hornsby	Canobolas	256	7 S/C	
Wingecarribee	Canobolas Zone	257	7 D/C	
Engineering	Palerang	258	1 D/C	
Coffs Harbour	Canobolas	259	2 D/C	

**General Purpose Standing Committee No 4
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Questions relating to the portfolio of Emergency Services

The Hon Ian Cohen MLC

QUESTION:

Could you advise whether people with hearing impairment can access triple-0 through text messages?

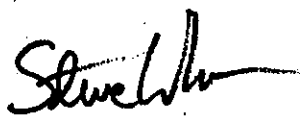
Is a failure to provide such a service a breach of the *Disability Discrimination Act*?

ANSWER:

Australia has two emergency call numbers, Triple Zero (000) and 106, the latter for the hearing- and speech-impaired community. Calls to 106 are made from a teletypewriter or through a computer modem. There is no capability to send an emergency call to 106 or Triple Zero using SMS text messages.

Over the last five or more years, NSW Fire Brigades and all other Emergency Services across Australia have unsuccessfully lobbied the Commonwealth regulator of the Emergency Call Service, the Australian Communications and Media Authority, to allow the use of SMS messages for the hearing and speech-impaired community.

Although it is recognised that SMS is a 'store and forward' technology with no guarantee of prompt message delivery, allowing emergency call text messaging to 106 would significantly improve accessibility for the hearing and speech-impaired community when away from their homes.



Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services

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The Hon Ian Cohen MLC

QUESTION:

Mr IAN COHEN: With regard to the Hotspots Fire Project, given that the initial \$1 million allocated to get the program up and running has now run out, and given the success of the project, will the Rural Fire Service be allocating funding for the project in 2009-10?

Mr STEVE WHAN: The Commissioner can add to this. It is a very positive project. We are providing funding through the Conservation Council for its work. I know that the Hotspots project is separate to that. But we provided some funding towards the Conservation Council. We have received a letter from the Hotspots proponents, and we have yet to respond to that. But I will hand over to either Mr Tannos or Commissioner Fitzsimmons, who may be able to add to that.

Mr FITZSIMMONS: I would have to check it—and I am happy to get back to you—but I understand there was a request for an increase in funding. At this stage what we are looking at doing is continuing with the funding we have to further the program, and we are evaluating the ability to increase the funding further. We are yet to respond to that.

ANSWER:

Yes.



Steve Whan MP
Minister for Emergency Services

**General Purpose Standing Committee No 4
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The Hon Ian Cohen MLC

QUESTION:

How many prosecutions have occurred, if any, in situations where there are no smoke alarms?

ANSWER:

Local Government is legislated as the Regulatory Authority for NSW smoke alarm legislation and is responsible for compliance.



Steve Whan MP

Minister for Emergency Services