

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p2**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Minister, given that Leila Alavi was turned away up to a dozen times from women's refuges in the months before her estranged husband allegedly stabbed her to death, do you think your Government's restructure of women's refuges under Going Home Staying Home has been a failure?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** This is Minister Hazzard's responsibility. Minister Hazzard was here yesterday. Women's refuges play an important role in responding to women escaping domestic violence. I am advised that funding for homelessness services has increased and that this additional funding is being injected into the service system to make it stronger and to increase places. I am advised that under the specialist homelessness services program the total budget for specialist homelessness services delivered through non-government organisations in New South Wales has grown from \$135 million in 2012-13 to a record \$182 million in 2015-16.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** You have previously answered questions about women's refuges. Is there some problem with answering them this time?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I have just given you an answer. Women's refuges play an important role in responding to women in crisis but they are just one pathway of support. They are not the answer for all women experiencing domestic violence. Not all women choose to go to a refuge. Alternatives to a refuge are Staying Home Leaving Violence, temporary accommodation, accommodation subsidies through Start Safely and outreach through domestic and family violence services.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** As the Minister for Women, are you not concerned that someone was turned away 12 times from a women's refuge?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that question on notice.

**ANSWER:**

Every death of a woman is a tragedy. I won't be commenting on individual cases which may be subject to court proceedings.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p2**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Have you investigated whether Linda Locke attempted to access any refuges, given that the Police found documents suggesting that she had approached domestic violence specialists?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: You do not know whether she was able to access a refuge?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** You have asked about a particular case and I will take it on notice.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Maybe one of the bureaucrats, the departmental officer, could assist you.

**Ms KOFF:** I would have to take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

Every death of a woman is a tragedy. I won't be commenting on individual cases which may be subject to ongoing criminal investigation.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p3**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Given that Linda was the second woman to die that week from domestic violence, following the tragic death of a young woman in rural New South Wales earlier in the week, did you take any action that week to ascertain whether women are able to access a refuge if they need one?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** You would know whether you took action to ascertain whether there were any spots in refuges.

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:** Point of order: The Minister has said that she will take that question on notice.

**ANSWER:**

Every death of a woman is a tragedy. I won't be commenting on individual cases which may be subject to ongoing criminal investigation.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p3**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Would you know if a woman needed to turn up to a refuge in New South Wales that there would be a spot for her? If a woman who needed to be in a refuge turned up to a refuge, would you know whether they had access to a spot?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I know that since 2012-13 the amount of money in specialist homelessness services has gone from \$135 million to a record \$182 million. That has meant increased funding for homelessness services that has been injected into the service system to make it stronger and increase places. May I also refer you to the Family and Community Services website and their help for homeless women? You will be delighted to know that the data on this website about accommodation requests by domestic and family violence agencies in New South Wales, which should be available to you, show that the turn-away rate since 2007-08, when your Government presided over an appalling lack of systematic response to domestic violence, has decreased from 67.4 per cent to 35.7 per cent. We can do better, but we have done a great deal better than you ever did. If you like, I shall read to you from the Auditor-General's report to let you know exactly what he had to say about your appalling—

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** That is not the question. You can show me all the data from the websites but my question is: Today, if a woman needed to turn up at a women's refuge, under your Government would there be a spot for her?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** She has an almost double chance of getting into a refuge—

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** What is the availability of spots in women's refuges today? What is the availability this week?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take on notice the availability this week or today.

**ANSWER:**

The Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, oversees Specialist Homelessness Services.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p3**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Let us go to that. Previously there were refuges, particularly in rural areas, that had women there 24/7. How many of those refuges now have recorded message services?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

The Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, oversees Specialist Homelessness Services.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p6**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** I want to know how many women have received a payment under the brokerage for security locks to put on their houses, and what is the total amount?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Can I first of all correct the record? I need to correct the record so that the record states that evidence-in-chief came into effect on 1 June 2015. Thank you. What was that question?

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Okay. Under the Staying Home Leaving Violence program, how many women have received payments for brokerage of security? What is the total amount?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

The Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, oversees the Staying Home Leaving Violence program.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p12**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, you may have addressed this earlier, but please confirm there has been an evaluation of the program It Stops Here Safer Pathway. Has an evaluation been done of that program?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** There are many evaluations that have been done on a number of programs.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** On that particular program, with the two LCPs that have been in place for some months now.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will get back to you with further information on that. We have considered it satisfactory enough to roll it out to Tweed Heads, Parramatta, Bankstown—

**ANSWER:**

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has conducted a process evaluation of the first two trial sites of Safer Pathway. The process evaluation is currently being reviewed.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p14**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Do you know whether they considered alternative schemes that may have been evaluated?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that question on notice.

**ANSWER:**

The starting point for consideration of a NSW domestic violence disclosure scheme was Clare's Law, in the United Kingdom.



Domestic Violence

**Transcript p21-26**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I am talking about the DVDS roundtable.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The DVDS roundtable,. I have some notes on that.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Were representatives from high at risk communities invited to that roundtable, or have they been involved in other discussions?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** To save your time, it was a pretty comprehensive roundtable. There were a number of them. Sorry, I am just looking for my note. There was one for the legal fraternity, one for the Aboriginal community and one specifically for the CALD community.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** What about people with disabilities and the LGBTI community?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** There was not a specific roundtable for those people but those issues would have been canvassed in all those roundtables.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I am not talking about the issues; I am asking specifically about representation of those communities when programs are developed to prevent domestic violence.

**Ms THOMPSON:** Yes, people were invited to the roundtables here at Parliament House. We can provide a comprehensive list of people who attended that.

**ANSWER:**

Refer to page 44 of the hearing transcript.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p22**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I understood from Minister Hazzard's response to a question in budget estimates yesterday that you called a cross-portfolio meeting last week related to domestic violence. Which portfolios were involved in these meetings?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I can roughly recall but I would rather give you the accurate answer.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** It was particularly on education strategies, as far as I understand.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** To make sure that I cover everybody who was there I would rather provide you that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

The meeting referred to was a meeting of the DFV Ministers Group.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p22**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Of the 24 new domestic violence specialist police officer positions you announced in June this year, how many positions have now been filled?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will have to take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

This is a matter for the Minister for Justice and Police, the Hon. Troy Grant MP.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p35**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Minister, do you know how many duress alarms for domestic violence are currently in circulation in New South Wales?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that question on notice because I know you would like a specific answer. Can I just add something about the roundtables?

**ANSWER:**

I am advised:

The *Staying Home Leaving Violence* program has 120 operational SOS Duress Response System devices.

Domestic Violence

**Transcript p44**

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** Following up the issue of domestic violence, what funding has been allocated to increase the opportunity for men to be housed at men's shelters while seeking treatment, rather than moving the women and children out of the home?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Your question was specifically about what funding is being provided to men?

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** Yes, so they can be housed at men's shelters.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The Staying Home Leaving Violence program, is that what you mean?

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** Yes, so that the women the children can stay in the home.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice, but obviously it is an important consideration.

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** Just following up that question: Will the Government commit to higher resourcing for men's shelters, which would enable the women and children to stay in the home?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** We are always looking to improve our service response and reduce the rates of domestic violence. I am certainly happy to take that suggestion and get back to you with some advice.

**ANSWER:**

The Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, oversees Specialist Homelessness Services.

Domestic Violence

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**ANSWER:**

The Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP, oversees Specialist Homelessness Services.

Fluoridation

**Transcript p16**

**Dr CHANT:** In relation to the North Coast, I am pleased to say that last night I signed the certificate of authority for the final steps for Rous Water to commence fluoridation.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Oh, good. Let me put on the record I am 100 per cent in support of that.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** It is not about you, Walt.

**Dr CHANT:** As you are aware, at the time in around 2013—I just need to check the date of that—I, my colleagues in NSW Health, the local dentists and other representatives of the medical fraternity on the North Coast did present to the Byron council general meeting and endeavoured to persuade council to vote in favour of fluoridation. That was not successful. It is not to say that we will not continue. A key role that we have is providing an evidence base for informed decision-making of local council and we will continue to engage with Byron council, but also the community of Byron.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** They have been pretty hostile to you up there, haven't they—personally?

**Dr CHANT:** I think it is important that New South Wales has made incredibly great inroads in fluoridation and I can provide a list of the expansion within council regions where we have been able to expand water fluoridation, but it is pleasing to see new councils come on. Sometimes there are a number of challenges for councils. For instance, at the moment we are doing a piece of work with Gunnedah to actually—

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** Hear, hear!

**CHAIR:** It is not about you!

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** It is not about you, Sarah.

**Dr CHANT:** Because they have multiple bores supplying the towns, we are providing some funding to support a technical analysis of that. In other areas we may need to upgrade the existing water treatment facility to then add a fluoridation plant. There are some complexities, but we are very passionate and it is great to see a number of councils engaging. For the small handful of councils where they have not at this point taken that step to either seek a direction from the ministry to fluoridate or made the vote to fluoridate, we will continue to work with councils to support them and the community to understand the benefits of water fluoridation.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, is the Government considering legislation to direct local councils that are refusing to put fluoride in the water?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

The evidence is clear that fluoride plays a positive role in good oral health.

NSW Health, led by the Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant, in partnership with local clinicians, has been very successful in convincing the community of the benefits of fluoridation.

NSW Health will continue to support local communities and councils to make local decisions.

Dental waiting lists - children

**Transcript p17**

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, I return to dental policy. Are you familiar with the fact that

waiting lists for dental for children on the North Coast are up to two years?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I am not—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Infants—little children.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I appreciate the importance of dental care for vulnerable children.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** And what steps are you taking to address the long waiting lists for dental?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will refer to Dr Chant. I think she could give you the complete information.

Dr CHANT: In relation to child dental waiting lists, I do not have the specific data from North Coast but would be happy to make that available.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Okay. I would like you to take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised:

Information concerning dental waiting lists can be found on the NSW Health website at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/Pages/public-dental-care-waiting.aspx>



Dental waiting lists

**Transcript p19**

**Dr CHANT:** Yes. We have a triage category whereby if you have those critical things you would go for rapid assessment. Sometimes local health districts will, for instance, bring in the children directly or, in other cases, they may do an initial assessment. We also have a scheme called the Oral Health Fee For Service Scheme. For instance, if people have been assessed, they can be issued vouchers and then there is a range of private providers where they can get the work done. Many of our services have a mixed in-house model but also draw on our oral health fee-for-service process.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You mentioned the category of rapid, what are the other categories?

**Dr CHANT:** I would have to refer to the policy directive.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Can you provide to the Committee the categories by classification and the number of people that are on that list as at 1 September?

**Dr CHANT:** Certainly. We are in the process of finalising the policy directive. Perhaps the Committee would be interested in seeing that revised policy.

**ANSWER:**

This information will be publicly available in due course.

The current priority codes for public dental waiting times are given in the Priority Oral Health Program and List Management Protocols policy directive 2008/56 that is available on the NSW Ministry of Health website:

[http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2008/pdf/PD2008\\_056.pdf](http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2008/pdf/PD2008_056.pdf).

Market sounding – South Western Sydney

**Transcript p20**

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** To the point of order: Budget estimates exist to have a check on Executive Government. It is our only opportunity to ask Ministers policy questions about the budget. The Minister has now taken 13 subjects on notice, and I asked a simple question: What does market sounding of women's health services in south-western Sydney mean? It is a very simple question. This is a significant process that we go through. It is a check on Executive Government and I resent that the Minister has repeatedly taken questions on notice.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I am sure you do, but I will take that one on notice too.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** We are up to 14.

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:** You can count, Walt. I am amazed. (The Hon. WALT SECORD: Boy, can I count).

**CHAIR:** Mr Secord, you have used most of your question time taking points of order. You have 25 seconds left.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Dr Foley, can you begin and I will return to this question after the next block. What does market sounding of women's health services in south-western Sydney mean?

**Dr FOLEY:** I am not familiar with the particular thing that south-western Sydney is doing, but I am happy to talk to the chief executive of the district and get detail. In principle, it would not be unusual for a district to see what non-governmental organisations [NGOs] are available to provide particular kinds of services and districts enter into arrangements with NGOs in their districts for a range of services, which will then work closely with the hospital and community health services of the district, but I do not have specific details of that and I will seek them.

**ANSWER:**

Refer to page 26 of the hearing transcript.

Market sounding – South Western Sydney

**Transcript p26**

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When you say "market soundings", does that mean commercial operators?

**Dr FOLEY:** I would have to take advice as to their expectation, but the expectation in the space is much more about non-government organisations. There are currently several women's health centre nongovernment organisations in the district that the district funds, and also general medical practice is a key partner in the community health space for local health districts.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** As part of that market sounding, during the last block I also received some information. Would you be comfortable if the market soundings involved cervical screening, pelvic examinations, breast examinations and domestic violence and disease screening services as part of this?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice. It is a question of what women's health services deliver, and should deliver.

**ANSWER:**

Refer to page 26 of the hearing transcript for Dr Foley's comments.

Market sounding – South Western Sydney

**Transcript p27**

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the Minister's response to community concerns about the outsourcing and privatisation of cervical cancer screening, pelvic examinations, breast examinations and screening services such as disease and domestic violence screening? I know the question is within the standing orders.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Can you detail the community concerns for me?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I had a whistle-blower contact me to express concerns about this.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** So an anonymous call.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, it is not anonymous. I know who the person is. I asked the question.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take it on notice

**ANSWER:**

Refer to page 26 of the hearing transcript for Dr Foley's comments.

If Mr Secord could provide me with the details of his constituent's concerns, I would be more than happy to follow that up.

Mental Health Beds – Melaleuca Unit

**Transcript p28**

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Are you familiar with Melaleuca, which is based at Blacktown Hospital and was opened by your Government in August 2014.

**Dr FOLEY:** I am not familiar with that name, but I will refer to—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** For your information, it is a 20—

**Dr FOLEY:** Is it a subacute mental health service?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Yes it is. It has 20 beds. Are you familiar with it now?

**Dr FOLEY:** I am familiar with the rollout of programs for subacute beds that we have put in place over the last couple of years.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Are you familiar with Melaleuca unit at Blacktown Hospital?

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:** She just answered that.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, she did not answer my question.

**Dr FOLEY:** Not in detail, no. I am familiar with our subacute beds and how they operate.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Why not ask Dr Wright.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Dr Wright, what is your title?

**Dr WRIGHT:** I am the Chief Psychiatrist, NSW Health.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Are you familiar with Melaleuca unit at Blacktown Hospital?

**Dr WRIGHT:** I have not visited the Melaleuca unit but I certainly am familiar with the rollout of the

non-acute beds across the State, including those at Blacktown Hospital.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Are you confident that the 20 beds at Blacktown Hospital are being occupied by patients?

**Dr WRIGHT:** I would have to take that question on notice because I have not had any specific information about what is happening at the Melaleuca unit at the present time.

**ANSWER:**

The new beds are available now for patient admission as required by clinical need.

Mental Health Beds – Melaleuca Unit

**Transcript p28**

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, have you received any correspondence or have any concerns been raised with your office about the Melaleuca unit?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I get a lot of correspondence, as you can imagine, so I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** For the record, the Minister will take on notice my inquiry about the amount of correspondence she has received about Melaleuca. Will you do that?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Yes.

**ANSWER:**

My ministerial office receives a great deal of correspondence on many issues.

If Mr Secord's constituents have concerns relating specifically to the Melaleuca Unit, I am more than happy to follow up those concerns.

Mental Health call outs

**Transcript p31**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** My question asked who other than police officers respond. You said ambulance officers may respond. They responded 1,000 call-outs. Which other agencies respond to mental health-related incidents?

**Dr WRIGHT:** Mental health services.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Who in mental health services goes out?

**Dr WRIGHT:** We have community-based mental health clinicians across the State in all of our local health areas. There is a large workforce. We also have acute care teams.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** How many call-outs did the mental health teams physically respond to last year?

**Dr WRIGHT:** I cannot provide a figure about responses to acute requests. I can provide figures for the number of occasions of service.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Perhaps you can take on notice how many times clinicians responded in the field to mental health related incidents.

**Dr WRIGHT:** I think there is a specific question about that. They do home visits all the time and respond to requests to assess someone on numerous occasions. If you are talking about critical incidents, I can take that question on notice if that is the specific information you require.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** I am talking about critical mental health incidents, not risk to life and limb. I am talking about someone who is psychotic.

**Dr WRIGHT:** That often involves risk to life and limb.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** We can discuss that, but it often does not.

**ANSWER:**

Data available to NSW Health does not allow the determination of the number of community client-related contacts that can be attributed to “Critical Mental Health Incidents or Call-outs” as defined by Ambulance or Police reporting.

Coroners – Anthony Waterlow

**Transcript p32**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Last year I was advised that the New South Wales Government response to the Coroner's recommendations in the Antony Waterlow matter was still under consideration. Can you advise the Committee whether your Government has now responded to the recommendations?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will ask Dr Wright to provide an update.

**Dr WRIGHT:** Some of the recommendations have been taken up in the revised Mental Health Act, particularly in relation to greater clarity about the issue of risk of harm. My office issued a clarifying statement late last year, which indicated that risk of harm needs to consider including risk to reputation, risk to others and emotional risk both to the individual and other people. That was a critical issue in the Waterlow case. The other parts of that case that informed the amendments to the Mental Health Act included the importance of seeking advice and input from carers, other relevant family members, treating doctors and others before making treatment decisions about people for whom we are contemplating involuntary treatment.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Despite the motion of the Legislative Council asking for a public inquiry into section 14 of the Mental Health Act, your review did not involve a public inquiry. Only those who were invited to do so made a submission.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that question on notice. I could like to update the Hon. Walt Secord—

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** No, we are dealing with my questions now. I still have no indication that the Government has provided a written response to the Coroner's recommendations.

**Dr WRIGHT:** I will take on notice the specifics about whether a written response has been provided. However, I have certainly seen the response.

**ANSWER:**

Minister Skinner has corresponded with the Coroner about the Antony Waterlow case.



NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity

**Transcript p38-39**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** You said you were responding through your NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity. Who is currently on the board of the NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** The Deputy Chair is Catherine Fitzpatrick. Brian Seidler from the Master Builders Association is a member. Danielle Lehrer, from Forex Nation is a member. June Heinrich from Macquarie Community College is a member. Louise McCoach from Clayton Utz is a member. Lyn Craig from the University of New South Wales is a member. Sandra Triulzi, from the Triulzi Group is a member. Tracey Friend of the Royal Australian Air Force is a member. Yvette Pietsh, from Crowe Horwath is a member. We have two ex-officio members: Kylie Hargreaves from Resources and Energy, and Kathy Esson from the New South Wales schools board.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** When were they appointed?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** If you want the dates I will have to get back to you with them.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** The last chair's term ran out in November 2014 so is this the new board?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I am the chair.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** I said that the last board's term ran out in November 2014.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You said "the last chair" actually.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Okay. Is this the new board?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Some of these people have carried on from the previous board.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Are you saying that you have reappointed the previous board?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** To be precise I will have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** You are taking over as the chair. That is a new role, is it not, because the previous chair was a man?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I am the chair. I will have to take on notice—

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** You are the chair now. How long have you been the chair?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** To give you a specific date I will have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** How many men are on that board?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I have just listed them. Brian Seidler is currently on the board.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Only one?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** We have the pending reappointment of Peter Blanchard from the Institute of Automotive and Mechanical Engineers.

**ANSWER:**

Some members were reappointed following the end of their first two-year term. I have chaired the Council of Women's Economic Opportunity since its establishment in 2012.

Women NSW – Move to North Sydney

**Transcript p40**

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Why did you say in the media that you were transferring Women NSW from FACS to Health to align with your ministerial portfolio responsibilities? Did this mean that they had to physically move premises?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I think it is pretty evident what my ministerial responsibilities are; We have been speaking about them for over two hours. It was transferred to Health to align with those responsibilities. We have a very proud record of achievement in four years. Importantly, we have demonstrated that when the office is embedded in frontline service departments we can deliver more.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** Did this mean that they had to move premises?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will ask Ms Koff to describe that process to you.

**Ms KOFF:** The team was located at Ashfield at the FACS premises and moved to the New South Wales Ministry of Health in Miller Street.

**The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ:** How much did that move cost?

**Ms KOFF:** I would have to take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

The cost of the move from the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) offices in Ashfield to the Ministry of Health offices in North Sydney was approximately \$5,000.

RU486

**Transcript p45**

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** I wish to follow up another issue. There have been reports of increasing numbers of women contacting crisis support centres who have had a negative reaction to the RU486 drug. Are you aware of that? Has there been any funding allocated towards this issue and to educate the doctors themselves?

**Dr CHANT:** Could you perhaps clarify, Reverend Nile, the concern? You mention women are presenting in distress to crisis centres as raising questions of access?

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** No. They have taken the drug and they have had a physical health reaction to it.

**Dr CHANT:** Clearly, the doctor prescribing the medication has an obligation to check that the person is suitable for the medication in terms of any risk factors or drug interactions. The primary way of answering that question I would say is that the doctor responsible for prescribing it should have set up a follow-up path for the affected woman to come back to the service. If you are talking about some of the mental health dimensions—

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** And physical reactions too.

**Dr CHANT:** The physical reactions and, I think, to some extent the mental health reactions are really very much a responsibility of the clinician who has prescribed it. As you know, there are requirements for the doctors to be adequately apprised of the issues associated with the medication to prescribe it and to provide the individuals with what they need to do in response, if they have adverse effects.

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** That is part of my question. What education are you providing for the doctors regarding those side effects?

**Dr CHANT:** I would have to take that on notice, but I do believe that in the rollout of the program — and, again, I would not want to mislead the Committee—in order to prescribe it, the doctors have to do a certain training program. I will seek clarification of that. But certainly we would support, whenever a doctor is prescribing a medication, that they are well versed in its drug interactions, its complications and its side effects and have a duty of care to provide advice to the person taking that drug about what to do if they encounter adverse effects.

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** Do you have a list of doctors who are approved to use it?

**Dr CHANT:** I will chase it up. I would not want to mislead. That was just a recollection.

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE:** You will take that on notice?

**Dr CHANT:** I will take that on notice.

**ANSWER:**

The Australian Government's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is responsible for regulating the supply of medicines prescribed by a medical practitioner in Australia, this includes mifepristone (RU 486) which is registered. The registered sponsor of mifepristone is Marie Stopes International Australia.

A tailored educational package, developed by the sponsor, is available for medical practitioners who wish to prescribe mifepristone. This package includes information on the appropriate selection of women, the counselling of women, the need for patient consent, information on the risks and adverse events, and the need to follow up women who have been prescribed the medicine.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG), which is responsible for the training and accreditation of specialists in these areas, produces a number of clinical guidelines for health professionals, including:

- Termination of Pregnancy (C-Gyn 17)
- The use of Misoprostol in obstetrics and gynaecology (C-Obs 12), and
- The use of mifepristone for medical termination of pregnancy (C-Gyn 21).

These documents can be downloaded from [www.ranzcog.edu.au/the-ranzcog/policies-and-guidelines/college-statements.html](http://www.ranzcog.edu.au/the-ranzcog/policies-and-guidelines/college-statements.html).

The RANZCOG website also provides access to a number of more detailed publications on the termination of pregnancy including:

- Termination of Pregnancy: A health resource for health professionals, RANZCOG, Nov 2005
- The Care of Women requesting Induced Abortion, Evidence-based Clinical Guideline Number 7, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Sept 2004.

It is understood that the sponsor provides education online or directly to health care professionals by suitably qualified and experienced users. Practitioners with a Fellowship of the RANZCOG (FRANZCOG) or a Diploma of the RANZCOG (DRANZCOG) do not have to complete the training.

The sponsor has made the training a requirement for prescribing practitioners to have access to the medicines. Except as described above, practitioners need to complete and pass the course evaluation. Once this has occurred they are listed on a register kept by the sponsor. Practitioners who have FRANZCOG or DRANZCOG can be registered by the sponsor without undertaking the training.

The NSW Ministry of Health does not have a list of authorised prescribers for mifepristone in NSW.