



New South Wales

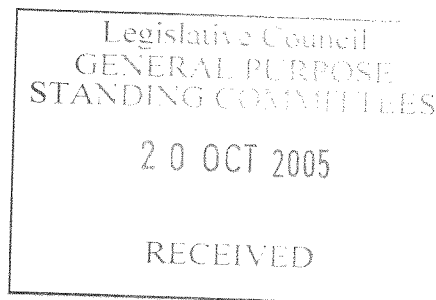
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20 OCT 2005

David Campbell

Minister for Regional Development
Minister for the Illawarra
Minister for Small Business

GO500587

Ms T Bosch
The Director
Budget Estimates
Room 812
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000



Dear Ms Bosch

Re: Budget Estimates 2005-2006 – Questions Taken on Notice

I refer to your letter of 20 September relating to my appearance on Friday 16 September 2005, before the General Purpose Standing Committee No 5, in relation to the portfolio areas of Regional Development, Illawarra and Small Business.

Please find attached my responses to those questions taken on notice at that hearing in hard copy and on disk.

Yours sincerely

David Campbell
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for the Illawarra
Minister for Small Business

20 OCT 2005

Questions and answers from budget estimates hearing in relation to the portfolio areas of Regional Development Illawarra and Small Business on Friday 16 September 2005.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Occupational health and safety is a major issue. What was the cost of workers compensation to your department specifically over 2004-05 and what is your projection for 2005-06?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Direct expenditure?

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Specifically, what are your department's workers compensation costs?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I think it would be better for us to come back to the Committee with the specific detail of the exact costs.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: How many employees are in your department?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: In terms of direct costs, I will come back to the Committee. In terms of the specific number of employees, the director general can probably answer that.

Mr HARRIS: There are 242.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Of those 242, how many in the year 2004-05 have lodged occupational health and safety claims?

Mr HARRIS: I cannot answer that question with any specificity. It would be a relatively low number out of 242. It is not a number that has caused particular angst.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: So you will come back to the Committee with those details?

Mr HARRIS: Absolutely. I am perfectly happy to provide that.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Can you also specify what the claims have been for?

Mr HARRIS: Certainly.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Mr Harris, are you able to identify the costs associated with complying with occupational health and safety regulations for your department?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I think we have indicated that we will come back with the costs of occupational health and safety as it relates to the department.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: The cost, as well as the amount of time that the department has to spend in complying with occupational health and safety principles?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We will come back with a response on occupational health and safety issues as they relate to the department.

Response:

The idea that employers should plan for the prevention of workplace accidents and injuries is long-standing and widely acknowledged in the international business community.

This Government is committed to improving the health and safety of the New South Wales workforce, including our own.

The latest figures show NSW work related fatalities and employment injury rates have dropped to their lowest levels in 15 years.

This Government has made a substantial effort to reduce the incidence of accidents and injuries in the State's workplaces by introducing modern, flexible and cooperative safety laws and ensuring that WorkCover and our agencies have the resources to tackle the problems.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Are you able to explain to the Committee how the department's small business division actually works, and how many staff there are within small business area?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: The small business development division has a total of 49 staff, whose role is to encourage small business by working with business organisations. Other aspects of the department offer support in that role as well.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Where are those 49 people located?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: They are in various locations, from the city to the suburbs and the regions.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Can you provide a breakdown of those positions and where they are located?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Sure.

Response

Sydney CBD	36.6
Non CBD	12

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: You talked about the proactive role of encouraging businesses. How many staff handle complaints from small businesses about dealing with regulations applied by the State Government? How many staff handle complaints from small businesses about negotiating difficult State Government regulations?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We have a strong policy of encouraging small businesses to contact the Government with their issues of import. As I said, I have worked very hard to move around the State to listen to what they say. I encourage them to talk to me and to contact the department.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Can you provide us with the types of complaints that department receives?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I can undertake to offer a sample of complaints. I will not have staff taken from their proactive activities to trawl through file after file, but we will give a sample—

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: You must have records of how many complaints come in. Perhaps you can provide them.

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I said I would give a sample of some of the issues raised with us by small businesses and some of the issues we take up with other agencies on their behalf.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Your department must have statistics on the number and types of complaints it receives from small businesses. Can you provide those? If you are unable to provide them, can the department provide them?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I have indicated that we will give a sample of the issues that are raised with us.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: So you will not provide us with a list of complaints.

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: As the Minister has answered the question, it is only fair—

CHAIR: The Minister has a right to take these questions on notice if necessary.

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I want to make it clear: I will not have staff taken from their proactive role to trawl through file after file. I have indicated that we will give a sample, but we will not go through and give every detail of every issue. That is an inappropriate use of resources. It is crazy for someone from a party that is proposing to sack 29,000 public servants to expect—

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: You are misleading the Committee.

CHAIR: With respect, I do not think that statement is relevant. However, if a Committee member makes a request, while there is no obligation, I think there

is an etiquette to fulfil that request. Often in the Parliament such requests may be seen to be frivolous, but the member may have a good reason to request that information from you.

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: And I have indicated that we will give some information that will assist the Committee.

Response:

The Department deals with many varied small businesses, across industries, throughout New South Wales. Small businesses generally express satisfaction in the Department's services.

CHAIR: The Minister has answered. It is now my turn to ask questions. The Opposition will have its turn again in a moment. Minister, looking through the budget papers I find in Budget Paper No. 3, volume 2, page 16-1 that there is one page on the Illawarra region without a statement of financial position or other cash flow statements that occur in other portfolios. Then in Budget Paper No. 5 I found a one-liner under Treasurer, Minister for State Development and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs portfolio for the Department of State and Regional Development. Also on the next page is another one-liner. Why is this so, Minister? Do you have a discrete or distinct ministry or is it under the Treasury or the Minister for State Development? Could you explain why?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: The Department of State and Regional Development, if you like, has three components. There is a component for State development, which the Minister for State Development has responsibility for. There is the regional development component and the small business component that I have responsibility for.

CHAIR: Why is it that there is no statement of financial position or cash flow statements from your department?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Because there is one agency. There is the Department of State and Regional Development. I do not have a copy of the page you are referring to. To be certain that the Committee is getting accurate advice, we will give you a written answer on that.

CHAIR: Sure. It is just that as far as my staff and I were concerned, you had that one page there but, unlike other portfolios, you do not have the cash flow and the clear statements that we can work from.

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Again, as I say, we will make sure you have a detailed answer on it.

Response:

The Department's financial statements are published in *Budget Paper No. 3 - 2005-06 Budget Estimates* as follows:

- Operating statement - pages 22-56, 22-61 and 22-62;
- Cashflow statement - pages 22-57 and 22-58; and
- Statement of financial position - page 22-59.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: I would like to ask questions of the Director-General, Mr Harris. How many displaced public servants are there in your department?

Mr HARRIS: I think there are none at the moment. I can certainly check it out. If you had asked me some months ago I would have said one that I was conscious of. I think the answer is none. My colleagues think that is probably the answer. I can confirm that for you but the answer is none.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: In terms of displaced public servants, could you tell us how many self-nominated displaced public servants there are?

Mr HARRIS: It would be the same number.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Are there any that have self-nominated?

Mr HARRIS: No, not that I am aware of. Again, I will check that and advise you. But my answer so far is none.

Response:

One displaced public servant in the Department.

DSRD has no self nominated displaced public servants.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: How many overseas and interstate trips have been undertaken by you, the director-general and departmental staff?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: In the current financial year?

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: We are talking about the previous financial year. Those are the budget estimates we are talking about.

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: In the previous financial year I travelled overseas on two occasions and interstate perhaps one or two times to ministerial council meetings. I would have to check specifically.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Could you come back to us with details of where those trips were to, the location, the duration, the cost?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: In relation to international travel, one was for three weeks. I took advantage of the opportunity given to all Ministers to undertake a study tour. I visited centres in the United Kingdom such as Newcastle and Sheffield. The second occasion of international travel was when I led a trade mission to China—Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. As part of the visit—

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: Could we just have some specific details of your visits and of the department as well? Could you take that on notice and come back to us?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I have described the nature of the international travel. I will double-check the exact number of interstate visits and that information will be provided.

The Hon. ROBYN PARKER: I would like information as to locations, costs, who took the trips, those sorts of things. Will you take that on notice?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We will take that on notice. The information is published in the department's annual report. It is a public document that the Committee can have access to.

Response:

Overseas travel by public sector employees is governed by various Premier's Memoranda and Circulars. Travel by public sector employees is determined on the basis of value to the tax-payer and public sector development. Travel undertaken is always on government business and essential for the performance of official business on behalf of the Government of New South Wales.

All overseas travel is subject to Minister's approval. Ministers are to exercise strict economy in approving overseas travel and significant benefits to the agency and/or the State must be demonstrated. Ministers may approve official

travel overseas after deciding that the travel is essential and that it can be funded within the budget allocation for the organisation concerned.

Employees who are required to travel overseas in the course of their duty may be eligible for overseas travelling allowances. Overseas travel by agency staff is reported in the Department's annual report.

In the financial year 2004/2005 I travelled interstate on one occasion.