

**MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED**

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Patricia Forsythe MLC asked a question, on page 6 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to smoking rooms in hotels. The following is provided in response:

I am advised that as at 5 September 2006, 75 applications have been approved for a second smoking room, in the majority of cases in hotels and 51 applications have been denied. Venues which may apply for the exemption must meet strict criteria that include being fully enclosed with no access to an outdoor area such as a beer garden or balcony.

  
(John Hatzistergos)  
Minister for Health

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### BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Patricia Forsythe MLC asked a question, on page 8 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to the list of Health Services where an audit of corporate reforms was underway. The following is provided in response:

The process for an independent audit of the corporate reforms has commenced for the following Health Services:

- Greater Southern Area Health Service
- Greater Western Area Health Service
- Hunter New England Area Health Service
- North Coast Area Health Service
- Northern Sydney & Central Coast Area Health Service
- South Eastern Sydney & Illawarra Area Health Service
- Sydney South West Area Health Service
- Sydney West Area Health Service
- Ambulance Service of NSW
- Children's Hospital at Westmead
- Justice Health




(John Hatzistergos)  
Minister for Health

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### BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Robyn Parker MLC asked a question, on page 9 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to the average salary of NSW Health employees and corporate administration jobs. The following is provided in response:

I am advised that the Department of Health does not routinely collect data on salary ranges for the Corporate Administration category reported in its Annual Report. The diversion of public resources to answer this question is not justifiable.



(John Hatzistergos)  
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**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED**

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked a question, on page 13 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to Transport for Health - IPTAAS travel and accommodation costs. The following is provided in response:

In the 2005 calendar year, the average claim made under IPTAAS was \$261.35. It should be noted that IPTAAS is a financial subsidy, not a full reimbursement scheme. Data is collected on the value of the claim processed, which generally only relates to items eligible for reimbursement. Information is not collected on the total cost incurred by the patient.

In the 2005 calendar year, the average payment made under IPTAAS was \$231.64. This represents 89% of the average claim. The difference in amounts paid compared to amounts claimed will, in most cases, be due to patient and/or escort contributions.

  
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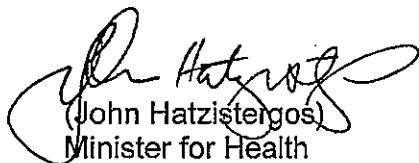
On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked a question, on page 14 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to the average period of time patients must wait for their travel costs to be reimbursed under IPTAAS. The following is provided in response:

I am advised that the period for processing IPTAAS claims varies across the State however, at all times, IPTAAS offices endeavour to process claims in a timely manner.

In the 2005 calendar year, the average time between a claim being received by an IPTAAS Office and the patient receiving payment was 39 calendar days. Waiting times are steadily decreasing across NSW. In June 2006, the average time between claim receipt and payment was 31 calendar days. I am advised that this will decrease further as EFTPOS is adopted as the main form of payment across the State.

This information relates to travel *and* accommodation claims, as waiting times for travel claims are not recorded separately.

The reasons for a claim not to be paid would be in a situation where the criteria was not met.



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On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Patricia Forsythe MLC asked a question, on page 26 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to the number of advisers and support staff present at the Estimates Hearing. The following is provided in response:

As the Committee would be aware, Health is one of the largest and more complex of the Government portfolios.

As the Committee generally failed to provide in advance of the hearing an indication of the questions they intended to pursue, it was necessary for appropriate staff to remain on hand at the hearing to provide responses and/or advice on specific Health portfolio matters (ie; technical and/or financial) should they have arisen.

The salaries of those in attendance are either disclosed in the NSW Department of Health annual report or are in accord with the NSW Public Sector Award.



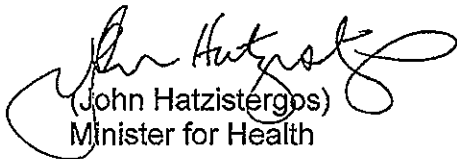
(John Hatzistergos)  
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**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED**

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Robyn Parker MLC asked a question, on page 24 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to the Greater Southern Area Health Service's elective surgery waiting list. The following is provided in response:

I am advised that details on Waiting List patients are not measured or reported in these categories. Details on Booked Surgery patients waiting more than 12 months, by hospital and by procedure, are published on the NSW Health website.



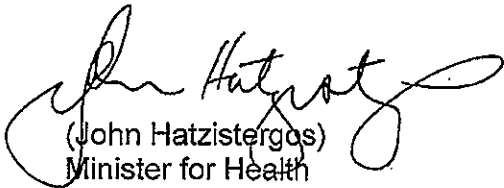
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**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED**

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Robyn Parker MLC asked a question, on page 43 and 44 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to dental waiting lists. The following is provided in response:

I am advised that the Department of Health has not routinely collected data relating to people waiting for public oral health services across NSW since the cessation of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program (CDHP) in late 1996. With the introduction of the Priority Oral Health Program (POHP), the focus has been on the clinical priority of patients, rather than maintaining chronological lists.



(John Hatzistergos)  
Minister for Health




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**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED**

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Patricia Forsythe MLC asked a question, on page 59 of Hansard, which was taken on notice regarding NSW Health's definition for "corporate administration". The following is provided in response:

NSW Health has developed the attached definition for "corporate administration" positions.

This definition is used to determine the number of employees performing corporate service functions, which are reported annually in NSW Health's Annual Report.




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**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED**

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Robyn Parker MLC asked a question, on page 4 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to the number of motor vehicles operated by the Greater Southern Area Health Service. The following is provided in response:

I am advised that the Greater Southern Area Health Service operates a total of 777 vehicles, including motor vehicles, ride-on lawn mowers, tractors, road sweepers, forklifts, bobcats, cherry pickers, mobile therapy units, skidoos, dental vans and breast clinic vans.



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**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING – QUESTION ANSWERED**

On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Sylvia Hale MLC asked a question, on page 30 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to dentists and dental therapists employed by the Greater Southern Area Health Service. The following is provided in response:

The NSW Government has provided a \$40 million funding boost for dental health announced in the 2006/07 Budget. This is additional to a recruitment campaign undertaken by the NSW Government.

I am advised that there are 25.63 FTE dentists and dental therapists working within Greater Southern Area Health Service.

It is important to note that where vacancies exist, locum dentists have been utilised where available and the NSW Oral Health Fee for Service Scheme is used. The latter enables patients to be issued with a voucher for treatment by a private dentist in their area, who has agreed to participate in the Scheme.

  
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On 4 September 2006, during my appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, the Hon Arthur Chesterfield-Evans MLC asked a question, on page 52 of Hansard, which was taken on notice relating to the evaluation of the Private Provider Pilot Program. The following is provided in response:

I am advised the evaluation report provided to the NSW Department of Health contains information that is commercial in confidence including the names of individual private facilities and specific contract prices.

I have asked the Department to ascertain if this information can practically be excluded from the report to enable a copy to be provided to the Member.

  
(John Hatzistergos)  
Minister for Health

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