

**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014/15 WOMEN NSW**  
**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – FROM HEARING TRANSCRIPT**

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**QUESTION 1 – Page 32**

**The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS:** How long has the position of Executive Director been vacant?  
I understand you have an acting Executive Director.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will take that on notice, or I could ask Ms Harrison to answer.

**Ms HARRISSON:** I would have to provide the specific date on notice, but it has been since about March this year.

**ANSWER**

I am advised:

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 18 from Sophie Cotsis MLC.

## **QUESTION 2 – Page 33**

**The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS:** No. I want to find out when you will advertise for the position of Executive Director for Women NSW.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** It is a long time since a Minister put an advertisement in a paper. You should let Ms Harrisson answer the question.

**Ms HARRISSON:** We will be advertising the position, along with the other positions at the equivalent grade, across the department as part of our implementation of the government sector employment reforms.

**The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS:** In the next month, three weeks? Can you give me a time frame?

**Ms HARRISSON:** Those reforms have to be implemented on the Public Service Commissioner's time line and I can come back to give you details on that.

**The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS:** Will you take that on notice?

**Ms HARRISSON:** I will take that on notice.

## **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 18 from Sophie Cotsis MLC.

### **QUESTION 3 – Page 36**

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** I understand that Dr Rory Gallagher, a senior member of the British Government's Behavioural Insights Team - also known as the "Nudge Unit" was engaged at the end of 2012 by then Premier Barry O'Farrell specifically to examine ways the Government could either save money or recoup money through nudging or changing behaviour? Was the Nudge Unit engaged to work or advise on any projects or funding models within the Department of Women or the Department of Community Services when you were Minister?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I am afraid you will have to ask the Minister today those questions I am sure Mr Coutts-Trotter can fill us in.

**Mr COUTTS-TROTTER:** To the best of my knowledge, the first time Family and Community Services began to work with Dr Gallagher is in the past few months to look at the services we provide to social housing tenants.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** What about the Department of Women?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** It is Women NSW. It is an office within the Department of Family and Community Services and I ask Ms Harrison to answer that.

**Ms HARRISSON:** We have had a lot of interaction as a department in growing expertise of behavioural insights across the Department of Family and Community Services. There may well have been some discussions in terms of the development of staff but I need to take the detail of that on notice.

### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 49 from Mehreen Faquqi MLC.

#### **QUESTION 4 – Page 39**

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Well, 2013-14 was the second year of that grants program, which was to invest, as you say, \$9.8 million over three years. The funding program directly supports the implementation of 'It Stops Here: Standing together to end domestic and family violence in NSW,' which is the New South Wales Government's whole-of-government response to domestic and family violence. So this year is the third and final year of the \$9.8 million funding commitment and will include a focus on initiatives to support prevention and early intervention of domestic and family violence. That ongoing funding of \$2.9million per annum will continue to support our actions to reduce domestic and family violence.

**Dr MEIREEEN FARUQI:** So, Minister, the \$5.6 million will not be spent this year?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I might ask Ms Harrison to answer that.

**Ms HARRISSON:** As had always been our plan, we have always intended to use the prevention studies and the outcome of the prevention studies to inform some further projects and partnerships into prevention of domestic violence and that is the main focus of our planned expenditure for this year. I can provide the details of our forecast on that.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Could you confirm that the \$5.6 million will be spent this year?

**Ms HIARRISSON:** That is certainly our intention.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Have contracts been signed for those programs?

**Ms HARRISSON:** As you all know, the reports were published yesterday. We are going through their findings and making sure that we can tender for the right programs for prevention, but some of our budget for this year has been allocated.

**Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Could you take on notice to provide the specifics of the tenders and the programs?

**Ms HARRISSON:** Absolutely.

#### **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Information about Government tenders is available on the e-tenders website [www.tenders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tenders.nsw.gov.au). Further details about some of the programs funded under the Domestic and Family Violence Program are available on the Department of Family and Community Services website.

## **QUESTION 5 - Page 39/40**

**CHAIR:** I know this issue is very controversial because there has been a lot of media debate about it but, Minister, in your opinion should New South Wales women be warned about known risk factors for breast cancer, especially if those risks involved a lifestyle choice? Are you or your advisers aware of the latest peer reviewed research on breast cancer risk factors published only in February this year by the United States National Institutes of Health PubMed journal by Chinese scientist Dr Huang and others? This was reported in the Weekend Australian newspaper last Saturday by journalist Angela Shanahan. Dr Huang and his colleagues reviewed 36 recent peer-reviewed studies and found that on average an induced abortion increases the risk of breast cancer by 44 per cent, two abortions increase the risk by 76 per cent, and three by 89 per cent.

Are you aware that these findings are in line with nearly 20 other studies in this area, published since 2007, from a range of countries I have already quoted China including India, Turkey, France, Greece, Bangladesh, Armenia and so on. Are you also aware that the analysis that is quoted by Dr Valerie Beral, which is often cited by the American Medical Association, is a flawed study because in the study it excluded 60,000 abortions that are on the public record but are not part of the computerised record that was begun in 1972? Will your department investigate this latest report, the one I have referred to in the United States National Institutes of Health journal, and other recent valid studies and consider informing New South Wales women about these significant findings?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Angela Shanahan is an assiduous correspondent on these matters and I will refer the question to the Minister for Health because I know she has a keen interest in women's health. I think that might be the better way of dealing with it, but we can also take it on notice. Ms Foran may be able to provide some advice.

**CHAIR:** I am happy if you want to make a brief comment that you will review that material.

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** Scientific information is always relevant. It must be considered seriously, and that is what we will do.

## **ANSWER**

I am advised:

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Health.

## **QUESTION 6 – Page 41**

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** Minister, you referred to the role of the Domestic Violence Council and you said it provided advice on policies, programs and legislation, including the It Stops Here program. Did the council also provide advice on Going Home Staying Home?

**Ms HARRISSON:** Not as far as I am aware.

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** Why not? Why would it not provide advice on that program?

**Ms HARRISSON:** I will take that question on notice. I will review the agendas and the discussions conducted earlier in the year when those policies were being formed. Obviously, the Going Home Staying Home program started its life before the council.

## **ANSWER**

I am advised:

Refer to Supplementary Question on Notice 12 from Sophie Cotsis MLC. .

## **QUESTION 7 – Page 42**

**The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS:** Do you have a budget for regional sites?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I will ask Ms Harrisson to answer that.

**Ms HARRISSON:** The budget for the first launch site was included in the \$9.8 million for the reforms. I can come back to you with the specific detail of how that money has been allocated to support those reforms.

**Mr COUTTS-TROTTER:** We have an ongoing budget set aside in the agency's overall budget for both those launch sites and, from memory, assumptions about the scaling up of the program in the following years. We are happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

## **ANSWER**

I am advised:

FACS has an ongoing commitment to fund further sites over the next five years.

## **QUESTION 8 – Page 43**

**The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS:** Minister, earlier in the year the Public Service Association found that 77 per cent of the respondents to a survey-and there were 900 respondents from the public service-said that they had missed out on an opportunity for promotion while pregnant. Also, 79 per cent of those respondents had been subjected to inappropriate comments by supervisors while pregnant. You are probably aware that the Australian Human Rights Commission released a report called "Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review". What action is the Government taking to ensure the end of discrimination against pregnant women and new mothers in the public service?

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

## **ANSWER**

As Minister for Women, I maintain a keen interest in this area, however I am advised this matter falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Premier.